

Submission
No 239

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

Organisation: Australian Wildlife Protection Council Inc and Coalition for the
Protection of Kangaroos

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Health and Wellbeing of Kangaroos and Other Macropods in New South Wales – Parliamentary Inquiry April 2021

**Joint submission by the Australian Wildlife Protection
Council (AWPC) and the Coalition for the Protection of
Kangaroos (CPK)**

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INTRODUCTION

AWPC and CPK is pleased that the Senate Committee recognises the importance of protecting native macropods. As groups with combined extensive experience in advocacy, rescue, care and rehabilitation of Kangaroos and Macropods, we welcome the opportunity to input to the development of an informed and factually based animal welfare policy for one of this country's national treasures – the Kangaroo.

For decades Kangaroos have been maligned and persecuted. AWPC and CPK welcomes this inquiry as an opportunity to bring about much needed urgent reform of policies governing the treatment and protection of Kangaroos and other Macropods.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

AWPC and CPK Recommend

1. That the Committee recommend the commercial killing of Kangaroos in NSW be banned.
2. That an independent evidence based transparent audit be undertaken urgently to accurately determine actual Kangaroo populations across NSW.
3. That should any Kangaroo Management Plan be deemed necessary that it is subject to the findings of Recommendation 2.
4. That the Committee reject The National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes as being inhumane and unenforceable.
5. The responsibility for the protection of Kangaroos be removed from the Department of Planning Industry and Environment and given to an agency dedicated to wildlife protection.
6. That the Committee recommend a review of legislation governing the rights of individuals impacted by the killing of Kangaroos.
7. That an independent, scientific and evidence based review be undertaken of the classification of Kangaroos as “pests”.
8. That the Committee recommend a review of existing tourism policy with the aim of protecting Kangaroos for the purpose of generating increased social and economic benefit.
9. That the Committee recommend increased government support for wildlife carers and rescuers.
10. That the Committee consider the extreme cruelty of the acts perpetrated against Kangaroos and their young, and the implications of what are essentially government enabled and promoted cruelties, and how these cruelties to animals impact levels of domestic violence in the state.

PARTIES TO THIS SUBMISSION

The Australian Wildlife Protection Council

The Australian Wildlife Protection Council (AWPC), established in 1969 by Arthur Queripel, is a voice for Australia's wildlife and for all Australian species. Its aim is to protect our native animals from cruelty and exploitation,

The Coalition for the Protection of Kangaroos

The Coalition for the Protection of Kangaroos was formed in 2016 with the aim of influencing government policy to bring about improved welfare outcomes for kangaroos including an end to their commercial slaughter.

Together we aim to:

- a) raise awareness of Kangaroos and their importance as precious native wildlife;
- b) bring an end to the commercial slaughter of Kangaroos;
- c) promote the management of Kangaroo populations in a sustainable, humane and non-lethal manner; and
- d) advocate for an informed approach to how humans can co-exist with Kangaroos harmoniously.

CONTEXT OF SUBMISSION

Australia leads the world in mammal extinctions, and a new wave of endangerment of Australian species is occurring because of climate change (for which, the impacts on wildlife are obvious). Government has become increasingly aggressive in allowing the killing of wildlife, and cultural attitudes, many of which have been created by marketing and various other campaigns, are denigrating Australian species, specifically Kangaroos.

Australia's iconic Kangaroos are hunted in the largest commercial slaughter of land based wildlife on the planet. Over 90 million Kangaroos and Wallabies have been lawfully killed for commercial gain in the last 20 years¹.

In 2012 the Australian government allowed up to 5.2 million Kangaroos and Wallabies to be commercially hunted². More have been and will be killed for non-commercial purposes such as damage mitigation and recreational hunting. This cruel slaughter is tolerated because of a false perception that Kangaroos are a 'pest' and a 'sustainable resource'.

Kangaroos symbolise Australia. They have existing here for over 14 million years – long before we arrived. We use their face and name to promote our major airline carrier, national football codes and we put them in sanctuaries to promote tourism. We rightly consider them as native wildlife worth protecting and give them such status under legislation.

Yet perversely we subject them to appalling discrimination by hunting them down and cruelly slaughtering them and their joeys for pet food and body part profits. We unjustly label them as pests and allow land owners to kill them, often inhumanely, when we perceive they are “intruding” on our space.

Australia wide, the idea of pest status, the attempt at denigrating wildlife for the benefit of commercial exploitation, mean that attitudes towards Kangaroos today, are not much different from the early colonial period, when Kangaroos and other wildlife were killed in very large numbers. We need to consider very carefully the implications of colonial type attitudes, reinforced by government, on remaining Kangaroo populations. This means that permits or permissions, and the reasons these are issued or given, to kill Kangaroos for purposes of damage mitigation, also require close scrutiny and a comprehensive review of what has occurred.

Government and industry claims of over-population of Kangaroos are false and are not supported by independent studies. Modelling used to estimate Kangaroo numbers is seriously flawed and is resulting in overinflated numbers which in turn is being used by industry and government to justify the killing.

¹ Australian Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Kangaroo Statistics – 6 January 2012 <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-trade/wild-harvest/kangaroo/kangaroo-statistics.html>.

² Australian Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Quotas 2012 – 6 January 2012 <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-trade/wild-harvest/kangaroo/quota/2012.html>.

As a result of what is occurring, kangaroo populations are being destroyed region by region by “commercial” culling, ill-informed self-interested landowners and ignorant bureaucrats and the mass killing continues regardless of circumstances. This is no more so than in NSW where even the government’s own inflated population estimates show a decline in the population of Kangaroos in NSW of over 25 per cent when compared to the previous year. Perversely (and this demonstrates the flawed methodology used to calculate population estimates), Victoria, which also experienced the devastating fires in the summer of 2020, claims Kangaroo populations increased by over 40 per in 2021.

The rate of decline of Australian mammal extinctions will only continue with predicted increases in droughts and climate change. The relatively recent devastating bushfires across NSW, Victoria and SA are evidence of this. These fires have reportedly wiped out over three billion wild Australian animals, including an estimated 5 million Macropods, and the scale of these events are likely to result in the populations of a significant number of species being so impacted that they are dangerously close to extinction. Even these catastrophic events have had little or no impact on the mindsets that allow the unsustainable slaughter of Kangaroos and other macropods.

In this context, and due to questionable population survey methodology, the pet food industry and the wider commercial culling of Kangaroos, puts at risk the future of Kangaroo populations across Australia. To allow the commercial slaughter of Kangaroos and Wallabies to continue under these dire environmental conditions is unconscionable and irresponsible.

Properly informed policies regarding the protection and “management” of Kangaroos are long overdue and urgently needed if we are to see Kangaroos survive into the future.

We assert that:

- commercial killing of Kangaroos is inherently cruel and must stop;
- modelling used to determine Kangaroo populations is flawed which has resulted in inflated Kangaroo population estimates, which in turn are being used by industry and government to justify the killing;
- an independent evidence based audit must be undertaken urgently to accurately determine actual Kangaroo populations across NSW;
- the Codes governing the commercial killing of Kangaroos have been, and always will be impossible to monitor and enforce and hence animal welfare will always be compromised;
- there is a clear conflict of interest in the same government department (i.e. Department of Agriculture) developing policies and promoting the commercial killing of Kangaroos, while at the same time being responsible for the protection of these animals. The protection function for Kangaroos needs to be given to a separate agency;

- pest status of Kangaroos is misinformed and unsubstantiated and needs to be withdrawn; and
- that governments in Australia, including the NSW Government, have a duty of care to protect the nature of Australia, including Kangaroos, and should not be engaged in promoting persecution of these animals nor their slaughter.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT BY FIRST NATION REPRESENTATIVE

Our first nation's people also are appalled by the ongoing slaughter of kangaroos.

The following statement was prepared by Aunty Ro Mudyin Godwin³ specifically for this submission.

"When the white man took the first steps upon Country it marked the beginning of the death and destruction of Country, Wildlife & Indigenous Culture. With these first steps came the poisonous infectious disease of Colonialism. The White man wasn't here to share or learn, they were here to take. And to this day we see that narrative continuing.

The Commercial Kangaroo Killing Industry, a White Government legislated industry, the core of which is founded in Colonialism, in racism. This industry thrives on the destruction of Culture, Wildlife, Ancestral connections. With every kangaroo and joey slaughtered for the Commercial Kangaroo Killing Industry, so too our spiritual connection to Country is slaughtered.

It wasn't enough that the Settlers of this once pristine Country mass slaughtered Indigenous peoples, it wasn't enough that they took body parts of our people, tools, bones to the other side of the world as trophies, no, that wasn't enough. That behavioural pattern that caused so much distress continues today, no lessons have been learned, in fact they repeat themselves ad nauseam and without care, with it seems, deliberate intent. We see that clearly in the Commercial Kangaroo Killing Industry. Millions of Kangaroos continued to be gunned down, a mass indiscriminate slaughter industry built on barbaric unhinged behaviour and lies that flies in the face of Indigenous Culture. Many of we Indigenous people hold Kangaroo as a Sacred Totem Animal.

The body parts of this Sacred Totem Animal the Kangaroo, this animal slain every night, taken, stolen, removed from this their Ancestral Home, transported for profit around the world on the lies of Government and a marketing platform of propaganda.

The spiritual connection between the Sacred Totem Kangaroo, country & indigenous peoples, destroyed, yet again. The spirits of these animals unable to rest. The spirits of those gunned down, for nothing more than profit NEVER able to rest. Just as happened so many years before, with the slaughter of Indigenous people, the slaughter of the Thylacine history repeats itself, over and over again, those repeating this history proud of themselves in doing so. Our spiritual connection to our Ancestors to our Totem Animal destroyed. Song lines, dreaming tracks, the interconnectedness of Country that the Kangaroo is essential to, destroyed. The distress caused to many of we Indigenous people ignored as long as a profit is made. Our inability to teach future generations about Sacred Totem Animal destroyed as more and more kangaroos are gunned down across vast areas of this OUR ancestral home. Millions of Kangaroos have died at the hands of murderers, the killing done for profit, the web of lies used to

³ Indigenous Educator, Freelance Journalist.

market this industry enables more to die, the spiritual unrest itself will reach a tipping point. It always does and future generations will look back on this industry in utter disgust just as many look upon it today in utter disgust.

This slaughter must stop, this deliberate destruction of Culture must stop. Enough damage has already been done, but sadly not enough damage has been done to satisfy some”.

Indigenous Elder Yuin Man Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison also stated:

*“The Kangaroo is an important part of this nation that they call Australia. Kangaroos have been here for millions of years. This is their land. They are the first Australians”
(2020 NAIDOC Week)*

ADDRESSING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Commentary on historical and long-term health and wellbeing indicators of Kangaroos, and other Macropods, at the local, bioregional and state levels, including the risk of localised extinction in New South Wales.

The commercial killing of Kangaroos in NSW

Four species of Macropod, the larger Kangaroos, are part of the commercial trade in wildlife occurring in New South Wales (NSW).

The species are the Red Kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*), the Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*M. giganteus*), the Western Grey Kangaroo (*M. fuliginosus*) and the Eastern Wallaroo (*M. robustus*). These Kangaroos are killed for commercial purposes within fifteen commercial Kangaroo shooting zones. Killing Kangaroos for commercial purposes is currently prohibited within National Parks and other reserved areas in NSW.

These commercial shooting zones are:

1. Tibooburra
2. Broken Hill
3. Lower Darling
4. Cobar
5. Bourke
6. Narrabri
7. Armidale
8. Coonabarabran
9. Glen Innes
10. Upper Hunter
11. South East
12. Griffith North
13. Griffith South
14. Central Tablelands North
15. Central Tablelands South

Licences to kill Kangaroos in NSW

The license types to kill Kangaroos in NSW are currently:

- Commercial Harvester (Kangaroo) Licence;
- Animal Dealer (Kangaroo) Licence;
- Animal Dealer (Kangaroo skin) Licence; and
- Non-commercial Licence to harm Kangaroos – these Licences are issued in all commercial zones.

Since August 2018 carcass tags have not been required for Kangaroo carcasses in NSW under the non-commercial licence. Commercial tags are currently required for Kangaroos killed commercially in NSW. Recreational shooting of Kangaroos is encouraged by the NSW Government.

NEW SOUTH WALES IN CONTEXT WITH NEIGHBOURING STATES

The history of commercial shooting zones developed to kill Kangaroos in Australia has seen a pattern of temporary closures of zones as local populations have been shot at levels where drastic declines, even collapses in local populations, are inevitable.

The continual attempts to open up new shooting zones and expand existing shooting zones are a feature of what has occurred around the country as populations of Kangaroos are depleted, zone by zone. Victoria, and its seven new shooting zones are an example, as is the pressure to allow the industry into the coastal regions of NSW.

Prey switching, attempts to add new species to the commercial trade in wildlife, has recently occurred in South Australia, and is a symptom of serious declines in those species already on the commercial list. So South Australia, by its actions, demonstrates clear evidence of local extinctions - the expansion of zones and the adding of three new species to the commercial list. Six species of Kangaroo and Wallaby are now killed commercially in South Australia, the Eastern and Western Grey Kangaroo, The Sooty Kangaroo from Kangaroo Island, The Kangaroo Island Tammar Wallaby, the Red Kangaroo and the Euro. Remarkably, populations of the newly added species in South Australia already looked at risk and two of the new species were severely impacted by the fires of 2019-20.

Evidence of the impact of commercial and non-commercial killing in South Australia can be seen in the population statistics for that State over the past several years. Their published management plans show that, in 2020 the estimated Red Kangaroo population in all commercial zones in South Australia (including the expanded zones as of 1 January 2020) was 1,178,888, a decrease of 24 per cent from the previous year total of 1,552,679 and 24 per cent lower than the long-term survey data average of 1,545,893 (1999-2019 data from model estimates). The estimated population of the Western Grey Kangaroo in all commercial zones (including the expansions to Mallee and Yorke Mid North sub-regions but excluding Southern Agricultural region) is 846,127, a 22 per cent decrease from the 2019 population estimate of 1,085,193 and 28 per cent below the long-term average of 1,180,479 (1999-2019 data from model estimates). The population in the new Southern Agricultural zone is estimated at 208,811, a decrease of 24 per cent from the 2019 population estimate of 276,183. These figures are indicative of what can and is occurring to Kangaroo populations in NSW.

What is also clear is that in all places where Kangaroos are killed at scale for commercial gain, including NSW, that large male Kangaroos are the first to be killed. This has a devastating impact on mob structures, and because of the scale of what is

occurring (that is, the unnatural skewing of populations in terms of sex, age and size), there will be a resultant severe genetic impact on future generations.

The accuracy with which Kangaroo and other Macropod species numbers are calculated when determining population size, and the means by which the health and wellbeing of populations is assessed.

The Federal and NSW governments assert that all kangaroo species approved for limited commercial population management are widespread, abundant (with a population in Australia of 42 million in 2019) and none are endangered or under threat from extinction. The Commonwealth Government Department of Agriculture currently claims an Australian population of Kangaroos targeted commercially as being 50 million⁴.

Government and industry claims of over-population of Kangaroos are false and is not supported by independent studies. Modelling used to estimate kangaroo numbers is seriously flawed and is resulting in overinflated numbers which in turn is being used by industry and government to justify the killing.

An indicator of the disaster for Kangaroo populations now unfolding in NSW we need only to look at the government's own management plans to discover what has occurred in the state's shooting zones. Here are just two examples; for the Grey Kangaroos in the Tibooburra shooting zone the government's population estimate for 2016 for this species in this zone was 451,594. By 2020 the population estimate had fallen to 6,859 – a decline of a massive 98%. For the Red Kangaroo in the Cobar shooting zone the population estimate in 2016 was 437,129, by 2020 the population estimate was 102,480 – a decline of 76%. These are extreme declines in population and recovery back to something resembling a normal population of these animals will take decades and that's only if the slaughter is stopped.

The claims from the NSW government staff presiding over these terrible circumstances are that the collapse in Kangaroo populations is due to drought conditions and disease. We dispute these claims and place mismanagement and the overstated population estimates, resulting in quotas that are completely unsustainable, at the forefront of these terrible declines. For example, if drought was the cause for these collapses in population, then why are the declines in populations not as great in adjoining shooting zones in NSW?

One common feature across Australia where commercial killing of Kangaroos occurs is that the percentage of the quota actually met are typically very low. This has been particularly a feature of what has occurred in NSW.

For example in 2020 (when despite the dire climate conditions and catastrophic fires) quotas actually went up when compared to the previous year and, only then to fall dramatically in 2021. The percentage of the year's quota achieved by mid-November 2020 for Western Grey Kangaroos was just 10 per cent, for Wallaroos just 11 per cent, for Eastern Grey Kangaroos just 17 per cent and for the beleaguered

⁴ <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/kangaroo>.

Red Kangaroo, just 14 per cent. To explain away the total failure to achieve quotas, each and every year the industry and its government supporters claim that quotas are not met because they are being environmentally conscious. The reality is that quotas are not met, because the Kangaroos are not there in the numbers used to calculate those quotas in the first place – a reflection of vastly overstated kangaroo populations estimates. The reality is that the industry will take every animal it can get.

This is a dangerous pathway for both Kangaroos and government because, by continuing to exaggerate population numbers as populations undergo significant decline, the probability is that the NSW Government will get to a point where it will have to admit that Kangaroo populations are so depleted that the commercial industry cannot continue. The smaller the actual populations, the faster this will occur.

The solution is to undertake an independent audit of Kangaroo populations in NSW to give a far more accurate picture of what has occurred to Kangaroo populations in the state.

Adjoining states and territory

Australian wildlife does not recognise state borders. So it is critically important to understand what is happening to kangaroo populations in adjoining states. What has happened in the adjoining states should send alarm bells ringing in NSW. We have discussed South Australia briefly so it will be useful to describe what has occurred in Victoria and Queensland.

For Victoria, the population numbers for the commercially targeted Kangaroo species is thus; the commercial industry (as a trial) commenced in Victoria in 2014 and without any understanding of Kangaroo populations in the state. The trial was completed by late 2019 and the full industry commenced at that time. The first population survey was conducted in 2017 and included three species, the Red and the two Grey Kangaroos.

The 2017 population estimate for these species was 1,442,000. Since 2014, up to and including 2021 the government will have issued permits (commercial and non-commercial) to kill 1,213,111 Kangaroos, a number that excludes joeys which are also killed as “collateral damage”. Add to this the countless kangaroos that perished in the catastrophic fire in 2019-20.

So if we include the killing of joeys and the Kangaroos which perished in the worst fires in Victoria’s colonial history, we get to a number of 1,523,111 supposedly dead Kangaroos in the period since 2014, more than the 2017, 2018 and 2020 population estimates for these species. In 2021 we suddenly get a population estimate (for the Greys only) of 1,911,550, a population increase of over 40 per cent over the previous survey. That is, a population increase of Grey Kangaroos in Victoria of well over half a million animals over the previous year estimates (2020) and the previous survey (2018), despite the catastrophic fires of 2020 and the very large number of permits being issued to kill these animals.

For Queensland, the most recent population survey which sets the quotas for 2021, and put the population of Queensland's commercially killed Kangaroos at – for the Red Kangaroo 4,135,700 (quota 673,050 – 16.3 per cent) – no quota for Central South; for the Eastern Grey Kangaroo 10,043,400 (quota 1,087,450 – 10.8 per cent) – no quotas for Central South and Central North and for the Wallaroo 2,484,750 (quota 220,650 – 8.9 per cent) – no quota Central North, even though the trigger point to stop commercial shooting (population decline) has been reached in Central South there is still a quota of 8,100 Wallaroos in this zone. By the end of 2020, the highest number of tags sold as a proportion of quota was 100 per cent for Wallaroos in the Central Zone, the actual killed for this species, in this zone was 77.9 per cent of the available quota.

For Queensland, the data from dealer returns, entered up to 5 February 2021, shows that there were 514,144 Kangaroos killed commercially and sold, representing 18.2 per cent of the overall quota, the majority of the killing traditionally occurring in the Central Zone. Of the 514,144 Kangaroos killed for commercial purposes in Queensland in 2020, there were 200,779 Red Kangaroos, 263,409 Eastern Grey Kangaroos and 49,956 Wallaroos killed for commercial gain.

According to figures supplied to the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy, Queensland populations fell from a high of 32,803,900 in 2013 to 20,999,900 in 2018. The total population of the three commercially targeted species in 2021 is estimated to be 16,663,850.

So for the three adjoining states we see a pattern, very similar to NSW, of exaggerated population estimates, constant propaganda about exploding populations (even when government's own figures show the opposite is occurring) and overstated quotas which go largely unfulfilled.

The commercial killing of kangaroos is the largest land-based wildlife slaughter on earth, kills more unweaned young than any other country and is as shameful as the Japanese whale slaughter and the Canadian seal hunt.

As a leading environmental scientist puts it⁵:

“The government, the industry and the media cannot describe the Kangaroo industry in Australia as “sustainable” if no-one knows how many animals have been/are being killed. Note that as well as the damage mitigation and commercial killing, some states have “recreational” permits, and no-one even tries to guess how many kangaroos are shot illegally, or how many die in fences and on roads every year – these factors are ignored by “harvest” models”.

At this rate Kangaroos are headed for extinction.

⁵ Ecologist R Mjadwesch.

The ACT is also worth a brief mention. While there is no commercial trade in Kangaroos in the ACT, Kangaroo populations have declined dramatically in the last fifteen years because of the mass killing of these animals in nature parks and reserves and adjoining farmland.

The ACT seems to be a leader in developing policies that continue to push the limits of what is being done to Kangaroos, what is 'lawful', what levels of cruelty are acceptable and what rates of killing can be tolerated. As elsewhere, numbers are exaggerated and current killing rates are a very long way from sustainable. All of it driven by concocted ideologies and complex reasoning for destroying the native animals that belong in these landscapes where they have existed for millions of years.

Particularly terrible aspects to the treatment of Kangaroos in the ACT include a policy that Kangaroos and their joeys MUST NOT be rescued and rehabilitated if they are injured in the ACT and that Kangaroo meat can be used as a vector for 1080 poison. There are very substantial fines for Canberra residents protesting the Kangaroo slaughter on their doorstep and, as in other parts of Australia, the people who care about wildlife have few or no rights. This is hardly democratic conduct. There is a clear lack of wildlife corridors between nature parks and reserves in the Canberra Park system, the lack of which creates road safety issues and the death of a large number of Australian animals across a range of species as they try to cross the major roads intersecting the parks. To add to this, exclusion fencing is now being used to exclude wildlife from significant areas within the nature parks.

Threats to Kangaroo, and other macropod species, their 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, the growing prevalence of exclusion fencing which restricts and disrupts the movement of Kangaroos.

We should understand that the "value" of Kangaroos is that they are a keystone species in maintaining ecosystems, despite a series of claims to the contrary, claims which are generally nonsense and constructs to justify the killing. Kangaroo populations are now under such threat that, as a keystone group of species our concerns should be focussed on the ecological damage being done by the absence of kangaroos in the landscapes of New South Wales.

The commercial exploitation of kangaroos is not the only way these animals die. They are killed for claims of damage mitigation, on roads and of diseases and other illnesses caused by introduced weeds and climate change amongst other causes.

There are ever fewer and fewer places where kangaroos can exist and this fact increases pressure on already fragmented populations. Exclusion fences are a step too far for many species of wildlife. Inside the fences kangaroos and emus are killed on mass. Outside the fences, they are excluded from food and water and shot by thrill seekers. All of it intensely cruel.

Climate change is a key driver of biodiversity loss and Australia, despite the rhetoric, has performed poorly in relation to developing effective climate change policy. Australia's climate policies have largely been driven by vested interests are inconsistent and can be described as generally lagging many other developed countries. These shortcomings in our climate policies are having a significant impact on wildlife and the natural infrastructure that sustains us all.

Recent droughts, floods, heat and fire intensity is the best evidence of Australia's lack of concern about the environment and the climate. . Australia's target of a 26 per cent reduction of 2005 GHG emission levels by 2030 is currently on track for only a genuine 7 per cent reduction (that is, without previous target carry-over "credits" being considered) in 2030. Poor policies mean there continues to be limited action in transport, existing buildings, industrial processes, wastes and agriculture National Greenhouse Gas Inventory (NGGI) sectors. The Climate Change Performance Index, used by Climate Change Tracker, found that the best performing countries are Sweden, Denmark and Morocco, and the worst performing are Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and the US. New Zealand was ranked 34 and Australia 53 of the 58 countries assessed.

If Australian fossil fuel exports are embedded into emissions it is likely that Australia's global share of emissions is somewhere in the region of 3.3 per cent.

Unless governments in Australia take urgent action to address climate change wildlife populations will remain at great risk and we can expect more extinctions in the months and years moving forward. It is this very fact that makes the continued persecution of Kangaroos so unconscionable.

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, temporary drought relief policies and programs.

Conflicts of interest are rife and how decisions are made regarding the killing and commercial use of Kangaroos needs careful review. The welfare and conservation of Kangaroos must be administered by an agency, with a prime responsibility to conserve wildlife populations and not to destroy them. NSW is a very long way from this basic principle of duty of care to the natural world, with the Department of Planning Industry and Environment having responsibility for kangaroo conservation and commercial culling.

How licenses are issued and to whom is a very significant issue. One of the key threatening processes for wildlife and the environment more generally across all states and territories, are the cultures within government. That is, politicians who either don't know or don't care and government departments and their bureaucrats who endlessly defend and facilitate the mass killing of wildlife. This reflects on governance and management standards and processes. All this leaves the people in our communities who care about their wildlife without rights, and that extends to even defending their own livelihoods and investments from the kind of behaviours that are commonplace in regional NSW and beyond.

The impact of Kangaroo slaughter on wildlife carers and regional Australians

We are also concerned about those people who are involved in the rescue and care of wildlife, including Kangaroos, and their treatment by government departments. In some states, the treatment of wildlife carers, who are mostly self-funded volunteers, is abysmal. Also, the level of or the lack of support, including financial support, from governments who see some of our carer community as a nuisance and an obstacle to the agenda of mass scale killing of wildlife, needs to change. Greater respect for carers is essential and this is also a matter of governance.

Also of concern are those Australians living in regional Australia who witness and are often harassed by the killing activities conducted by governments and industry. Because of state based legislation there are almost no avenues to complain about these horrendous acts occurring on their doorstep. We have heard many such stories from individuals whose houses and children have been hit by shot from hunting activities and from those witnessing the butchering of Kangaroos from their properties. These are the animals that they have come to love.

Current government policies and programs in regards to '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.

Among the closest relationship in the animal world is the relationship between mother Kangaroo and her joey. This is a tactile and loving relationship and the pouch is central to this. This is plainly evident to anyone. . This is why the killing of joeys, along with their mothers, is one of the most abhorrent of all cruelties to animals anywhere in the world and significant efforts are made by both government and industry to downplay the extreme cruelty involved in relation to this aspect of Kangaroo killing.

There is also a vast amount of evidence that at-foot joeys are left to die of starvation or predation after their mothers are shot, adding yet another dimension of extreme cruelty to this industry.

The government promotes the idea that two methods are suitable for the killing of unfurred pouch young, these are cervical dislocation and decapitation. Since unfurred young (with closed eyes) are considered by the government to be still in a state of unconsciousness (and therefore not capable of experiencing pain). This is clearly nonsense as are the claims that these methods are unlikely to cause suffering and are therefore considered acceptable”.

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.

The Codes governing the commercial killing of kangaroos have been and always will be impossible to monitor and enforce and hence animal welfare will always be compromised. The killing occurs out of sight, generally in remote places and remains largely unsupervised. The ‘dead’ Kangaroos have a number of body parts removed, including their heads, a gruesome dismemberment. These body parts

have typically been left in the paddock or bush where they can be found by residents or tourists.

There is no practical way the code can be supervised or enforced and it would be too dangerous to do so.

A key issue remains the use of the word humane to describe the intensely cruel methods proscribed in the code. There is nothing humane about the commercial exploitation of Australia's Kangaroos.

Euthanasia Methods in the Code

The Code's endorsement of what is considered "humane" euthanasia methods of pouch young and at foot joeys are highly dubious and questionable and would likely fail scientific interrogation.

The code states:

"The two methods suitable for the euthanasia of unfurred pouch young are cervical dislocation and decapitation. Since unfurred young (with closed eyes) are considered to be still in a state of unconsciousness (and therefore not capable of experiencing pain), these methods are unlikely to cause suffering and are therefore considered acceptable".

It is known that decapitation and cervical dislocation do not render immediate unconsciousness in numerous species. Instead, they are considered painful procedures and conscious awareness is likely to persist for anywhere from 8 to 43 seconds or longer⁶

The Code justifies the use of these methods for unfurred pouch young by arguing that "marsupial young" may not have the capacity to experience pain, given they are neurologically immature at birth.

This claim is referenced to two scientific studies that assessed responsiveness to painful stimuli in Tammar Wallaby joeys (*Macropus eugenii*). Importantly, the Tammar Wallaby is not subjected to commercial shooting, and there is no direct evidence to support the notion that the various kangaroo and wallaby species which are commercially killed in Australia are unable to experience pain before developing fur.

⁶ Bates G (2010) Humane issues surrounding decapitation reconsidered. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, **237(9)**: 1024-1026. 1026.

Erasmus MA, Lawlis P, Duncan IJH & Widowski TM (2010) Using time to insensibility and estimated time of death to evaluate a non-penetrating captive bolt, cervical dislocation, and blunt trauma for on-farm killing of turkeys. *Poultry Science*, **89**: 134-1354.

Kongara K, McIlhone AE, Kells NJ & Johnson CB (2014). Electroencephalographic evaluation of decapitation of the anaesthetized rat. *Laboratory Animals*, **48(1)**: 15.

The Code also states with respect to killing of joeys that an acceptable method is to:

“hold the young firmly by the hind quarters and then swing firmly and quickly in an arc so that the joeys head is hit against a large solid that will not move or compress during the impact (e.g. the tray of a utility vehicle)”

While it is possible that a “firm and accurate blow” would cause immediate insensibility in joeys there is no publicly available evidence to demonstrate that swinging a joey and smashing their head against a utility vehicle does **reliably** cause a firm and accurate blow and by extension, a quick and painless death.

The Code fails in its purpose to ensure the humane euthanasia of kangaroos and their young. There is no evidence which supports the Code’s claim that the methods of joey euthanasia (cervical dislocation, decapitation and blunt force trauma under field conditions) is humane.

The reality is that the Code cannot be supervised and current inhumane practices will continue and history demonstrates this.

An update to the *National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes (the Code)* was released on Wednesday 18 November 2020. The protections for Kangaroos were further weakened by this update.

The purpose of these codes of practice in relation to Kangaroos in Australia are twofold:

1. to legitimise extreme acts of cruelty which would otherwise be illegal by negating animal cruelty legislation; and
2. to create the impression for consumers, particularly overseas consumers, that Australia’s trade in wildlife, in this case members of the Kangaroo family, is humane and is closely managed for compliance, nothing could be further from the truth.

While we do not agree with the mass slaughter of kangaroos, AWPC spent several days preparing a submission for AgriFutures to attempt to moderate the extreme cruelty and evident dishonesty.

AgriFutures, the organisation responsible for the update of the national code (Federal Government funded) took precisely no account of what we had suggested, our submission was completely ignored, never acknowledged and we were not informed of the publication of the new code.

So a long established Australian charity and its members were treated with complete contempt by the individuals preparing the Code update.

When the commercial industry is criticised a flurry of strategically developed, perhaps with Commonwealth Government funding, marketing spin appears in the media. This disinformation is peddled by the Kangaroo industry, by governments and by farmers as well as a range of interest groups. The Country Women's Association in Victoria is one of many organisations to be promoting the idea of kangaroo plagues (this while many women do not support the industry, nor the mass killing). All this carefully thought through marketing, which is in affect propaganda to denigrate Kangaroo species to make the killing and cruelty look justified in the public eye.

The impact of this to promote more killing and callous cruelty by individuals who are likely to have no understanding that a code of practice exists, however useless it might be.

The impact of 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.

Competition between the commercial Kangaroo industry, land holders and recreational shooters has intensified in NSW, directly as a result of government policy. This makes any form of so called 'management' of Kangaroo populations impossible. To suggest otherwise would be highly irresponsible and frankly dishonest. The killing rates, 'legal' and illegal, are amplifying the problem of assessing populations and managing governance issues. The levels of extreme cruelty have also risen in line with this competition.

The free for all of Kangaroo killing and cruelty now occurring in NSW makes it impossible to estimate Kangaroo populations in the broader landscape as they may have now completely vanished from locations where population forecasts are describing significant populations of kangaroos. The further weakening of regulations around tags means that it is now far harder to make assessments than previously.

It is clear that as the boundaries of what is being done are pushed to ever further extremes, without any successful opposition and significant support from government, behaviours that were completely unacceptable 20 years ago, are now a daily occurrence.

This is particularly so, as now many of the public believe the marketing spin. So the gloves are off and anything goes, resulting in extreme and unsupervised acts of cruelty, rapid declines in kangaroo populations at the local level, leaving the government with no hope of properly understanding the dimensions and impacts of the slaughter.

AWPC and CPK also care about the devastating impact the commercialisation and other killing of wildlife has on so many people. For example, the all too often thoughtless and irresponsible behaviour of government, does not consider the impact of its cruel policies on many people who live in regional communities where wildlife still exist.

Many residents do not want to see the wildlife around them slaughtered in the many disgraceful and cruel ways in which this now occurs. While, at the same time a recent Federal Government Department of Health report promotes the health benefits to hunters of killing animals by hunting, which is nonsense of course, while not one thought is given to the danger, abuse, grief and loss, anxiety, damage to people and properties, done by the extraordinary act of allowing both shotguns and high powered rifles to be used to kill a range of native animals.

The current and alternative measures to provide an incentive for and accelerate public and private conservation of Kangaroos and other Macropods.

The great tragedy for Kangaroos, for the Australian population and visitors to regional Australia, is that the denigration of Kangaroo species, in order to justify a cruel and unsustainable industry, is so entrenched in the Australian psyche that repairing the reputation of these animals is going to be both a complex and difficult task.

This is however a task that must begin now or we risk losing the kangaroo from many more parts of regional Australia. The loss to date has been great and destroying those things that are truly Australian, Australian animals are just one aspect of this process, and replacing them with animals from somewhere else will alter our landscapes beyond repair.

Given the attitudes promoted by the government and the Kangaroo industry it has become difficult for people living in regional areas of NSW who want to conserve kangaroo populations on their land. The social pressures not to conserve these animals can be very powerful and can and do lead to abuse.

This brings in a disinterested police force, highly prejudicial government employees, this goes right up the management structure of the NSW public service.

Those who cared about the conservation of species probably long gone from government employment, replaced by promoters of the killing with absolutely no concerns for those attempting to conserve Kangaroo populations. Worse still, this 'chain of command' includes senior politicians in both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments, intent on killing as many Kangaroos as possible, while adding further disinformation and confusion to the task of introducing proper conservation activities.

So these things need to change. A review of government departments and responsibilities in relation to kangaroo conservation and management should be an outcome of this inquiry.

The industry, with the exception of a few 'business owners' is low paid, effectively piece work for the shooters who are finding it harder and harder to source 'product'. There are far better ways of developing a regional economy than killing wildlife. This is evident in Africa as it is in Australia.

Promote Nature Tourism Not Killing

Wildlife is a huge tourism draw card for Australia and Kangaroos and Koalas are on top of the list of what tourists want to see.

While the value of the Kangaroo killing industry is relatively low (its economic contribution should be properly investigated as the industry also delivers significant negative impacts, including on regional tourism businesses) the value of knowledge based tourism, including nature tourism, is far higher.

What we do know is that the Kangaroo industry has been around for decades and has not delivered any noticeable economic benefit to the regions where it operates. So while many agricultural and pastoral regions are places of low incomes and often associated with out-migration (or low in-migration), particularly of people in their early thirties. These regions are often at a loss as to how to attract younger people and the prospect of working in the commercial industry exploiting wildlife, with all the appalling tasks and very low incomes that accompany this work, has not been one of them.

Domestic tourism is a form of consumption which generates income in the same way as any other domestic expenditure.

Tourism shifts income between regions, with several important flows, including from all regions, but particularly the metropolitan suburbs, to resorts; and more generally, from all regions but particularly the higher-income metropolitan suburbs, to metropolitan centres interstate, often to attend sporting or cultural events.

This report of Kangaroo killing in a major Victorian tourist town is evidence of the damage to regional lives and livelihoods:

“Decapitated, disembowelled and left to rot. Kangaroo carnage at a Victorian holiday hotspot has horrified residents, visitors and tourism operators. WARNING: GRAPHIC IMAGES. Tourism operators and residents in the holiday town of Dunkeld were horrified when dozens of kangaroos were shot in the dead of night, then decapitated, disembowelled and left to rot in fields close to homes. The animals’ heads, tails, paws and entrails were left behind, alarming visitors and residents of the popular tourist hotspot at the southern edge of the Grampians National Park. The mobs are one of the attractions of the area, with many cottages and retreats highlighting the opportunity to meet the roos”⁷.

What we note from the numbers is that the very regions where the Kangaroo industry dominates the landscapes are among those regions most likely to miss out on expenditure from tourists (at a meaningful level). The main reason for this is the lack of imagination in developing tourism products and the lack of a proper understanding (or cultural will) of the possibilities of knowledge based value added tourism for the regional economy. So we are not only shooting Kangaroos here, we are also shooting ourselves in the foot, and probably both feet.

⁷ Sunday Herald Sun, 14 December 2019.

The tourism industry requires inward investment for infrastructure so as to provide a high quality experience for tourists. The benefit of this infrastructure also flows to locals. It is effectively the seed from which to grow a range of business sectors in the regional context. The Kangaroo industry cannot match this benefit and is likely to have a negative impact which is general and depressive in nature. We believe that over the next few years tourism is likely to bounce back as a bright spot in the Australian economy and the regions and States which plan for this creatively will be the beneficiaries.

The experience of nature based tourism developments in regional NSW would flow particularly to Australians and in terms of volumes and values, those from larger urban centres, would be most numerous and likely also to spend the most on their visit.

The other impact these types of regional tourism developments would generate are higher levels of visitation to the regions by international tourists. The figures show that historically the majority of expenditures by international tourists are restricted to a relatively low number of regions, major cities being the major beneficiaries of the international tourist dollar. The opportunity here is to bring a greater share of tourism expenditures to regional NSW through nature based tourism activities.

Currently the NSW mindset is to destroy the natural world on which we all depend.

So a significant change in thinking and planning is required if sophisticated and long lasting regional economic development is to occur. These changes, will however, prove to be worth the effort.

There are broader benefits which flow on from the marketing and branding opportunities that a conservation type approach to Australian wildlife will create. The opposite is now occurring as Australia's appalling treatment of its wildlife is now causing reputational damage, particularly in Europe and the US, where there are a number of actions that oppose what is occurring, particularly the extreme cruelty towards native animals and Australia's poor record of species conservation and action on climate change.

So the opportunity is to do something far more positive for us all, less violent (which also has its social and human health impacts) and a learning opportunity for all Australians, particularly the young. Australian wildlife is central to that opportunity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AWPC and CPK assert that:

1. The commercial killing of Kangaroos is the largest land-based wildlife slaughter on earth, kills more unweaned young than any other country and is as shameful as the Japanese whale slaughter and the Canadian seal hunt.
2. Kangaroo populations are being decimated by the commercial and non-commercial killing of kangaroos. If allowed to continue Kangaroos will be headed for extinction.
3. The ongoing slaughter of Kangaroos will have increased detrimental impact on nature and wildlife eco systems.
4. The commercial killing of Kangaroos is inherently cruel and must stop.
5. The lack of effective policies to address climate change and the attendant issue of fire, drought and flood will further put at risk Kangaroo populations.
6. Modelling used to determine Kangaroo populations is flawed which has resulted in inflated kangaroo population estimates, which in turn is being used by industry and government to justify the killing.
7. The National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes has been, and always will be impossible to monitor and enforce and hence animal welfare will always be compromised.
8. The National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes fails in its purpose to ensure the humane euthanasia of Kangaroos and their young. There is no evidence which supports the Code's claim that the methods of joey euthanasia (cervical dislocation, decapitation and blunt force trauma under field conditions) is humane.
9. There is a clear conflict of interest in the same government department (i.e. Department of Planning Industry and Environment) having responsibility for promoting and overseeing the commercial killing of Kangaroos, while at the same time being responsible for the protection of these animals.
10. The pest status given to Kangaroos is misinformed and unsubstantiated.
11. That governments in Australia, including the NSW Government, have a duty of care to protect the nature of Australia, including Kangaroos, and should not be engaged in promoting persecution of these animals nor their slaughter.
12. That there is much greater social and economic gain to be had from protecting Kangaroos for nature based tourism than that which comes from Kangaroo killing.

AWPC and CPK Recommend:

1. That the Committee recommend the commercial killing of Kangaroos in NSW be banned.
2. That an independent evidence based transparent audit be undertaken urgently to accurately determine actual Kangaroo populations across NSW.
3. That should any Kangaroo Management Plan be deemed necessary that it is subject to the findings of Recommendation 2.
4. That the Committee reject The National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes as being inhumane and unenforceable.
5. The responsibility for the protection of Kangaroos be removed from the Department of Planning Industry and Environment and given to an agency dedicated to wildlife protection.
6. That the Committee recommend a review of legislation governing the rights of individuals impacted by the killing of Kangaroos.
7. That an independent, scientific and evidence based review be undertaken of the classification of kangaroos as “pests”.
8. That the Committee recommend a review of existing tourism policy with the aim of protecting Kangaroos for the purpose of generating increased social and economic benefit.
9. That the Committee recommend increased government support for wildlife carers and rescuers.
10. That the Committee consider the extreme cruelty of the acts perpetrated against Kangaroos and their young, and the implications of what are essentially government enabled and promoted cruelties, and how these cruelties to animals impact levels of domestic violence in the state.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: HOW POPULATION ESTIMATES ARE PERCEIVED

In 2001 the Australian Government claimed that for just four 'harvest' species (species of Kangaroo subject to a commercial trade in wildlife are declared 'harvest' species) the population in the four major mainland states where these species exist and were part of the commercial trade in wildlife in the zones where they are exploited was 57,430,026. The species were the Red Kangaroo, the Eastern Grey Kangaroo, the Western Grey Kangaroo and the Wallaroo.

Here is what happened in Queensland to one of those four harvest species, the Eastern Grey Kangaroo. Out of the total population estimate for 2001 for Australia of 57,430,026 animals, 37,574,300 were from Queensland, of which 22,891,800 were Eastern Grey Kangaroos. That is a lot of Eastern Grey Kangaroos in one state and Queensland's share of the total Kangaroo population for these four 'harvest' species was 65.4 per cent.

Despite the endless claims of booming populations and the ever increasing places in which Kangaroos were being killed as a result of these claims, by the time we get to 2011 the Australian Government estimates for these four species in the four states was 34,303,677, again Queensland's reported share of these animals was high at 59 per cent. This leaves a total population for the rest of the three Australian mainland states 'harvesting' Kangaroos for these four species at 13,958,434.

Despite some of the most appalling drought conditions on record and the mass killing of Kangaroos across a range of 'legal' and illegal mechanisms the 2018 population of these species was estimated at an improbable 42,000,000.

Now for a reality check. At the beginning of November 2019 the Queensland Government announced that it would stop Kangaroo harvesting for 2020 for the Eastern Grey Kangaroo in the central (shooting) zone, both northern and southern parts of this zone (this is a vast area in Western Queensland stretching 1500 kilometers from above Richmond in the north to the New South Wales border in the south, and stretching west along the New South Wales border to the South Australian border). There is also a ban for the gentle and persecuted Wallaroo, which has now been driven to the edge of extinction in Victoria.

For New South Wales in 2017 here are the Kangaroo quotas v actual (proportion) set by its government and by region. For the Eastern Grey Kangaroo the proportion shot from the available quota is in a range of 1 per cent to a maximum of 30 per cent of the quota (highest was in Upper Hunter in the Northern Tablelands Zone, which has been running since 1991), with an average across the zones of 8% of the quota for this species.

For the iconic Red Kangaroo the range was from 3 per cent to 12 per cent of the quota, the average of quota take for this species was 9 per cent.

For the Western Grey Kangaroo the range was from 2 per cent to 9 per cent of the quota, the average of quota take for this species was just 5.7 per cent. For Wallaroos, no quota in 11 of the 14 shooting zones, with very low numbers counted with an average of 27 per cent of the quota shot in the operational zones.

Victoria, new to the industry (banned in the state in 1982) in its extensive and recent Kangaroo surveys shows the Victorian Government were able to count just 23 Red Kangaroos and 2,607 Grey Kangaroos (both Eastern and Western Greys) In 2017 and in a much more extensive survey in 2018 they counted just 104 Red Kangaroos and 4,609 Grey Kangaroos (again this figure includes both Eastern and Western Grey Kangaroos).

To conceptualise these often quoted and vastly exaggerated population estimates think about this.

Taking the 2001 figure of 57,430,026 for the four 'harvest' species Kangaroos. For the four species and in four states discussed here we are saying that giving population equivalents (swapping people for Kangaroos) that somewhere in these four states there should be the equivalent of eleven cities the size of Sydney plus one around the size of Brisbane, cities populated by just four species of Kangaroo. Or as an alternative, we can imagine one greater Tokyo with its 38 million Kangaroos plus another 20 million or so in four Sydney sized cities.

These numbers are simply not credible.

APPENDIX B: COMMERCIAL CULLING IS CRUEL AND UNJUSTIFIED

A multi-million dollar meat and skin industry⁸ has been built on the suffering of our country's most beloved native animal. However this industry hides behind the guise of the demand for pet food. In fact there is increasing evidence that the culling of Kangaroos is not about pet food but is being driven by a more hideous industry – the selling of kangaroo skins and other body parts.

According to THINKK, the think tank for kangaroos at the University of Technology Sydney, the “harvesting” of kangaroos is the “largest commercial killing of land based wildlife on the planet.”

The Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare concluded in its 1988 report into the killing of Kangaroos that, "To some extent, cruelty to Kangaroos has become institutionalised through the system of Kangaroo management."⁹

Because Kangaroos are shot in the wild and at night¹⁰, when they are most active, the cruelty associated with the slaughter of Kangaroos is largely hidden from the public eye.

The National Code of Conduct for the Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes requires commercial shooters to shoot the animal in the brain to achieve an instantaneous death. However in reality non-fatal body shots are an unavoidable and common occurrence resulting in horrific and painful injuries.

Data collected by RSPCA Australia in 2002 from meat processing plants indicated that 120,000 (or 4%) of Kangaroos were mis-shot, while Animal Liberation NSW data from chillers (holding facilities for carcasses) indicated that over one million kangaroos (or 40%) may have been mis-shot annually between 2005 and 2008.¹¹ The lack of industry monitoring would suggest the figures may be far worse.

A vivid picture of the types of injuries that occur is painted by the words of a former commercial kangaroo shooter:

"The mouth of a Kangaroo can be blown off and the kangaroo can escape to die of shock and starvation. Forearms can be blown off, as can ears, eyes and noses. Stomachs can be hit expelling the contents with the kangaroo still alive. Backbones can be pulverized to an unrecognisable state etc. Hind legs can be shattered with the

⁸ John Kelly, Kangaroo Industry Background (July 2008) - Kangaroo Industry of Australia <http://www.kangaroo-industry.asn.au/morinfo/BACKGR1.HTM>.

⁹ Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Kangaroos 1998 (8.2).

¹⁰ Glenys Oogjes “Band-Aid Code Will Not Stop Joey Cruelty – Only An End to The Practices Will Do That” – Kangaroos Myths and Realities (Australian Wildlife Protection Council 3rd Ed 2005) 110.

¹¹ Ben Ami, Boom, Boronyak, Townend, Ramp, Croft, Bekoff “The Welfare Ethics of the Commercial Killing of Free Ranging Kangaroos: an evaluation of the benefits and costs of the industry” – 2014.

*kangaroo desperately trying to get away on the other or without the use of either. To deny that this goes on is just an exercise in attempting to fool the public."*¹²

To make the slaughter even more barbaric, joeys of the slaughtered adults are considered "collateral damage". Under the "National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies" furless joeys can be discarded by blunt force trauma to the base of the skull then decapitated. Furred joeys should be killed with a blow to the head.

In its 2014 report into the industry¹³ the Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC) confirmed that cruel and inhumane practices were widespread in the kangaroo industry. This is of no surprise to animal welfare organisations given the nature of the killing - in remote areas at night without any effective regulatory authority oversight, and involving the inherent risk of missed brain shots and the killing of pouch young and at foot joeys of the females killed. Researchers witnessed harvesters stamp on furless joeys and larger joeys swung against rocks, utility van racks and trays or clubbed to death with iron bars. This amounts to nothing less than legalised government sanctioned animal cruelty. If any other animal was subject to this treatment charges would be brought for animal cruelty.

Even worse, "at foot" joeys that are not caught and killed in accordance with the Code of Practice are tragically left to die of starvation, hypothermia or predation as they need their mother's milk every three hours up to 18 months of age.

On a 10 year average, it is estimated that 800,000 dependent joeys are killed as collateral damage of the kangaroo industry each year.¹⁴ This does not include the joeys killed as a consequence of non-commercial shooting.

¹² David Nicholls "The Kangaroo – Falsely Maligned by Tradition" in Maryland Wilson and David B Croft (eds), *Kangaroos Myths and Realities* (2005) 38.

¹³ SR McLeod and TM Sharp (2014) "Improving the Humaneness of Commercial Kangaroo Harvesting", <https://www.agrifutures.com.au/product/improving-the-humaneness-of-commercial-kangaroo-harvesting/>.

¹⁴ Ben Ami, Boom, Boronyak, Townend, Ramp, Croft, Bekoff "The Welfare Ethics of the Commercial Killing of Free Ranging Kangaroos: an evaluation of the benefits and costs of the industry" (2014) 23 (1) *Animal Welfare* 1,5.