

Submission
No 224

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

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In 2018 I displayed this photo (supplementary file #1, leaping kangaroos, on Facebook. I gave it this caption: "This is part of a big herd that hangs out in the fields and open forest across from the town dump in Kleinton. We'd see them pretty regularly up to about a year ago, not so much lately. (photo by Sandra Willis)" My brother, a doctor in Tennessee, who hasn't been to Australia, commented: "This would make a fantastic video!" I replied: "It's already fully in motion, video would be redundant!" then added: "The land in the picture is now (July 2019) for sale, tall grass mowed down, trees thinned out—no more leaping kangaroos to be seen, probably ever. So the banner photo Sandra took 5 or 6 years ago, around the corner from where I've been living with her since 2016, is no longer a proud & happy advertisement for my new homeland, but just another sad, empty memorial to another magic place fading into memory and myth. (Who'd ever believe these great bouncing beasts were not only much more remarkable and bizarre than unicorns, but also much more real, and not even uncommon?)

Still lots more magic than anywhere else I've lived, but watching it fade, dissolving into money, is pretty grim." The pain of seeing the natural wonders of Australia, especially the marvellous animals, being nonchalantly diminished and discarded, was a major factor in my very reluctant decision to return to America after a few years.

The devastation is worse here in America, but you'd think a big young country like Australia, with such fragile ecosystems and such smart good-hearted people, would be willing to learn from our example and avoid our mindless errors.

Most other countries with vast natural areas still more-or-less intact are faced with overwhelming socio-economic problems, extreme poverty, internal turmoil and too much political chaos to maintain a rational decision-making process let alone develop a consensus for long-range far-sighted land-use planning that will make sense fifty or a hundred years hence.

Australia is blessed with a sacred opportunity to conserve its share of Creation. Future generations will look back with horror and contempt if this opportunity is tossed aside.

