

**Submission
No 377**

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

Name: Ms Danijela Saric

Date Received: 26 April 2021

. a) 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

It appears to that as kangaroos have gone from being on Australian flag and coat of arms and an Australian icon to be proud of in a past, these days due to being seen as pest by farmers and grazers, these animals have been vilified as animals which destroy Australian soil and regions.

Instead of killing kangaroos NSW government and Australian government should looking into phasing out unsustainable farming of land to feed cattle, sheep and other animals. It should also look into phasing out dated practice and industry of breeding cattle and sheep. If this is done then kangaroos would not be seen as pest, but as they are – Australian native animal which would not be killed to make more room for cattle, sheep and such herbivores which do not belong on Australian soil.

Australia and Australian people can gain more from having kangaroos around and using them alive as an icon and animal tourist come to see here. Tourist industry is multibillion industry, however, tourist want to see what they cannot see in any other part of world, which is Australian fauna and flora. Tourist and for that matter people from overseas, as I was, before I became Australian citizen, want to see kangaroos alive, not dead and extinct.

First question I was asked over the phone by my family and friends after I arrived to Australia in 90's was if I saw kangaroos and koalas. I said yes in the past. I am still asked a same question, but these days I cannot say yes.

b) The accuracy with which kangaroo, and other macropod, numbers are calculated when determining population size, and the means by which the health and wellbeing of populations is assessed

The treatment of kangaroos through systematic culling suggests that Australia sees them more as a pest than a treasured species.

In an increasingly urbanised Australia, it's likely that most won't encounter wild kangaroos often enough to be aware of the issue. For private landowners with livestock whose lives are directly affected by kangaroos, however, they say that kangaroos ruin fences, cause hazards on the roads, compete with their sheep and cattle for food and water, and damage the land and its biodiversity- and so the culls are well justified.

Perhaps what's missing in this view, however, is that more land has been cleared for agriculture, which has created more grazing areas for kangaroos. Patterns of drought and rainfall have led to varying numbers and movement of mobs. We've built roads and highways across their wildlife corridors. All in all, it's simply a case of the species adapting to changes in their environment, contributed to mostly by human activity- yet the kangaroos appear to be the ones punished for it.

Kangaroos, like all native wildlife, are protected in Australia. Under this legislation, it's a chargeable offence to kill, take, control or harm wild species, and penalties including

imprisonment and fines are imposed. So kangaroos are protected, however under the same governance that seeks to protect them, they're systematically killed in droves.

To kill a kangaroo, a bullet to the head is claimed as the most efficient method by the National Code of Practice. Except, however, when this 'efficiency' is inaccurate. While mostly professional shooters are used, accurate marksmanship isn't guaranteed, and stray bullets often enter other parts of the animal, causing trauma and a prolonged and painful death. A study found that 16% of those culled- or 120,000 kangaroos- were not shot in the head. It's a sizeable number and raises serious concerns regarding how humane the Code really is.

. c) Threats to kangaroo, and other macropod, habitat, including the impact of: (i) climate change, drought and diversion and depletion of surface water sources, (ii) bushfires, (iii) land clearing for agriculture, mining and urban development, (iv) the growing prevalence of exclusion fencing which restricts and disrupts the movement of kangaroos

As more land is cleared for agriculture and grazing, kangaroos as species adapt to changes in their environment, which has been caused by human activity, hence move to use areas. Kangaroos are then blamed for soil damage, whereas this soil has been damaged by human activity and by cattle and sheep grazing on it (see as quoted in d)iii).

Kangaroos are vilified and punished by killing for damage done by human activity on NSW, and for that matter, other Australian soil. Humans built road and highways across kangaroos wildlife corridors, we stop them from accessing water and food supply by building exclusion fences, and then blame them for trying to get to it, and perhaps in a process cause damage to fences and causing hazard on roads. Kangaroos do not cause hazard on roads, people do as they drive too fast.

d) Current government policies and programs for kangaroo management, including: (i) the method used for setting quotas for kangaroo culling, (ii) the management of licences to cull kangaroos, (iii) temporary drought relief policies and programs

i) There are issues with how populations of kangaroos are estimated hence question has to be asked how sustainable quotas for killing kangaroos are.

It is not possible that after kangaroo numbers are decimated due to New South Wales bushfires have more kangaroos killed by shooting them whenever it suits landowners and shooters.

ii) there is no proper management of licenses to kill kangaroos. Management of licenses to cull kangaroos should be done by independent body of those who care about animal welfare, not by those who are partial to kangaroo killings and benefit from it.

iii) temporary drought relief policies and programs do not favour kangaroos. These programs cater for those who keep animals who graze on land such as cattle and sheep. These animals are found to cause even more damage to drought affected land, while kangaroos are, as per research ("Do

grazing intensity and herbivore type affect soil health”, David J. Eldridge, 2016,
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.128340>.

Temporary drought relief policies and programs should concentrate on enabling transitioning from farming unsustainable grains for feeding cattle and sheep to those for feeding people instead. It should transition those who keep soil destroying grazing animals (cattle, sheep, etc....) out of breeding and keeping it.

e) 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

Current government policies and programs mentioned above are not humane and it is currently not monitored and controlled in way as it is left to the shooters to decide the course of action.

Control is given to killers who profit from a kill as there is not control of what is killed and when at all.

These need to be changed and there is a need for accountability. There should be cameras worn and each killed kangaroo accounted for.

f) 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

There is not compliance with the Code and it is not monitored adequately or enforced.

Consistent and regular inspections should be undertaken at all shooting locations, and if not possible a moratorium on shooting kangaroos till such inspections are undertaken and possible.

There should be a moratorium to stop kangaroo shooting as long as compliance with code is not monitored and enforced. Heads of kangaroos should be retained to be able to inspected whether these were killed by a direct shot to the head (as mandated by the Code) or not.

As the Government can not ensure compliance with the Code and therefore compliance with the Government's obligation to 'promote the humane treatment of wildlife' under s.303BA of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), **the industry must no longer be supported**

. g) 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

There is no communication between parties involved in commercial and non-commercial killings; hence it is not possible to know number of killed kangaroos. This is not acceptable as estimates undertaken which allow quotas for commercial killing of kangaroos do not distinguish between commercial and non-commercial killing of kangaroos, hence grossly overestimating number of kangaroos allowed to be killed for commercial purposes.

If landholders are allowed to kill kangaroos, drop tags should be re-established and under control of body which looks after animal welfare. This body cannot be and cannot have any connection or benefit from kangaroo killings.

Conclusion as under f):

As the Government can not ensure compliance with the Code and therefore compliance with the Government's obligation to 'promote the humane treatment of wildlife' under s.303BA of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), **the industry must no longer be supported**

. (h) Current and alternative measures to provide an incentive for and accelerate public and private conservation of kangaroos and other macropods

Incentives should be concentrating on having kangaroos alive on NSW and Australian soil, which brings and would bring billions of dollars from tourist industry. This industry needs to have kangaroos alive and hopping around for tourist to see.

Tourist came here in a past as they considered Australia safe place and wanted to travel through the country being safe. Tourist wanted to see kangaroos alive in countryside. They do not want to see cattle and sheep, which they can see in other countries of the world, and perhaps in their own country.

Tourists do not want to have people with guns around them. Why are there so many people to have gun licences in Australia's countryside? Gun licences and shooting licences should not be given out in numbers there are at the moment.

Which wild animals do people in countryside have to protect themselves from?

Roads should have speed limit and cameras detecting a breach, which would stop people from hitting and running over animals, kangaroos being only one species of them.

Money incentives should be given to people and organisation that are trying to save kangaroos, not to farmers, graziers or kangaroo killing industry.