

**Submission
No 300**

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

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Kangaroos across vast areas of Australia are very thin on the ground, with depleted wild populations across all states. This is a direct result of continual shooting for the last 60 years and when natural disasters hit like bushfire, flood, drought and any disease that affects the animals from coming into contact with domestic animals, livestock or humans, the populations are so severely impacted that their very survival is now in real jeopardy. Add to this the use of the cluster fencing which has been erected across much of Qld and NSW and this in itself has caused the death and starvation of thousands of kangaroos together with other native wildlife. Macropods are a slow breeding marsupial and this is never taken into account. The fact that a mother will only replace herself once in her lifetime, leaves macropods at a huge disadvantage. She will only breed for an average of 8 years and in that time only 2 of her joeys will reach adulthood. Any joeys born into drought perish and roadkill has not even been discussed in this submission, so that will be taking out many of the 2 joeys that would normally survive in the wild, if not shot or interfered with. What is being seen is a repeat of what has been done to the koala population by shooting. The same happened to koala until the species were at crisis point and still are. Shooting is extremely cruel and any shooter will tell you that mis-shots are more frequent than the government or departments want to believe and this leaves the target animal with horrific injuries that will kill them over a matter of weeks where they will die from facial injuries stopping them from feeding, infection and stress. The additional loss of any in-pouch young and at foot young, die the same traumatic death as their mother is suffering. Male kangaroos have been almost completely wiped out of the populations now with the male only 'harvest' (slaughter is a better word because that is all this is). Male kangaroos take an active role in the rearing of their off spring and decimating mob structures has caused many issues for our macropod species. A healthy heirarchical structured mob of kangaroos should be in numbers of 300-500 animals in each mob. This has not been seen since the 1980s. The carcass weight has been reduced to the ridiculously low weight of 11kg in NSW and 12kg in Qld - eviscerated. These animals are not even sexually mature. Shooters in the 1980s drove past any kangaroo that would not weight in over the hooks at high 30-40kgs. But not anymore. In fact shooters are leaving in industry because they are unable to find any kangaroos big enough to shoot to support their livelihood. Despite the states and territories claiming ownership of our kangaroos, the truth is that the government do NOT own these animals and multiple high court cases has documented this fact, and for this reason, the government should not be approving the killing of any of these animals, period. The commercial harvest along with the damage mitigation permits continues to cause pain and suffering to these animals with a callous disregard for their well being. Unfurred joeys are allowed to be killed by the shooter by bashing their heads against a hard object (blunt forced trauma), decapitation and now the added method of cervical dislocation, all approved by the RSPCA and government. All three of these methods are inhumane and must be stopped immediately. If a citizen of Australia was seen bashing in the heads of kittens, pups or any other domestic animals, there would be an uproar and charges would be laid against those persons for cruelty to animals. The Cruelty to Animals Act is completely ignored when it comes to our kangaroos and this is unacceptable. As an ex professional kangaroo shooter I have seen first hand just how much cruelty and disregard there is within the industry towards our kangaroos. There is absolutely no policing of this industry at point of kill and only the shooter and any off sider knows what goes on in the field. The damage mitigation permits work on a 'honesty system' so again only the farmer knows how many kangaroos are killed on these permits. The departments are very inefficient at policing these permits as well, as in 2015 in Qld, one property in Barcaldine was given 47 permits over a 6 month period at 1000 kangaroos per permit to kill 47,000 kangaroos on a 100,000 acre property. It should be noted that adjoining properties in the area were also able to apply for permits during this period as well and with the new E-Connect system in place, these permits are automatically granted without any inspections being undertaken by the department or any questions being asked. Applications are approved in less than 1 minute from applying online.

This has added enormous pressure to the wild population of macropods as many farmers have even setup 'week-end shooting' for those who wish to travel from towns or cities to have a weekend of hunting, shooting everything that moves. Kangaroos have been found weeks later by rescue/wildlife carers and the injuries these animals have sustained are truly appalling. No regard is given to any pouch young or at foot young and so again these joeys are left to die from exposure, starvation and predation. There is nothing ethical or right about shooting wildlife and when you continually shoot any species 24/7/365 for decades, there is no hope of that species ever surviving. Add the fact these species are slow breeding marsupials unique only to Australia and there is no hope for their survival unless a complete moratorium is put in place immediately Australia wide. Government are not taking responsibility for these animals and that was evident when the management of the species was placed in the hands of the Agricultural department sector. Wildlife are protected in Australia but they get little to no protection at all given to them.