

Submission
No 113

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

Organisation: Australian Wildlife Society

Date Received: 19 April 2021



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The Director Portfolio Committee No.7 – Planning and Environment
Parliament House Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Correspondence via email: portfoliocommittee7@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Re: Inquiry into the health and well-being of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales

Dear Director,

Australian Wildlife Society, founded in 1909, is a national not-for-profit wildlife conservation organisation. We are dedicated to the conservation of Australian wildlife through national environmental education, advocacy, and community involvement.

According to annual survey data from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, the state's kangaroo population dropped by nearly forty per cent in five years. Red and grey kangaroo and wallaroo populations in New South Wales fell from 17 million in 2016 to about 10.5 million last year.

Below we address the key Terms of Reference:

1. Historical and long-term health and well-being indicators of kangaroos, and other macropods, at the local, bioregional, and state levels, including the risk of localised extinction in New South Wales.

No scientific studies have examined and compared the overall health of macropod populations throughout the state, and no studies have examined the historical health and well-being of macropod populations.

2. The accuracy with which kangaroo, and other macropod, numbers are calculated when determining population size, and how the health and well-being of populations is assessed.

Whilst macropod numbers are estimated using various methods such as fixed-wing aircraft; these methods are only effective in certain areas due to the nature of the habitat. These methods rarely incorporate numbers of adults, young at foot, or pouch young and hence may over or underestimate population numbers.

3. Threats to kangaroos, and other macropods, habitat, including the impact of climate change, drought and diversion and depletion of surface water sources, bushfires, land clearing for agriculture, mining, and urban development, and the growing prevalence of exclusion fencing, which restricts and disrupts the movement of kangaroos.

Whilst it is well documented that some macropods have increased in numbers due to the provision of water for stock, removal of these sources or diversion of water and how it impacts macropods have not been investigated. Limited studies have investigated urban development for some macropod species. The broader impact of agriculture, mining, and urban development have not been studied. Erection of exclusion fencing is unregulated and likely impacting macropods by restricting movement and may lead to genetic bottlenecks in some areas. The impact of the recent bushfires has been examined for some rare and endangered species but not those regarded as 'Least Concern'.





4. Current government policies and programs for kangaroo management, including the method used for setting quotas for kangaroo culling, the management of licences to cull kangaroos, and temporary drought relief policies and programs.

Government policies and programs for kangaroo management should be ever-evolving to compensate for population fluctuations. Hence, the numbers of kangaroos need to be as accurate as possible, and factors impacting those numbers investigated. Improved culling methods and euthanasia should be investigated, and training provided to ensure the highest level of animal welfare are maintained. When and how these policies are changed to account for population changes is essential to maintaining biodiversity whilst ensuring effective management of kangaroos.

5. Current government policies and programs regarding 'in pouch' and 'at foot joeys' given the high infant mortality rate of joeys and the unrecorded deaths of orphaned young where females are killed.

To best achieve population management ethically and maintain animal welfare at the highest levels must be informed by science. Policies need to be informed by accurate records of mortality rates for the numbers of pouch young and joeys at foot euthanised during population culls.

6. Regulatory and compliance mechanisms to ensure that commercial and non-commercial killing of kangaroos and other macropods is undertaken according to the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and other relevant regulations and codes.

How numbers culled are measured and recorded informs policy, hence in the field records need to be accurate. Allowable numbers need to reflect current situations in the field, hence numbers and impacts on populations need to be easily and effectively measured quickly to ensure compliance with the regulations and codes as well as the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

7. The impact of the commercial and non-commercial killing of kangaroos and other macropods, including the difficulty of establishing numbers killed by landholders since the removal of the requirement for drop tags.

How the numbers culled by commercial and non-commercial means are recorded, ensuring their accuracy needs to be addressed.

8. Current and alternative measures to provide an incentive for and accelerate public and private conservation of kangaroos and other macropods.

Population numbers will change overtime; hence the importance of conserving biodiversity needs to be widely disseminated and should be incorporated into any training regarding population management culling.

The Society encourages your strong support for this action and acknowledging the receipt of this letter, please.

Yours sincerely

Doctor Julie Old
PRESIDENT

