

Submission
No 376

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 26 April 2021

Partially
Confidential

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

I welcome the long overdue Inquiry into the health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales and sincerely thank those that have made this possible.

I am years of age, retired and a respected Aboriginal Elder and member of my local community. I have lived at my current address for years . We happily raised our children here.

Our area is part of a wildlife corridor . I have been an active participant within local community groups and individually in trying to conserve the critically endangered wildlife corridors and protect all native wildlife.

Seeing Kangaroos and other macropods have been part of our daily life here for years. We have welcomed them all, shared our space and appreciated that we can offer a 'sanctuary' for all wildlife. We do not have any domesticated animals or pets so no threats to the wildlife.

In 2017 the nightmare began. Uncontrolled firearm use by adjoining neighbours commenced. Since that time I have been subjected to horrific levels of abuse, including racial abuse. Until 6 months ago firearms have been used regularly, anytime day and night.

A Licence to Cull Kangaroos was issued in 2018 which allowed a number of properties between mine and the village to shoot any time of the day or night, often all night. Shooting would occur even when myself or my family were clearly visible in our property.

I was subjected to coercive actions such as persistent verbal abuse, including racial abuse, drones were put over myself and my family in our property, vehicles with 3-4 hunting spotlights on them directed at me, subjected to portable hunting spotlights being directed and left shining on myself, when I was in my vehicle, and over my paddocks, driveway and house. I have suffered extreme fear and anxiety with the knowledge that as well as the verbal abuse there was firearms involved and knowing and feeling that my life was at risk.

I reached out and communicated to many 'authorities' in my desperation, trying to save our precious wildlife, have the shooting stopped, protect my family and trying regain my beautiful, peaceful home. I was soon to realise that my rights, and that of the safety of the Public were secondary to the rights of firearm use of 'Primary Producers' (or shooters they authorised) even if it were head of cattle that provided that status.

Some of my actions include letters to the Police Commissioner, phone calls to the Firearms Registrar, endless phone calls to the local police informing firearm use. I estimate I would have made 40-50 phone calls to the police including 2 to the 000 line.

I feared constantly for my life, my wellbeing and that of the Public, including those in the nearby village and travelling on the road near where the shooting was occurring. The danger was created of a bullet that had not hit the target animal hitting a person and the real potential of a vehicle accident when any nearby animals, including kangaroos and deer, bolted in fear onto the road after hearing loud shots.

I contacted National Parks and Wildlife, local Councillors, a journalist and many others.

The police had told me that I needed to contact the local council to try to have the council rating changed so firearms could not be used on the nearby properties. I contacted the local council and they said as there was firearm use it was a police matter.

With no-one in authority to turn to, trying to control my immense fear, not being able to bear the thought of leaving my much loved family home, feeling intense sadness and care for our wildlife, I would patrol my property in my vehicle trying to prevent the shooting, copping all forms of abuse from the perpetrators. All this with the knowledge that shooting could and often did occur at any time.

We were forced to install CCTV and were able to provide proof to the police of the number of gunshots. One Sunday afternoon there was more than 34 gunshots.

During the 'culling of the kangaroos' period, on the evening of 2018, a bullet was fired towards me, landing within 3 metres of me. I have no doubt that it was intentional, a coercive action meant to stop me from interfering with the kangaroo shooting. I was totally shocked and terrified and feared for my life. A police investigation commenced.

The kangaroo culling continued, the rampant firearm use continued. The verbal abuse, including racial abuse and all other abuse continued.

I remain traumatised, not knowing if/when shooting will occur again, anxious most of the time, particularly in the evenings when the shooting was worse. Unsure if another 'Licence to Cull Kangaroos' could be issued in my area. Difficulty sleeping. Always on the alert for anything that may happen. My life will never be the same and I feel if there had been more checks and balances that a Licence to Cull kangaroos would never have been granted. The number and variety of kangaroos and other macropods have greatly diminished in my area.

26th April, 2021