

Submission
No 252

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

Name: Ms Patricia Campbell

Date Received: 27 April 2021

Partially
Confidential

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Our Ref: 1459096, 1461970,1471413, 1471652, 1485913

Your Ref:

27 April 2021

NSW Parliament
Portfolio Committee No 7 – Planning and Environment

Submission via email:
Portfoliocomittee7@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Members of Portfolio No 7

Re: Health and wellbeing of Kangaroos and other macropods in NSW.

Introduction

I am an individual that has been involved in witnessing dog attacks on Kangaroos over the last three months at my residence in South Grafton in the Clarence Valley Council area..

I am a registered nurse that has been working for NSW Health since 1996 until 2020. I now work as a Registered Nurse for a home care provider. I also am a volunteer at a local animal shelter, known as Happy Paws (Tindall Road Eatonsville NSW 2460) , where I attend on a regular basis the looking after of cats and dogs that are to be rehome. I have a strong love of native wildlife and am fortunate enough to have land at the rear of my house that has no doubt been home to kangaroos for decades, even centuries. This land is lot number 686 and the DP number is 715384. The land was sold by the Clarence Valley Council in 2018 August as a private sale with a view to development of a gated community with up to 45 homes. It is in a natural gully and has been a home for up to 40 kangaroos at a time.

In the 2019-2020 fires that were rampant across Australia, the Clarence Valley too was engulfed by flames, smoke and destruction. Many of the kangaroos (I saw up to 55) sought shelter in this area behind my house. Myself and other neighbours throughout the bushfire season and prior to that in the droughts left troughs of water and suitable food for the mob of kangaroos that sought shelter there.

Terms of reference addressed:

- 1(c)(iii) – Threats to habitat by urban development,
- 1(e) – Morality rates of orphaned joeys,
- 1(f) – Non-commercial killing under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act*¹ and other regulations

Issues that I believe are having an impact on health and wellbeing of Kangaroos and Macropods:

¹ *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW).

Dog Attacks

Terms of reference 1(c)(iii), 1(e) and 1(f).

Since the start of this year, I have witnessed dog attacks on Eastern Greg Kangaroos (Kangaroos).

Below is some of incidents that I have witnessed.

26 January 2021

At approximately 8 am I was on my veranda and heard another neighbour, Julie across the paddock (Lot 686 DP 715384) screaming that dogs were attacking kangaroos in the paddock. Julie yelled out that they had already killed one, as we later saw (pictures one and two separate attachment) was a female and her joey and then I watched as they attacked and killed another young male kangaroo.(pictures three and four separate attachment). The joey was still in the pouch of the female when it was killed by the dogs. There were five dogs involved in the attack, two black mastiff cross, one Rottweiler, one tan and one marbled brown and cream (mastiff cross) (pictures The land is an extension of Bob Lilliard Park and borders Peppermint Place, Roberts Drive, Silverton Street, Blanch Parade, Rushforth Road and Bimble Avenue, South Grafton. The dogs did not bark which my neighbour, who had grown up in Narrabri and was familiar with dogs used for hunting pigs, indicated could be pig dogs. The dogs continued to roam around the property, myself and my neighbour yelling at them , two of the dogs came near my fence and seemed to be

As it was Australia day (public holiday) I contacted the Police for assistance (which did not attend) and Clarence Valley Council (CVC) after hours Rangers and also spoke with WIRES to report the incident. . I had left my number with both the police and rangers but had no contact with them on the 26/1/21 Ranger phoned me on the 27/1/21. I explained the incident, and let the ranger know I was extremely concerned at the brutality of the dog attacks , expressed my fears of the dogs and requested fines and penalties to be issued to the owner of the dogs.

28 January 2021

Around 0800am another neighbour and I witnessed the same dogs from the 26 January 2021 return to the area to feed on the bodies of the deceased Kangaroos from that day.

I took several photographs of the dogs with my phone (pictures five , six and seven), the photographs were a little poor so I purchased a better camera for the sole purpose of being able to take better photographs of the dogs.

CVC Rangers attended the location on this date and placed the dogs back in the owner's property. It is inferred that no action was taken other returning the dogs.

My neighbours and myself had grave fears for the safety of my own animals, children that play in their back yards near or in the paddock and also walk through the paddock on their way home from school.. All the , native wildlife were at risk of being injured or killed by these dogs that now were aware they could come freely to kill or return to eat their kill. Nothing appeared to being acted upon so I contacted Emma at the local paper and told her the events that were occurring and she ran two weeks of the story in the local Independent

newspaper in hopes in the hopes of triggering action by CVC and other authorities. I also purchased online three air horns, for myself and two neighbours in case of further dog attack in hopes of scaring them off with the sound of the air horn. This did work on later attacks.

Clarence Valley Independent articles were published 2 and 9 February 2021 on this subject.

These articles can be sourced by the following links:

<https://clarencevalleynews.com.au/south-grafton-residents-barking-mad-over-rogue-dogs-running-wild/>

and

<https://clarencevalleynews.com.au/residents-and-wildlife-remain-alert-following-vicious-attacks/>

31/01 2021

Again on the 31/1/21 at around 0730-800 am the dogs reappeared in the paddock and were chasing the kangaroos, this time my direct neighbour began cracking a whip which distracted the dogs from the kangaroos, the kangaroos and the dogs dispersed within about 20 minutes.

The local Grafton Police attended. I called them as per the CVC(Clarence Valley Council) website which advises to call the police if incidents relating to dogs occur on the weekend/ public holidays . The police stated that they would contact the ranger on call.. I received a phone call from Ranger later that day, after a heated exchange, did not seem to think this issue was important but after I sent him emails I had sent the previous week to the council and giving him the names of other neighbours that had witnessed the events of the dogs attacking / harassing the kangaroos. said he would call in the next day to take a statement.

1/2/21

Ranger attended my residence at I gave him my statement and the names of other witnesses to the dog attacks on native wildlife (none of these people have ever been contacted).

1/2/21-06/03/21

The dogs appeared at Lot 386 on several occasions(approximately twice to three times a week) over the above period, seen by either myself or other neighbours , there were several reports of more dead kangaroos in the nearby streets, I was unable to get photographs of the same. On the 3/3/21 I had to phone Wires to attend to a young male kangaroo that had injuries from being bitten by dogs (picture nine), infection had set in, in the back leg and tail and the kangaroo could not stand for any length of time., was in obvious pain and poor physical condition . Wires assessed that euthanasia was the only solution for the young male and this was carried out on the property.

In this area it is an area where Kangaroos live close to houses and enough though habitat loss through urbanization has been occurring it appears that this group of kangaroos have been able to coexist without issue (other than road trauma) very successfully.

As these Kangaroos have been harmed the *Biosecurity Conservation Act* indicates that harming any native animal² is guilty of an offence. Other regulations being the *Companion Animal Act*,³ provides offences for persons that do not prevent their dogs from escaping,⁴ and for when dogs attack.⁵ Once a dog attacks it is a dangerous dog.⁶ And this Act also provides powers for seizing dogs after they have attacked,⁷ and declaring dogs dangerous.⁸

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As these Kangaroos have been harmed the *Biosecurity Conservation Act* indicates that harming any native animal⁹ is guilty of an offence. Other regulations being the *Companion Animal Act*,¹⁰ provides offences for persons that do not prevent their dogs from escaping,¹¹ and for when dogs attack.¹² Once a dog attacks it is a dangerous dog.¹³ And this Act also provides powers for seizure of dangerous dogs.

These incidents have been devastating to the numbers of kangaroos that I have seen over the past five years .With the above incidents outlined, these have occurred in a small area and the mortality rate of kangaroos has been affected significantly .From a usual mob of between 30-55 kangaroos to between 8-12 kangaroos in a few months the devastating effect in a short amount of time can only be a result of dogs attacking wildlife.

I had extensive phone calls with the Rangers over this period., I believe that if there had there not been an article and multiple complaints made the rangers would not have attended the property as often. Twice a police officer who had attended on 31/1/26 had come around 8 am to walk the paddock to see if the dogs had/ would return, no other police visited the area for this purpose apart from this.. The rangers told me there would be daily patrols. The patrols o the area occurred maybe twice to three times a week for about 3 weeks. I have never been officially informed of the outcome of the dogs seized, when or if they were ever seized. Eventually I believe two of the dogs responsible have been seized on either 3/3/21 or 6/03/21. I have not seen the same dogs back here again since then. There have been other stray dogs crossing my property and the property Lot 686 since then but I have not witnessed further attacks on the kangaroos.

In summary I believe that these incidences were handled badly by the CVC rangers and mostly not well by the local Grafton Police. There has been a total lack of communication to our neighbourhood and seemingly a lack of concern for the native wildlife and those concerned for them. I believe the onus of most of this is those that are there to supervise owners of dogs and remove dogs that are attacking from the area. Also it appears that the dogs and who/what they attack seem to pay the ultimate price but the owners really do not have to be responsible for their supervision or care. , I have no awareness whether the owners of the dogs have been fined etc., but am aware that they live close by.

² *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) s 2.1(1)(c).

³ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW).

⁴ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 12A.

⁵ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 16.

⁶ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 33.

⁷ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 18.

⁸ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 34.

⁹ *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) s 2.1(1)(c).

¹⁰ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW).

¹¹ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 12A.

¹² *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 16.

¹³ *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 33.

Possible Solutions

Suggestions to mitigate or assist with the above could be the following:

1. Education for dog owners of their responsibilities.
2. Investigation and action when reports are made.
3. Communication and joint participation between residents of an area experiencing dog attacks on native wildlife and council/ police and wildlife protection groups to enable a successful and speedy outcome.
4. Proactive actions by public services regarding dog attacks on native wildlife in the form of education, fines and declaration of dangerous dogs.
5. Trapping programs targeting dogs and other non-native species that prey on kangaroos to be implemented.
6. Council rezoning/ selling off land areas to private organisations for development of housing should be investigated more thoroughly to see if it is truly applicable to an area
7. Environmental Impact Study on Lot 686 DP 715384 investigating the impact on native wildlife including Eastern Grey Kangaroos.
8. Green areas/ zones left as they are for native wildlife to remain protected.

I am willing to be a witness at any hearing if required and I have no reservations to having this submission published given that Parliamentary privilege is attached.. If any other information is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Patricia CAMPBELL



