

Submission  
No 386

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

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**Date Received:** 26 April 2021

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Who am I

I am a lawyer by profession but make this submission as a private citizen. I am passionate about wildlife and have been involved in various ways for decades in advocating for the interests of animals and the environment. I also do voluntary work with farm animals on a local municipal farm.

Terms of Reference - key comments/concerns:

(a) Urgent, united action needs to be taken by all 3 levels of government to save kangaroos and other macropods from extinction by the next generation, including localised extinction in NSW.

(b) & (c) Our Eastern states including NSW lost billions of wildlife in the fires of 2019-20. The numbers, state of their habitat and the wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods have not been properly assessed since the ravaging results of those fires, nor have the species and their environment/habitat been given any real chance of recovering. Within 3 months of the fires, the year 2020 was quickly overtaken by Covid-19. Our wildlife that had just been more than decimated and was seriously struggling to survive in a destroyed habitat/ environment was now largely ignored by governments totally focused on COVID. Wildlife volunteers, self funded organisations and scientists have until now seemed to be the only ones caring about the dire wildlife situation. The key concern is that government departments/authorities are relying on misleading statistics and assumptions about the numbers of the animals and the state of their environment based on surveys taken BEFORE the 2019-20 fires.

(c) Apart from the 2019-20 bushfires, there have been other unexpected bushfires this year in NSW. There is also the concern that government departments/authorities are still operating controlled /planned burning off programs. It can be taking place in areas that were subject to the 2019-20 fires and have barely got new regrowth - and these areas happen to be sensitive green corridors that form an important habitat /refuge for the kangaroos and other macropods (as well as other significant wildlife). These animals rely desperately on the new regrowth for food - they cannot survive another burn off in their habitats.

Of equal concern is if the planned burn takes place in unburnt bush refuges. These areas should also be protected from burns for many years since "they will be the only mature patches within extensive landscapes and hence require protection "(according to the national Threatened Species Recovery Hub - The Age , 13 April 2021). Allowing animals to retain unburnt refuges is paramount to their ongoing survival. Governments/authorities must not allow controlled burn offs to be "business as usual" because that incorrectly assumes all is well , as "as usual" , with the wildlife world .

Bushfires also cause long term contamination of waterways ie sedimentation run off.

The lack of drinking water for the kangaroos and other macropods is also affected by by droughts and climate change.

However the biggest threat to the wildlife animals' access to drinking water is, in my view, the inequitable water licensing system/rights given to farmers and big industry. It allows blocking & diversion of natural waterways that in turn dries up the creeks and rivers that are the primary water source of our wildlife. This is a key issue that needs to be addressed by government.

Landclearing and development obviously is a threat. All development should be required to be planned sympathetically. Green bush corridors must be retained and fencing done in a way that allows the kangaroos and macropods (and all wildlife) to move safely between the green

corridors. NSW does not want a situation like in Victoria where significant number of kangaroos have been "fence locked" for over a year in a small area within a new development area ("Kinley kangaroos") and cannot get out. The authorities and developer seem to be at a stalemate with any action to rescue/release the animals.

Likewise any future roads to be built in NSW near or in green corridor areas should be required to have animal underpasses (like in Canada). This allows the animals and other wildlife to cross roads without accident, injury or death.

(d) Government policies and programs for kangaroo management including culling and licences should take be subject to annual reviews and take into account specific factors/ extreme incidents /conditions, like the bushfires of 2019-20 and drought conditions. There needs to be a stay on any culling until such time that reliable and comprehensive surveys and data has been obtained to confirm the numbers of the animals and details of their habitat .

(d) & (e) & (f)

I strongly oppose any licence system that allows:

- individuals to go out shooting kangaroos & other macropods on their own, without anyone else to act in a formal supervisory role
- shooting indiscriminately in any undeveloped areas, including areas where tourists may visit
- killing by any means of a female kangaroo or other macropod that has an "in pouch" or 'at foot joey"
- killing of an "in pouch" or " at foot joey" ( including by bludgeoning or slamming against a rock etc )

- Killing for commercial sales overseas ( I only support humane commercial killing for end use within Australia where culling is required due to overpopulation)

(h) Private /public conservation - consider offering wildlife government funding to owners of open bushland areas to become designated wildlife nature reserves (subject to conditions eg allow public entry or chemical castration /neutering of animals?) OR make it a mandatory condition of relevant development permits involving large, suitable areas of land that specified areas of the land be set aside as a green zone for kangaroos and other macropods - subject to conditions such as ensuring an adequate water supply and natural bushland are retained.