

Submission
No 109

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

Kangaroos need protection. They are vulnerable, fragile, sensitive and emotive. They are totems of the land. They belong in Australia but why is the government allowing the continuation of the world's biggest land based massacre of a native animal? They know that wildlife carers save macropod lives but allow commercial operators to make profits on killing mobs and destroying family structure. Colonialism is history so the time has come to make this open slaughter, this wet market genocide which is associated with colonial thinking, history too.

In January, 1985 I spent 2 months in [redacted] and surrounding areas in one of my first positions as a teacher. I was shocked at the callous attitude towards kangaroos in the area and was told that there were millions of them. I never did see millions, even though I travelled no less than a 125 km radius from [redacted] which included Goodooga, Weilmoringle, Carinda, Byrock and surrounding sheep stations and properties. I did however, travel late afternoon and into the night from [redacted] to Dubbo for resources and discovered that this is when most kangaroos were out and about- coming to the road at night time. I accidentally hit and killed a kangaroo who had suddenly jumped in the path of my car as I travelled less than 60 kms per hour into town.

I lived in a house where a 'roo shooter' also resided and happened to see his truck with all of its hooks and items of destruction. He told me about 'the chiller' that he used to drop off the dead kangaroos after a nights shooting. He told me that males and females were shot. I did wonder what happened to the dependent Joeys at the time.

I visited a number of sheep stations where the ewes were lambing and witnessed first hand the dust, the heat, the scorching sun, the death, the lack of shade cover and the terrible lack of respect for the lives of the animals and the destruction of the landscape. In my travels, I rarely saw kangaroos hopping, resting or going about their business during the day time which seems unusual since the land was barren and went on for miles with a few scattered trees here and there. Kangaroos would have been easy to spot here if there were the reported millions. I have recently heard that kangaroo numbers have predictably dropped considerably in this area. My experience in the 'outback' left me unable to stop thinking of the pain, suffering and persecution inflicted upon these animals by what I had experienced and witnessed for many years afterwards. I also didn't see many kangaroos in my travels to and from Newcastle and up to the Queensland border since. I thought then and continue to think now how the shooting of animals such as kangaroos at night time would be impossible to regulate since all the killing and maiming is occurring at night time by commercial killers and during the day by inexperienced hobby killers with guns. It would be impossible for them to make a direct head shot which would leave the wounded to die a painful and violent death, in front of his or her mob. There are no repercussions for the perpetrators, no rules or regulations to protect these beautiful animals.

Now that I am a city dweller, the only kangaroos I ever see are the animals that have been hit by a car and left to die on their own by the side of the road along the Northern Beaches Wakehurst Parkway and on the Motorway (M1) and roads leading up to Newcastle and Clarendetown. I sometimes hear one wallaby hopping away at night time at our place as we back onto a bushland fire trail. It greatly concerns me that in a country such as Australia where there are supposed to be many kangaroos- that I rarely see any kangaroos who are alive and in their natural habitat.

There seems to be a lack of transparency surrounding number counts and how counting is executed. How many kangaroos live on the Northern Beaches area for example or is the count on numbers of kangaroos a guess and thus the numbers from one area are extrapolated to cover all other areas?

One of my good friends once lived on a property in the _____ and I can remember her heartfelt account of the mob of Kangaroos who would visit her were one night gunned down by what sounded like semi-automatic guns... on her own property. In the morning there were maimed and injured kangaroos and one in particular who was pulling herself along with one arm hanging, unable to move. My friend didn't know whether commercial shooters or hobby killers were responsible for this massacre but what she did know was that she herself was not protected either.

This is the face of colonialism, the face of murderers who enjoy the kill and of a nation who have been brainwashed into believing that our Aussie icon, the Kangaroo whom tourists hope to see in the wild is a pest and an animal ready to take over the country at any moment.

A public education program is urgently needed to shine a light on the true nature of our native icon and to highlight the importance of the protection of a native species who is worth so much more alive than dead. Tourism is worth a lot more money than the relatively small commercial operations that are making huge profits from exterminating our national icon for unnecessary 'products'.

The commercial slaughter industry and private land holders must be regulated in their behaviours towards kangaroos. Kill licences must become a thing of the past and instead, kangaroos must be safely relocated to areas where they can live without persecution. Every landholder must be supported in the creation of an area of their land where it is mandated that Kangaroos and other native animals can live alongside and in harmony with their operations. Bushland must be retained and habitats restored across the country along with Kangaroo corridors and wildlife crossing structures if we are to avoid the wholesale annihilation of yet another native species who is quickly disappearing from the Australian landscape.