

Submission
No 397

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

To the Committee on the health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales,

I am a Registered Veterinary Nurse in NSW; I have extensive training in triage, emergency and critical care for wildlife, including kangaroos. My work is predominantly with orphaned and injured wildlife.

Since the 2020 bushfires, I have observed a reduction in patients requiring treatment despite increased community support and action towards wildlife welfare.

We observe the general public reporting, intervening, and seeking veterinary treatment for kangaroos they encounter on the roadside either due to motor vehicle accidents or being caught in fence lines.

Our own roadside patrols report a marked reduction in killed or injured kangaroos over the same period as previous years.

From my personal experience travelling throughout the rural regions where I work, I have observed fewer roadside interactions. There is less evidence of vehicle to kangaroo incidents as there are fewer bodies observed and checked for pouch young

Fewer eastern grey mobs are observed. Areas where I would frequently see them and slow down to accommodate their presence, are now deprived of the mobs; there is no evidence of their existence with no scat observed at the roadside where they would frequently be seen feeding or congregating.

While working in the Southern Tablelands of NSW, I frequently observed 'volunteer' shooters working on neighbouring properties. Many of these properties had little to no livestock. Yet, every second weekend there were shooters in attendance, camping out overnight to shoot the kangaroos. As there was no longer any large local mobs, only smaller mobs that stayed on the property that I was working on, the shooters would frequently shoot over the fence line into the neighbouring property where I was working.

Deceased kangaroos, many whose death resulted from well-placed chest shots resulting in immediate death, were located between 100 to 300m inside the property boundary fence. When talking to the shooters on shooting over the fence line, they replied, 'the kangaroo hopped over the fence and died over your side,' which was physically impossible due to the injuries to the kangaroos.

On more than one occasion, I found a kangaroo who had died from a bad shot, usually with broken or fractured legs or pass-through injury due to full jacket rounds being used, leading to infection and excruciating death.

Discussion with the local NSW Police officers on shooting over boundary lines I was told by officers that 'shooters cannot be expected to see fences in the dark'. If the NSW Police condone the shooting over property boundaries, especially into properties that do not give permission for shooters due to them being wildlife havens and sanctuaries, where is the wildlife supposed to exist?

Working with landowners who enjoy our wildlife, we have lost several release sites due to new neighbours moving in who 'shoot everything that moves' yet have no commercial animals on the property. The released wildlife on these properties are now in danger, and there can not be any future releases due to the new neighbours.

Working with a local NSW Registered Veterinarian, several autopsies were performed of kangaroo bodies found around and localised to a dam on a non-shooting property and all were found to have

deceased due to gunshot. Yet, no permission had been provided for anyone to shoot on the property.

My personal observation of many kangaroos who have been shot shows an apparent lack of skill, knowledge, and general competency in firearms. As someone who spent seven years in the Australian Army as an infantry soldier and continues to pursue target shooting, it is evident that the basics of ballistics, fall of shot and the beaten zone are not understood in a hunting context by many of these volunteer shooters.

Animals shot in the abdominal regions instead of the head/chest area indicate a range/zero issue where the shooter is not compensating for fall of shot over distance, resulting in an extremely cruel and excruciating death for the kangaroo due to gutshot or fractured limbs. The failure to comprehend that the bullet does not stop at the fence line or the animal in the event of a miss as there are no butts or mounds to contain the shot like a structured range.

On one occasion, I heard what sounded like automatic small arms fire; upon investigation, I located a 'hunting party' who were all shooting simultaneously as a single kangaroo attempting to flee, all not accounting for fall of shot over distance and all shooting in the direction of a homestead within 1500m of the shooters over a rise.

Working with kangaroos in clinical practice, frequently working 18+ hour days in surgery repairing and healing wildlife injured because of human interactions and going outside for a break or travelling to my next role and coming across kangaroo illegally and inappropriately shot is highly traumatic.

With the massive damage to our state forests and national parks, and privately held forests, our wildlife must move into other areas to survive. This, unfortunately, means private lands as this is where our defensive fire operations were fought and the only regions left with feed, shelter, and viable water supplies.

From my own personal observations of our localised mobs during the drought and the 2020 bush fires, there has not been a successful joey reach adolescence. We have had close to a 100% mortality rate; members of the public have brought in joeys found with their deceased mothers who have no visible signs of injury or trauma aside from nutritional issues. These joeys are severely underweight for their age, malnourished and dehydrated with poor prospects of survival despite veterinary intervention due