

**Submission
No 176**

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

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I am a Wildlife carer of thirty years, specialising in the care and rehabilitation of kangaroos and wallabies. I also rescue these animals and I drive hundreds of km to do these rescues. I cover a vast area of northern and central western NSW to perform these rescues. I am very familiar with the country and the animals who live there. I am also very aware of the cruelty, torture and destruction whole populations of these animals by shooters(both professional and recreational) ,vehicle strikes and exclusion fencing. I have joeys in care now from all of these events. I've had thirty years of caring for kangaroos and their young from these events! Add to that the prolonged and devastating drought and fires out here, as they, in themselves, have had a catastrophic impact to entire populations of kangaroos out here. To say joeys are killed humanely by professional shooters is untrue. Ive had many joeys in care as a result of these shootings. One especially comes to mind. She was found in a paddock after people heard shooting on a neighbouring property the night before.A small velvet joey(meaning she was just growing fur) There was trauma to her neck so I took her to the Western Plains zoo vet clinic. On examination it was found the she had a herniated cerebellum. The result of blunt force trauma to her head!! She was euthanised at the zoo. They had shot her mum ,dragged her from her mums pouch and hit her head on something. She was then left in the paddock to either freeze to death or be predated on but she was still alive that morning. Ive lost count of the hundreds of joeys I've cared for as a direct result of shooters. Another joey fell out of her dead mums pouch from the back of the ute her mum was hanging from. The car behind the ute stopped and collected the joey then called me. I have many, many more horror stories like these. During the drought I did many trips to Collarenebri, Walgett and Brewarrina.. I saw many dead and dying kangaroos and Emus hung up in these inhumane exclusion fences. I saw the aftermath and carnage when these animals were herded out and onto the roads between these country towns. Roads for miles littered with bodies from trucks and road trains travelling through. These animals were trying to survive the drought. They were either cut off from food and water within the fence lines or were driven off the land and onto the roads to meet horrendous ,violent deaths hit by trucks. These fences are many kms long and are now on both sides of many roads out here in western NSW. Kangaroos have a home range of ten square kms. They travel around this range at different times of year. They know every pad, path and track. Every water source, every tree and rock within this range. Joeys are constantly imprinting these things as they travel about with mum in the pouch. They will know their home

range intimately by the time they emerge from mums pouch. It's part of their survival, their complex social infrastructure. It's a part of their very being. When we interfere by fencing off part or all of their home range we not only prevent them from accessing food and water, we fracture and isolate whole families. When we shoot the great Alpha males we not only create chaos when younger males have no role model, we then put females and young at risk from these younger males who have no one to keep them in line. Small joeys learn from these Alpha males too. I have seen these great males "babysitting" joeys until mum comes back from a drink. The joeys will mimic the males behaviour. Just as in our society, kangaroos need a leader, a protector and a teacher. I know this because I've studied them and their behaviours for many years. Since the drought has ended there are not the joeys coming in as were in pre drought years. There is hardly any road kill (a sign of what's about). There are no kangaroos out grazing at dusk and dawn and visible as once before. I travel many kms still but now I'm looking for them. Not to rescue but just to try to see if they are still there as before. They are not there!!! I suffer now from mental and emotional trauma and sheer exhaustion as a result from the fires and drought. Inherent cruelty I see on an almost daily basis and I do despair for the future of these wonderful animals. Thirty years of carnage. It makes me heartsick. These animals now are on the brink. Out here now there is a silence from their absence and its deafening.