

Submission
No 382

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

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

Response to Terms of Reference

- 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*

I own a property in Northern NSW and have done for the last 10 years. The property is 800 acres and over half is dry sclerophyll forest. In the last 10 years I have personally noted a definite decrease in the macropod population. If this decrease continues then localised extinction is a real possibility in this area.

- 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*

According to the documentation I have read ("Design and analysis of helicopter surveys of the kangaroo populations of the Northern Tablelands kangaroo management zones, 2019"(Cairns, Bearup & Lollback, 2020)), the supposed density of eastern grey kangaroos was 26.4 km², and wallaroos 7.4 km². If that were true, I would find 90 eastern grey kangaroos and 21 wallaroos on my property alone. From my personal experience, regularly walking the property, that estimate is out by at least a factor of two, probably closer to four. There would be lucky to be a ¼ of those numbers present. If the estimate is wrong by that amount on my property, how wrong is the area and state estimates. I believe the helicopter survey method is vastly over-estimating numbers in the New England area. More field/ground-based surveys should be completed, even if the cost is higher. Good decisions need accurate data.

- 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*

A very real threat to the local macropod population around my area is the use of dog fencing, or rather as it should be called, exclusion fencing. This type of fencing excludes all species, not just canines. Blocking free movement causes distress and injury to macropods as well as depleting the available water resources.

My property is one of a very few that still has remnant natural vegetation. My property is surrounded by cleared land used, mainly, for cattle production. If all my neighbours install exclusion fencing, which I believe is classed as 'Cluster fencing', imagine the impact on local macropod populations when they cannot move to areas that have remnant vegetation or contain water. Unfortunately, it appears that short-term profit-driven agriculture gets priority over long-term biodiversity efforts.

The impact of land clearing and exclusion fencing programs on local macropod populations needs to be measured and factored into the equation used for estimating populations.

- 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 routinely hear and see shooters around my property. This can be very early in the morning to late into the night. It is not a nice feeling having shooters firing rifles within sight of your home. I have no idea who these people are, or even if they are aware of people living in the area. The constant feeling of threat has made myself and my wife consider leaving the area. I should not be made to feel threatened simply because of the ease with which licences are handed out.

Any licencing or management of licences and permits should consider people like myself. If a landholder requires a culling permit, then they should have to prove they require it and notify all people concerned. They should also have to prove their competency. There is still no competency test for obtaining a firearm licence.

I have seen the results of indiscriminate shooting on my neighbour's property, where kangaroos were simply left to rot.

- 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*

Self-regulation has not worked. Much more accountability needs to be put in place to ensure that no 'in pouch' and 'at foot joys' are put at risk. Whether commercial or non-commercial, the inhumane killing of these young cannot be allowed due to lack of regulation. If a landholder can prove that they require macropod numbers to be reduced, then a non-biased observer should be on site when any shooting is occurring. This accountability is sadly lacking with the current rules.

- 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*

Again, self-regulation of this 'industry' has not worked. To ensure compliance to the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, commercial and non-commercial shooters need to be held accountable. This necessitates accurate record keeping and reporting.

The purpose of the Act – "... to maintain a healthy, productive and resilient environment for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development", does not appear to have been answered. The apparent ease with which some people can obtain a firearm licence or permit to cull and the impact of unknown shooters being allowed to shoot on properties surrounding my own, has had a negative impact on my, and my wife's, mental health. The 'well-being' of my community is not being maintained in a healthy, productive and resilient manner.

- 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*

As above. There needs to be an auditable system put in place to ensure that accurate numbers of macropods killed are recorded.

- h) *current and alternative measures to provide an incentive for and accelerate public and private conservation of kangaroos and other macropods.*

Funding for conserving native habitat and the creation of wildlife corridors needs to be considered. Landholders need financial motivation to conserve wildlife.

Funding for the killing of wildlife and native habitat destruction need to be

ended. Policy makers need to build policies that motivate landowners to maintain and increase native habitat.

Biodiversity equals Biosecurity.