

Submission
No 214

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

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(a)

I am very concerned about the decimation of kangaroo populations that seems fuelled by the financial incentive of the commercial industry and the intolerance of the agricultural sector. The slaughter shows no concern for the deep and complex family/mob bonds and to my knowledge there has been no studies into the impact of shooting and stress on mob structure and success.

(b)

I fear that it is greatly influenced by the commercial industry for financial gain. There is persistent propaganda about kangaroos being pests despite their unique adaptation to this environment over millions of years. I feel that they are persecuted for being social, with footage of large mobs being used as 'proof' that they are over abundant when, in fact, you can see a large mob and then no other kangaroos for hours of driving in the country.

(c)

Kangaroos are being decimated by shooting, bushfires, drought, poor water management, exclusion fences, roads and urban development. It is incredibly sad and distressing.

(d)

I believe it is far too easy to get authority to harm kangaroos and alternative measures have not been adequately explored. In cases of landlocked kangaroos there must be appropriate opportunity and support for macropod experts to translocate the mob according to best practice methods. It is very easy to get permission to harm kangaroos and extremely difficult to get permission to help them. This has been abundantly obvious in the case of a Victorian landlocked mob called the 'Kinley Kangas' who were set to be culled until the community uproar halted the killing. A group of preeminent macropod experts stepped in and put enormous pro bono effort into a best practice translocation proposal yet many months later they still have not received permission for translocation and the matter remains shrouded in bureaucracy. This is the attitude toward kangaroos, simply cull the inconvenient wildlife and don't entertain any other options that demonstrates their lives have value. This is an out-dated attitude to wildlife which should be treated as inherently valuable rather than disposable.

(e)

I find our treatment of joeys an absolute national disgrace. It causes me great distress to know mothers and babies are being slaughtered and left to suffer. It demonstrates a callous disregard for the sensitive and loving bonds between mother and baby that makes Australians seem brutish and cruel. It is truly heinous and disturbing and makes me ashamed to be Australian.

(f)

Given kangaroos are shot in the wild at night by lone gunmen I would say that the compliance is absolutely inadequate. There should be mandatory oversight, filming and reporting by animal welfare advocates, or better yet just ban the disgusting practice.

(g)

I believe we are decimating our priceless native wildlife in a manner that demonstrates pernicious colonialism which shames us internationally. We are quick to condemn other countries for their treatment of wildlife yet don't reflect on how abhorrent we appear to others given our kangaroo industry constitutes the worlds largest terrestrial wildlife slaughter.

I also believe kangaroo slaughter constitutes a major health risk. The CDC estimates 75% of new and emerging diseases are zoonotic, including our current pandemic, so trading in bushmeat seems irresponsible in the extreme.

(h)

I would like to see government subsidised programs working with landholders to harmoniously integrate with wildlife and find non-lethal methods of resolving perceived difficulties with kangaroos. Similar programs are run in Africa with regard to big cats.

I would also like to see large nature preserves set aside as wildlife parks in a similar manner to Kruger National Park. There can be small tourist camps with the idea that tourists have info booklets and drive slowly around the park trying to spot and tick off free ranging wildlife. There could also be guided night drives and indigenous cultural experiences, including education about the importance of wildlife to indigenous Dreaming by someone like Aunty Ro Godwin. I think this would be a huge success that would put a financial value on living wildlife.