



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Government Oversight of Kangaroo Industry Lacks Transparency, Monitoring and Compliance Parliamentary Inquiry finds

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 October 2021

A New South Wales Parliamentary Inquiry into the Health and Wellbeing of Kangaroos and Other Macropods has handed down its [report](#) today, with recommendations to the Government that include strengthening monitoring and compliance around animal welfare and reviewing the way in which annual harvest quotas for kangaroos are determined.

The Upper House committee included members of the government, opposition and crossbench and held three hearings to inquire into the practices of the commercial and non-commercial kangaroo industries in New South Wales, including the key assumptions and modelling underpinning the way in which harvest quotas are set.

Cate Faehrmann, Greens MP and Chair of the Inquiry said, “The committee heard disturbing evidence of animal cruelty and of landholders being harassed by shooters on neighbouring properties and we don’t believe the government is doing enough to prevent this.

“We were convinced by doubts raised about the modelling and methodology underpinning kangaroo kill quotas and have recommended that the Natural Resources Commission review the current methodology for estimating macropod populations in New South Wales.

“The killing of kangaroos for non-commercial purposes was a major line of inquiry for the committee. We found that the National Parks and Wildlife Service does not have adequate systems in place to monitor compliance with licence conditions for the non-commercial culling of kangaroos.

“The committee was moved to hear the testimony of Aboriginal elders and educators who made clear the deep and ongoing cultural and spiritual importance of kangaroos to First Nations peoples, and the distressing impact that the disrespectful treatment and killing of kangaroos has on them.

“Environment Minister Matt Kean is set to sign off on a new 5-year *Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan* before the end of this year. The committee is seeking a commitment from him that he not endorse the new Harvest Management Plan until the recommendations of this inquiry have been considered.

“As Chair of the Committee, I support this Report and its findings and recommendations and want to thank all members for their contributions and genuine willingness to work together on the issues that arose throughout the inquiry. This Inquiry has exposed the kangaroo industry in NSW to some much-needed scrutiny and, if all of these recommendations are implemented, will lead to improvements.

“However, there were a number of stronger recommendations and findings in my Chair’s draft report that were not supported. I was personally convinced by the evidence presented by stakeholders that the

kangaroo industry is unnecessary, unsustainable and cruel and I did not find the evidence provided by the NSW Government in response to these assertions convincing,” Ms Faehrmann said.

A snapshot of the committee's key findings and recommendations is attached. Further information about the inquiry, including submissions, transcripts of public hearings and the final report, can be found on the [committee's website](#).

-ENDS-

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Inquiry into Health And Wellbeing of Kangaroos and other Macropods in New South Wales

Key Findings

- the current methodology used by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to produce estimates of New South Wales' macropod populations lacks transparency
- the National Parks and Wildlife Service does not have adequate systems to monitor compliance with licence conditions for the non-commercial culling of kangaroos
- That there is a lack of monitoring and regulation at the point-of-kill during both commercial and non-commercial killing of kangaroos
- That the shooting of kangaroos has a profound impact on the mental health of some Aboriginal people, kangaroo carers and rescuers
- That the use of exclusion fencing has the potential to cause disruption to kangaroo migration as well as access to habitat, food and water.

A Snapshot of Recommendations:

- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment amend planning policies to require assessment of the impact on kangaroos located within peri-urban developments when assessing development applications;
- That the National Parks and Wildlife Service:
 - work with relevant local councils to identify local nature reserves and corridors for resident kangaroo populations on the peri-urban fringe
 - develop a plan for protecting further areas of kangaroo habitat in New South Wales through creation of reserves and national parks.
- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment investigate new technologies for counting kangaroo populations such as the use of infra-red and other camera drone technology.
- That the NSW Government:
 - undertake extensive and genuine consultation with Aboriginal peoples to seek their views regarding the commercial and non-commercial culling of kangaroos, and ensure these views are given serious consideration in the development of all future kangaroo management plans
 - incorporate the genuine involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the management of kangaroo populations.
- That the NSW Government conduct a review of the impact of exclusion fencing on macropod populations, and that the report be publicly released when complete.
- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment investigate new technologies for counting kangaroo populations such as the use of infra-red and other camera drone technology.
- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment use video imaging of kangaroo populations when surveying populations from aircrafts and make this footage publicly available on its website.
- That the Natural Resources Commission review the current methodology for estimating macropod populations in New South Wales.
- That the Natural Resources Commission establish an independent panel of ecologists to examine the scientific evidence for assumptions used in the Kangaroo Management Plan that

refer to kangaroo 'abundance', annual population growth, the impact of migration on population counts and the attrition of kangaroos in drought.

- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment identify, and independently verify, the biological growth rate for each macropod species to better inform setting sustainable quotas under future Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plans.
- That when setting population estimates and harvest quotas, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment must take into consideration climatic factors such as drought. In times of declared drought, reassessment of quotas should be conducted based on changed conditions, rather than have quotas made on out of date population estimates.
- That the Minister for Energy and Environment not endorse the new *Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan* until the recommendations of this inquiry have been considered.
- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment collect and publicly release data on all joey deaths occurring in the commercial kangaroo industry, including in-pouch, at-foot, and joeys at-foot who have fled.
- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment include in the *Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2022-2026* a requirement that commercial harvesters include the number of orphaned joeys when calculating the count for filling quotas.
- That the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment conduct a full review of the systems for issuing and compliance monitoring of licences to harm kangaroos. The review should aim to increase the rigour and transparency of the licensing and compliance monitoring processes, be conducted in consultation with stakeholders, and be made public.
- That the NSW Government review the 2018 changes to licences to harm kangaroos as a matter of urgency and provide a report to Parliament within 12 months.
- That the National Parks and Wildlife Service employ additional compliance officers to proactively monitor and investigate the non-commercial industry's compliance with the code of practice as well as specific cruelty allegations.
- That the National Parks and Wildlife Service work with RSPCA NSW to ensure the prompt reporting and investigation of breaches of regulatory compliance and cruelty allegations in regards to kangaroos and other wildlife.
- That the National Park and Wildlife Service make it mandatory for persons licensed to harm kangaroos to notify their neighbours, as far as is reasonably practicable, before they commence shooting.
- That the Department of Planning Industry and Environment, specifically including the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the NSW Police Force, work together to:
 - clarify the current investigation and enforcement framework in dealing with complaints concerning kangaroo shooting
 - establish a central database to receive, handle or refer complaints to responsible government agencies
 - ensure more satisfactory responses to complaints relating to kangaroo shooting.