

**Submission  
No 400**

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

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# Parliamentary Inquiry: The health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales

Dear Members of Portfolio Committee No 7,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on what could become a monumental catastrophe should our national icon be destroyed for ever.

Since early white settlers came to take over custody of the traditional lands of the Gadigal people, their steady decimation of the landscape and its fauna to this day has been well documented, and its history is not one to be proud of.

The only enemies Kangaroos and other macropods had in early days were dingoes and barefooted men with spears and boomerangs. Today they face larger numbers of threats, from many varied sources, far more serious to their health and wellbeing.

I'd specifically like to address item c) of the Terms of Reference

## ***c) Threats to kangaroo, and other macropod, habitat ....***

The monitoring and calculation of population size seems to depend on which side of the fence you are sitting, whether you are pro-culling for the kangaroo meat industry, or are a conservationist wanting scientifically realistic, honest, numbers. The numbers can only ever be estimates.

The estimated population decline of kangaroos and other macropods, as represented in this table, since white man took over stewardship of the land, is 90%.

## **Summary of Large Macropod Population Estimates for NSW, 1788 – 2010**

Year	1788	2010
Western Grey Kangaroo	30M	2.8M
Red Kangaroo	40M	5.2M
Eastern Grey Kangaroo	138M	14.6M
Wallaroo	12M	1.2M
<b>Total Large Macropods in NSW</b>	<b>220M</b>	<b>23.8M</b>

Reference: Mjadwesch R 2011 *Nomination to List the Large Macropods as Threatened Species under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* MESS Bathurst

Originally printed: 20 December 2011

An estimated 90% population drop over a period of 222 years from 1788 to 2010, leaves around 10% of the previous numbers.

If these figures are extrapolated to 2021, we are left with around 5.5%. This is a very rough figure, since in more recent years, with improved road access, all-terrain vehicles, and high-powered rifles, the numbers would have risen exponentially, and the population remaining now could be far lower than this. How long before there are none left if the slaughter continues unabated?

Is this the road to extinction of our once proud unique national icon? How will Australia look in the eyes of the world? What excuses can we offer?

Kangaroos and other macropods have increasingly been threatened from all sides, with their habitats decreasing by ever-spreading urban development and the proliferation of roads, their habitats being degraded by land clearing for mining and farming, and access to fodder and water severely restricted by thousands of kilometres of dangerous exclusion fencing.

One has only to drive out West to see not one live kangaroo, but quite a few dead ones on the road. With endless brown, bare, fenced paddocks on both sides of the road, the only fodder to be found grows along the road edges. I once stopped to check the pouch of a dead female kangaroo, to find that her very young hairless joey had crawled out of the pouch and was freezing cold to the touch. The only safe, warm place for this poor mite was in my bra, but it died anyway before I could reach expert care for it.

Land, as far as the eye can see, is cleared for crop and animal production leading to degradation of the environment, for commercial land management is generally very short-sighted and abysmal.

Farmers complain about drought their own poor land management practices helped bring about by the clear-felling of large swathes of land, where sheep and cattle suffer the long hot summers with little shade. Farmers seem to know nothing of Permaculture which, if practised widely, would benefit the whole area in the long-term by greening and attracting rain to fill water courses and dams. (Why isn't our government promoting and encouraging Permaculture?) Drought and the lack of access to water also badly affects kangaroos. The heat and the dry state of the landscape is an invitation to devastating bushfires which affect every living thing. The sight of a female kangaroo, her dead joey beside her, burnt to a crisp after becoming entangled in a fence while fleeing a bush fire, is a sight I cannot unsee.

Further, the only refuges where kangaroos may seek peace and 'safety' are invaded at night by four-wheel drive vehicles, spotlights and 'tough guys' who enjoy hunting and killing with high-powered rifles. Kangaroos stand little chance as important family members, mothers and fathers, the leaders of their mob, are blasted to death. Close knit families are shattered, scattered and traumatised and many of the joeys are either orphaned, or dispatched 'humanely' by the hunters. This is known as the 'humane' harvesting of a FREE natural, regenerating, 'resource'.

These animals are not 'free', they belong to every Australian!

(Oh, if only a superior alien species would come to this planet and view humans in this way – would justice be served?)

#### **d) Current government policies and programs for kangaroo management**

I don't know if this is the right section for addressing this, the "***National Code of Practice for the Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes***". I took part in assessing the '***Public Consultation Draft 2019***' of this document and a more inane, meaningless document I have yet to see. How anyone can envisage the 'humane killing' of any animal species that wants to live as much as humans, is totally beyond comprehension.

The very wording of this document, such as 'harvesting', 'a sustainable free resource', 'humane shooting', is designed to desensitize the reader to the actual situation which is animal cruelty in every sense, condoned and encouraged by our government.

The Code was produced as a subterfuge, to make it look like something was actually being done, that our government actually cared about these maligned creatures, these 'pests' who competed for fodder with livestock, to counter widespread claims of horrific cruelty as over a million kangaroos are slaughtered every year.

It is laughable that the production of this useless code is expected to ensure that the shooting of kangaroos and other macropods for commercial purposes will be carried out to minimise 'to the fullest extent possible' pain, distress and suffering. Really, seriously, and what authority is there in the bush, in the dead of night, to ensure that the minimum standards for an 'acceptable level of animal welfare' are met by gangs of men, happy to shoot defenceless animals

blinded by spotlights? The answer is that NO authority is present in the vast majority of cases.

No one, other than the shooting party, is present to ensure that kangaroos are killed by a head shot, or chased to ensure a kill if only maimed, that the 'negative welfare impacts' for joeys at foot are 'minimised' (how, when its mother is killed?), and that in-pouch joeys are dealt with 'appropriate euthanasia methods', which entails swinging its head against the bull bars or tailgate of a vehicle. Do you, the reader, see the sheer hypocrisy in such a document? This is government-sanctioned animal cruelty under the pathetic guise of a protective code.

Surely, if this Inquiry is genuinely about the health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales, the issuing of any licences for killing kangaroos must be held in abeyance until a serious review of kangaroo numbers, and the likelihood of their being driven to extinction, is conducted.

In conclusion, I ask that this Inquiry consider whether, in defending, protecting and promoting regional New South Wales, the interests of crop, cattle and sheep farmers and the mining industry, have superseded the interests of the vast majority of Australians who love this national treasure, the kangaroo.

These days people are far better educated and informed as to national issues due to social media, and therefore more discerning, critical and cynical as to governmental actions taken to benefit the country and people as a whole, not just the monied vested interest groups.

As our elected representatives, do you, members of this committee, stand for the vested interests who have declared the kangaroo a pest, but who have themselves degraded the land in their pursuit of the almighty dollar, or do you stand for the ideals of most Australians, and acknowledge your responsibility to protect this beautiful wonderful country and its natural resources which lived in harmony and balance before white man came on the scene?

Please, it's in your hands now, your integrity and compassion will NOT allow the kangaroo species to become extinct to benefit short-sighted greedy commercial interests.

**Amy Blackmore, Central Coast NSW 26/04/2021**