

Submission
No 72

**INQUIRY INTO HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF
KANGAROOS AND OTHER MACROPODS IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Ms Katherine Love

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I am deeply concerned about the welfare of our unique wildlife in Australia, and I feel that our current government is not doing enough to ensure their survival. Due to climate change, scientific evidence shows us that the temperature will rise and there will be more fires. It is therefore vital that we stop all kangaroo culls and protect and preserve the land that kangaroos live on.

Even after the devastating fires of 2019/2020 where billions of Australian wildlife were killed, I am appalled that kangaroo culls and the commercial harvesting of kangaroos continues in almost all states in Australia, including NSW and the ACT!
Kangaroo harvesting and kangaroo culls must end in all states and territories. There is ample evidence to back this up:

Speaking at an anti-kangaroo culling forum in 2016, hosted by the Animal Justice Party, independent researcher Sheila Newman said the studies relied on to rationalise the cull were "narrow and mechanistic". <https://www.theage.com.au/national/act/doubts-over-kangaroo-culling-science-20160408-go1u5k.html>

University of Technology Sydney conservation biologist and [Director of the Centre for Compassionate Conservation](#) Dr Daniel Ramp said the evidence given for the justification of culling kangaroos did not stack up. "We've found that the science justifying the ecological decisions to the killing program did not hold up to the scrutiny based on peer-reviewed scientific literature." <https://www.theage.com.au/national/act/doubts-over-kangaroo-culling-science-20160408-go1u5k.html>

Ms Soxsmith adds that the government makes false statements about its kangaroo killing campaign. "Every year they lie when they claim they do it for environmental reasons. Every year they lie when they claim the killing is humane. This is just one more offence to add to an already long rap sheet. They want to mislead the public into believing the kangaroo population can sustain what is clearly an unsustainable killing rate, so that can get away with killing kangaroos any time and for any reason they want. For example, every time they want to ram a new development up to the fences of a reserve – which they seem to be doing quite routinely since the annual massacre began."
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6110203/misinformation-rife-over-unnecessary-kangaroo-cull/>

The annual slaughter of kangaroos is not for Conservation or to protect temperate grasslands or other species, since the kangaroos are not responsible for over grazing or driving other species to extinction.

Many politicians quote "threatened species" such as the legless lizard, as being a reason for kangaroo culls, but I, along with many other people in Canberra, remember this "excuse" being given to cull the kangaroos, and then housing developments being built on the exact land that the legless lizard habitat. Here's one just one example:

"They were looking for species (the legless lizard) – hidden under the cover of dense grass tussocks – that will be affected when the land is cleared for a new development due to be built in coming years".

<https://www.bushheritage.org.au/newsletters/2015/summer/chance-legless-lizard>

Dr Daniel Ramp states that "the argument kangaroo grazing has impacted the population of animals such as legless lizards is incorrect because there is evidence the reptile's populations can survive well in areas where kangaroos inhabit, so long as there is no pressure from humans". <https://www.theage.com.au/national/act/doubts-over-kangaroo-culling-science-20160408-go1u5k.html>

Dr Daniel Ramp goes on to say that, "There are populations of legless lizards doing perfectly well in areas where there are lots of kangaroos in Canberra" <https://www.theage.com.au/national/act/doubts-over-kangaroo-culling-science-20160408-go1u5k.html>

Politicians that I have emailed (Mick Gentleman) claim that research shows that kangaroo numbers have to be 'culled' to prevent 'high densities' of kangaroos impacting on other biodiversity, but the only **independent research** undertaken since the annual slaughters began (by CSIRO Plant Industries) shows that populations of up to three kangaroos per hectare **benefit** the biodiversity of ACT reserves. The alarming find to come out of this research was that effects of over three kangaroos per hectare could not be assessed because kangaroos were not found in higher densities on any Canberra reserves! That's because this government is allowing them to be slaughtered at a rate that is unsustainable! This government continues to ignore research from the CSIRO, which state that the culling of kangaroos in ACT nature parks and other grassland is unnecessary and is actually counterproductive.

“Having killed of the majority of kangaroos in the Canberra nature park, and with the grass growing under their feet, the government has resorted to cattle grazing, slashing, and mowing, as well as wide scale back burning, to reduce the risk of bushfire. And I think we can all guess what activity causes more harm to the environment”. **Philip Machin, Wamboin, NSW**
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6110203/misinformation-rife-over-unnecessary-kangaroo-cull/>

“Overgrazing” by kangaroos as another reason that is used for them for them to be “culled”. This is a completely absurd and almost laughable excuse to slaughter kangaroos! If “overgrazing” were really an issue, then the government would have to allow shooters to “cull” all of the sheep and cattle in Canberra (and Australia) as their grazing pressure on Australian grazing land is 95 percent (UNSW, CSIRO), whereas kangaroos only have a 5 percent grazing pressure on low intensity Australian grazing land. Sheep and cattle also outnumber kangaroos in Australia by 4:1, so you don't even have to be a mathematician to work out which animals are really responsible for “overgrazing” in Australia!

“The most ridiculous myth is that kangaroos damage the very environment that they have evolved over millions of years to live in”. <https://www.savethekangaroo.com/factsheet#:~:text=The%20Australian%20Government%20authorises%20the,market%20for%20meat%20and%20leather>

Another myth is the population explosion. Kangaroos are a slow-breeding marsupial with low reproductive rates. A kangaroo can only raise one joey to independence per year. Further to demolish this myth on over-population, [Australian Senator Lee Rhiannon states](#): “It is biologically impossible for kangaroo populations to ‘explode’. They are slow-breeding, slow-growing marsupials with 73% juvenile mortality. Kangaroo population growth sits at 3-10% in good years, with up to 60% crashes during drought. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-20/kangaroo-management-not-effective-say-greens/6162672>. Senator Lee Rhiannon also states that **extreme drought**, which we frequently experience in Australia, has a major impact on kangaroo numbers.

The killing of kangaroos during culls is definitely not “humane” either. As kangaroos spook very easily, they are therefore moving targets and a “humane” shot to the head would be almost impossible, even by the most experienced shooter. “Regardless of gender, shooters aim for the head, but kangaroos have small heads. With animals hopping in all directions, many are miss-shot and suffer horrendous injuries. Jaws are blown off, they lose

eyes, have arms/legs shot off and try to hobble away on one foot or suffer internal injuries". <https://www.savethekangaroo.com/factsheet>

The killing of infant kangaroos is also inhumane, with them either starving to death due to their mothers being killed, or their heads being smashed by shooters. In the 2014 ACAT hearing, a veterinarian who had been present at a previous ACT government "cull" was called by the government as an independent expert witness. He admitted under cross-examination that more than a third of the female kangaroos killed during the annual ACT "cull" would have dependent young at foot. According to his testimony, these youngsters do not qualify as either kangaroos or joeys and are therefore not killed but left to die. This is contrary to the ACT Code of Practice for the Humane Killing of Kangaroos and therefore would seem to breach both the Animal Welfare Act 1992 (<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1992-45/>) and the licensing conditions of the shooters engaged to kill the kangaroos. <https://www.animalsaustralia.org/features/kangaroo-killing-canberra.php#:~:text=In%20the%202014%20ACAT%20hearing,have%20dependent%20young%20at%20foot.>

"What happens when those does [kangaroo mothers] are shot before the shooter can get to the joey is that those joeys have scarpered off, the reality is that those joeys will die from starvation and if not from predation and that in a humane society can't be tolerated."

— *Dr Hugh Wirth, RSPCA, Landline 2002*

*'The problem with shooting and culling kangaroos is that when these animals are shot they often aren't killed and it is **extraordinarily inhumane**. If we were processing domestic livestock the same way we do kangaroos it would shut down immediately. **People would be just horrified**. I think we need to have that same empathy and understanding for kangaroos as we would a cow'.*

— *Terri Irwin, 'Kangaroo' the movie, 2017*

The Animal Welfare Act of 1992

(<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1992-45/>) states:

- (a) animals are sentient beings that are able to subjectively feel and perceive the world around them; and
- (b) animals have intrinsic value and deserve to be treated with compassion and have a quality of life that reflects their intrinsic value; and
- (c) people have a duty to care for the physical and mental welfare

of animals.

The annual kangaroo culls and the harvesting of kangaroos in most Australian states and territories, including NSW and the ACT are a **violation** of the Animal Welfare Act!

I'm also disgusted and appalled that my tax dollars go towards the annual slaughter of kangaroos in the ACT! At almost a million dollars a year, to employ park staff, consultants, and contract shooters! No wonder I can't sleep at night! When I go to work, the money I am earning is going towards the slaughter of kangaroos! These annual "culls" leave me stressed, anxious and unable to work.

Here's a table of the financial years 2015–2019 (this includes a breakdown of the total cost figures to incorporate the operational and labour cost associated with the Kangaroo Management for the financial years referred).

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
\$ Employee	548,048.29	626,671.43	686,455.27	592,768.85
\$ Non-Employee	308,623.29	88,674.05	168,567.12	300,891.66
\$ Total	856,671.58	715,345.48	855,022.39	893,660.51

<https://districtbulletin.com.au/goodbye-big-fella/>

Dr Stephen Pyne (author of the book "Fire") states that we are in an age of fire as well as an age of extinction. He predicts that fires in Australia will be more frequent and more intense. As 3 billion of our native animals perished in the 2019/2020 fire season, it's beyond belief that you would continue culling kangaroos in the ACT, knowing that many will perish during our annual fire season, and that these fires, along with the culls, could lead the Eastern Grey kangaroos towards extinction.

"The reason why kangaroos continue to be controversial in Australia is because we haven't yet found a way of managing landscapes that treat wildlife with compassion and empathy, and that's what we need to do. And by continuing to support this idea that killing solves problems is not going to resolve anything." <https://www.theage.com.au/national/act/doubts-over-kangaroo-culling-science-20160408-go1u5k.html>

I believe that the main reason kangaroos are being "culled" is so that the land can be cleared for housing developments, which are going up at an alarming rate, due to the growing population in the ACT and other states and Territories around Australia.

According to the Animal Justice

Party <https://citynews.com.au/2019/routine-kangaroo-cull-is-wrapped-in-lies/>, "The real reason for the kangaroo cull is for **votes**" (mostly from farmers and developers).

Please stop the inhumane harvesting of kangaroos and the annual kangaroo culls, otherwise we won't have any kangaroos left.

Sincerely,

Katherine Love