

Submission
No 378

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

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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.

While I don't have Kangaroos on my rural property, because the land is too hilly for them, in the past I used to see small groups of Kangaroos as I drove out along my road to where the land becomes flatter, but I rarely see a Kangaroo on this road anymore. I also see less Wallabies than in the past too.

Many Kangaroos are killed or fatally injured everyday on the roads. As a voluntary phone operator for a wildlife rescue organisation, I frequently receive calls about severely injured Kangaroos with horrific compound fractures. I have also had calls about Kangaroos caught and injured in fences.

One night I had a call from a young man who was very distressed because he had found a Kangaroo in a paddock that had collapsed on the ground but was still alive, and had a hole through its body. This was in the Kempsey area.

Another night I had a call from a woman who lived west of Kempsey. She said the Kangaroos on the neighbouring property were regularly being shot at by the owner of the property, who used to also invite his mates over to join in. The woman said she was afraid of being shot by a stray bullet if she went outside.

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.

Climate change poses a serious threat to wildlife including Kangaroos. i) During the recent severe drought there was no grass for the Kangaroos to eat and the television news sometimes showed images of starving, dehydrated Kangaroos coming to water troughs near houses out of desperation. ii) There were frequent images also on ABC News of Kangaroos surrounded by flames, desperately trying to flee. No one knows how many perished in the fires, or how many died later, slowly and painfully from their burns, also with no food or water available in the burnt landscapes. iii) As a phone operator for a wildlife rescue organisation I sometimes get calls about Kangaroos hopping about frantically in the CBD of Port Macquarie because they don't know how to get back to bushland, possibly due to increasing urbanisation. At times I have had calls about Kangaroos caught inside the fences around aged-care facilities or industrial premises, desperately jumping along the fence line trying to find a way out. iv) I have also heard that the health of the Kangaroos in Port Macquarie is deteriorating due to urbanisation squeezing them out, but they have nowhere to go, because exclusion fencing prevents the displaced coastal Kangaroos from dispersing to the hinterland to the west of the highway.

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

- Kangaroos require protection zones along their migratory pathways.
- A Great Kangaroo Park could provide extensive interconnected areas where Kangaroos could live safely without fear of being shot at, and help to ensure their long term survival.
- Kangaroos are a national icon of Australia so the Government should invest in the development and marketing of tourism opportunities for viewing Kangaroos in the wild.
- Farmers should receive financial incentives for maintaining and protecting Kangaroos and their habitat on private land.
- Owners of Wildlife Refuges and Conservation Agreement properties who protect Kangaroos and their habitat should also receive financial benefits to assist with their conservation.
- Many more underpasses are needed below the Motorway to allow Kangaroos along the coast, who are being dispossessed by rapid urbanisation, to migrate to the hinterland west of the Motorway.