

Submission
No 243

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

Organisation: Bush Heritage Australia

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Submission

In response to:

Inquiry into the health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales

Prepared by
Bush Heritage Australia
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For further information on this submission, please contact:
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Bush Heritage Australia

Bush Heritage Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation, protecting over 11.3 million hectares of ecologically important land for the benefit of nature and all Australians. Operating nationally, Bush Heritage has an interest in and influence on the protection of our native species and natural landscapes. We work primarily in 19 priority landscapes that cover a vast and diverse subset of Australia's human and environmental communities.

Within these areas we are focussed on restoring natural ecosystem health and the viability of native species both on our reserves and across the broader landscape. Aside from carefully managing our own land, Bush Heritage takes a collaborative approach to land management and biodiversity protection, engaging and working with others, across sectors, to protect natural assets at a landscape scale. Bush Heritage is involved in significant species recovery programs across Australia, working with Traditional Owners, other not-for-profit organisations, farmers, governments and universities. Bush Heritage is supported by more than 35,000 active donors and over 1000 volunteers.

Bush Heritage's mission is to Return the Bush to Good Health. Bush Heritage is committed to the conservation of all native species and the welfare of all plant and animal species found in the landscapes in which we work. Some of Bush Heritage reserves are in mosaic landscapes where high nutrient availability and artificial water points can contribute to macropod population peaks that are not sustainable in the natural environment. Artificial, extreme high density of Macropods in Australia presents a significant risk to the viability of landscapes under our management by exerting unsustainable grazing pressure and thereby potentially compromising the conservation and welfare of all plants and animals for which we are accountable.

Health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales

Bush Heritage operations are evidence-based, founded in science, evaluated by peers and the results shared to drive best practice conservation across Australia. Impact monitoring and management of total grazing pressure is undertaken on a consistent basis on all relevant Bush Heritage Reserves. Macropods have been demonstrated to contribute significantly to this grazing pressure. Bush Heritage considers and employs a range of management options for reducing grazing pressure including exclusion of neighbouring livestock, water and landscape management, conservation fencing, and translocation, fertility control, deterrence, and finally, lethal control of macropods.

Bush Heritage understands that when total grazing pressure increases to unsustainable levels, starvation stress can have significant welfare implications on individual animal welfare and cause dramatic population decline. Many species which are dependent on the same habitat may suffer a similar population crash, with concomitant implications for animal welfare on a large scale. Macropod Management is important to mitigate these identified welfare issues.

Bush Heritage regularly reviews and investigates new and emerging methods available for humane population management and is acutely aware of the welfare and environmental cost of taking no action in the face of artificially high populations.

Bush Heritage actions are evidence-based, founded in science, evaluated by peers and the results shared to drive best practice conservation across Australia. Accordingly, we have a strict internal approval process that determines how macropods are managed. This process requires stringent adherence to the organisation's animal welfare policies and procedures which have been developed through consultation with experts in the field, universities and the RSPCA. Lethal management is only undertaken once a full scientific assessment has been completed and it is clear that the macropod population levels put both environmental health and animal welfare at risk, and approval has been gained by managers at multiple levels in the organisation. Even so, lethal population will only be undertaken under strictly controlled conditions:

- Lethal control of macropods is considered only if there is documented evidence that the populations are unsustainable and thus threatening conservation values and animal welfare, and other options have or are expected to fail;
- All management actions comply with the relevant National and State legislation and Codes of Practice, and with relevant Bush Heritage Policies;
- All management actions are undertaken using the highest animal welfare standards to achieve the maximum conservation benefit and welfare outcomes for all species;
- Staff and visitor safety and well-being is a critical consideration in all management decisions;
- We acknowledge macropods can be culturally significant to the Traditional Owners of the lands we manage and we will engage with and include Traditional Owners cultural considerations in management;
- Where possible, management actions should be undertaken collaboratively with other land-managers and regional groups across the wider landscape to maximise the effectiveness of Population Management.

Sincerely,

Heather Campbell
Chief Executive Office
Bush Heritage Australia