

Submission
No 152

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

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales Enquiry

c)iv) and h) Impact of Exclusion Fencing Which Restricts and Disrupts the Movement of Kangaroos

My family lives on 2 ½ acres, sharing a border with the Blue Mountains National Park.

About 1/4 of this property is zoned Bushland Conservation. When we moved here 17 years ago, our intention was to fence the whole property to establish gardens whilst observing the restrictions on the Bushland Conservation part.

Within days of moving here, we realized that we shared this property with lots of other creatures, including a mob of approximately 13 Eastern Grey kangaroos of both genders and a range of ages who came to graze on the grassed areas for hours most days.



Picture 1. Current male leader of our resident mob

We also observed the frequent visit of a pair of Pretty Faced Wallabies.

We realized that we could not fence the property because it would have an adverse impact on these roos, blocking their pathways and feeding areas. So we did not fence the property and **would like to make sure that this property is never fenced.** Our neighbor has not fenced his property either. The roos come to their feeding ground via the same paths, made by generations of roos, through our properties.



Picture 2. Roo path through our adjacent properties

We also realized that we would not be able to have dogs as they would be threats to the roos. (We don't regard these as sacrifices but as strict observance of the rights of the other nonhuman residents of this property.)

We have observed over the last 17 years, that female kangaroos come to this property each year for that crucial time when their joeys start venturing out of the pouch for the first time.



Picture 3. Joey and mother. The joey has been venturing out of the pouch for one day. Kangaroos are very affectionate with their young and, to a lesser degree, with other adults. Young joeys are very joyful and play. Our joeys chase our chooks around!

We had 3 does come for this purpose this year. **This is because they are familiar with us and know they are safe, that there is food and drink and no dogs.**

We would like to make the recommendation that properties adjacent to parks have zonings which either:

*** prohibit the property being fully fenced, allowing for only small areas to be enclosed for vegetable / specific gardens**

or

*** if the property is fully fenced, then an unfenced corridor, of at least 4 metres all around the perimeter of the property be officially incorporated, never to be violated by future human development which detracts from the following intention:**

ensuring kangaroos free movement between their feeding / watering / breeding areas.

c)ii) Bushfires

Since the bushfires, the size of our resident mob has decreased from about 13 to eight. However, we have noted that our resident does have three babies this year between them (normally two).

There has not been a return of the Pretty Faced Wallabies.

During the drought and fires, we provided hay and water for our resident roos and other desperate nonhuman refugees. It was obvious by their poor physical condition, how much they relied on this extra help.



Picture 3. Roo drinking from birdbath during fires. Please note, no grass due to drought

h) Current and alternative Measures to Provide an Incentive for and Accelerate Public & Private Conservation of Kangaroos

My family, and friend, _____, a local resident also passionate about kangaroos, are advocating the following measures for accelerating the conservation of kangaroos:

- when councils (in our case, Blue Mountains City Council) issue rate notices, include a survey form, for the ratepayer to voluntarily fill in and return, seeking information about the

wildlife that they have observed on their properties. A pre-paid envelope could be included to further encourage participation.

The ratepayer may not know the names of the species they observe: the survey could direct the ratepayer to a council website which details, with pictures and descriptions, common and uncommon species of the region.

This survey fulfills two main purposes:

1) As the surveys are returned to councils, these councils, in collaboration with the NSW State Government, could then make informed, intelligent decisions about how to integrate the rights of both humans and animals to live fulfilled lives in NSW.

2) Ratepayers would be encouraged to actively look for nonhuman inhabitants on the property and perhaps, take an active interest in, not only learning about them but actively supporting their wellbeing.

- When a council issues a 149 Certificate, they could include an information sheet on the wildlife the property purchaser is likely to be sharing the property with and how the purchaser can protect the wildlife and the homes of the wildlife, and also what official protection laws the property purchaser must observe. The information sheet could urge the purchaser to consider not fencing the whole of the property, so that animals can move freely, and instead just have smaller enclosures for vegetable / specific gardens.
- Local newspapers (in our case, the Blue Mountains Gazette) could have a weekly column solely dedicated to kangaroos and other wildlife in their regions. Content could include:
 - information about how to encourage wildlife in backyards
 - how to protect wildlife from cats, dogs and feral animals
 - rare bird spotting
 - annual report of results from the surveys [see above]
 - personal experiences

- interviews
- monthly competition for best kangaroo / wildlife photo
- etc., etc.....the content is endless

If these above, and similar, steps are taken, we would see a shift from the current predominant ignorance about and consequent neglect of the needs of kangaroos and other wildlife which is causing their populations to deplete, to residents and policy-makers making educated choices which uphold the rights of nonhuman individuals to live happy, peaceful, free-to-travel lives, as we humans expect to live ours.