

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

**Name:** Mr Matthew Morris

**Date Received:** 25 April 2021

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Partially  
Confidential

Our Ref: 1459096, 1461970, 1471413, 1471652, 1485913

Your Ref:

18 April 2021

NSW Parliament

Portfolio Committee No 7 – Planning and Environment

**Submission via portal:**

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2707#tab-submissions>

Dear Members of Portfolio No 7

**Re: Health and wellbeing of Kangaroos and other macropods in NSW.**

**Introduction**

I have been involved as a volunteer for WIRES for a number of years. I volunteer within the Clarence Valley Branch, primarily in Grafton NSW and the surrounding areas.

WIRES has a long history of actively advocating for native wildlife through rehabilitation and preservation strategies. Because of this history I believe that WIRES has a firm position of standing regarding the health and wellbeing of native wildlife.

Through my volunteering I have seen the large amount of time that volunteers invest in caring for and rehabilitating for native wildlife, this includes orphaned Kangaroos and macropods.<sup>1</sup>

The Clarence Valley Branch of WIRES was severely affected by bush fires recently.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Portfolio Committee No 7, Parliament of NSW, *Inquiry into the Health and Wellbeing of Kangaroos and other Macropods in NSW*, Terms of Reference 1(e).

<sup>2</sup> Portfolio Committee No 7, Parliament of NSW, *Inquiry into the Health and Wellbeing of Kangaroos and other Macropods in NSW*, Terms of Reference 1(c)(ii).

**Terms of reference addressed:**

- 1(c)(ii) – Threats to habitat by bushfires,
- 1(c)(iii) – Threats to habitat by urban development,
- 1(e) – Morality rates of orphaned joeys,
- 1(f) – Non-commercial killing under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act*<sup>3</sup> and other regulations

**Issues that I believe are having an impact on health and wellbeing of Kangaroos and Macropods:**

Bushfires,  
Road Trauma,  
Dog Attacks.

**Bushfires**

Term of reference 1(c)(ii).

A large amount of native wildlife habitat was destroyed through bushfires making the areas uninhabitable for Kangaroos, macropods, and other native wildlife.

**Road Trauma**

Terms of reference 1(c)(iii) and 1(e).

From my limited amount of service for WIRES, I can comment that most call sheets for Kangaroos and macropods are created due to Road Trauma, where the animals have been struck vehicles as they travel across roadways.

WIRES is not usually notified by the occupants of the vehicle that stuck the animal and the person reporting is usually a secondary person that sees the animal lying immobile in pain on the side of the roadway.

Unfortunately for the animals there are not many circumstances where they can be rehabilitated, usually due to compound fractures of rear leg/s, which results in the animal requiring to be euthanised on site.

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<sup>3</sup> *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW).

These animals usually have a joey in care, most of which are still in the animal's pouch. Once these joeys are recovered from the deceased mothers pouch WIRES internal processes are conducted and a large portion of the time it is deemed that the joey is not well enough developed to be viable no matter how much care carers would provide, as a result the joey is also euthanised at local veterinary practices.

### **Dog Attacks**

Terms of reference 1(c)(iii), 1(e) and 1(f).

Since the start of this year, we as an organisation have been seeing a great increase of domestic dog attacks Eastern Greg Kangaroos (Kangaroos).

Below are some incidents that have been reported to WIRES during this time.

#### 1 January 2021

Call sheet #1459096. We were notified of several wild dogs attacking a male kangaroo on a property in the                      This location is not far from town limits.

The kangaroo was reported to have survived the attack but soon after collapsed, started frothing from the mouth and died soon after.

#### 7 January 2021

Call sheet #1461970. We notified two dogs attacking a Kangaroo in the backyard of a                      address.

Whilst the dogs were mauling the kangaroo, the member of the public (MOP) took some photographs of this occurring (annexures 1.1 and 1.2).

I attended this location to be informed by the MOP that the dogs had only left when they heard my vehicle stop in the driveway. It clear that MOP, a young teenage female, was visibly upset from what she had just witnessed.

The large male Kangaroo was assessed and was already deceased.

#### 26 January 2021

Call sheet #1471413, we were notified on 27 January 2021 that dogs had attacked and killed several Kangaroos including a young male, a female and a joey. The joey was still in the pouch of the female when it was killed by the dogs (annexures 2.1 – 2.6). This occurred in the reserve enclosed by

This area also encloses

These dogs were described by the MOP as large 'pig dog' dogs, two were black (one with a red collar), one black and tan and one cream.

We have been informed that the MOP contacted Police for assistance (which did not attend) and Clarence Valley Council (CVC) this day. When CVC Rangers attended the MOP explained the incident, expressed her fears of the dogs, and requested fines and penalties to be issued to the owner of the dogs.

#### 28 January 2021

Call sheet #1471652, the MOP witnessed the same dogs from the 26 January 2021 incident return to the area to feed on the bodies of the deceased Kangaroos.

Prior to this report the MOP informed us that the same dogs were attempting to gain access to her property to attack her cats.

The MOP was able to take several photographs of these dogs (annexures 3.1 – 3.7). The MOP has indicated to us that she has purchased a better camera for the sole purpose of being able to take better photographs of the dogs to assist local agencies with their processes.

CVC Rangers attended the location on this date and informed the MOP that they placed the dogs back in the owner's property. It is inferred that no other action was taken.

A number of MOPs have informed me that they are fearful for the safety of themselves, their animals, children, native wildlife and believe that nothing appeared to be acted upon. Due to the inaction the MOP and others provided information to a local paper in the hopes of triggering action.

Clarence Valley Independent articles were published 2 and 9 February 2021 on this subject.

These articles can be sourced at:

<https://clarencevalleynews.com.au/south-grafton-residents-barking-mad-over-roque-dogs-running-wild/>

and

<https://clarencevalleynews.com.au/residents-and-wildlife-remain-alert-following-vicious-attacks/>

3 March 2021

Call sheet #1485913, we were called to the same location for a male Kangaroo that was injured by dogs. Dogs were seen that morning by the MOP.

I attended the location to assess the Kangaroo. The Kangaroo was seen to be not able to move very well, his right leg was swollen, unhealthy and very underweight whilst the other animals present appeared to be that of a healthy weight range.

Internal processes were conducted, and it was deemed that euthanasia was the preferred outcome for the sick and injured kangaroo. After this took place, the carcass was examined and there was evidence from wounds, that could have been dog bites, to the right leg and tail. There was a large infection to the right leg.

In this area it is an area where Kangaroos live close to houses and though habitat loss through urbanization has been occurring it appears that this group of kangaroos have been able to coexist without issue (other than road trauma) very successfully.

As these Kangaroos have been harmed the *Biosecurity Conservation Act* indicates that harming any native animal<sup>4</sup> is guilty of an offence. Other regulations being the *Companion Animal Act*,<sup>5</sup> provides offences for persons that do not prevent their dogs from escaping,<sup>6</sup> and for when dogs attack.<sup>7</sup> Once a dog attacks it is a dangerous dog,<sup>8</sup> or is kept for the purpose

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<sup>4</sup> *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) s 2.1(1)(c).

<sup>5</sup> *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW).

<sup>6</sup> *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 12A.

<sup>7</sup> *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 16.

<sup>8</sup> *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 33(1)(a, b).

of hunting.<sup>9</sup> This Act also provides powers for seizing dogs after they have attacked,<sup>10</sup> and declaring dangerous.<sup>11</sup>

With the above incidents outlined, these have occurred in a small area and it appears that the mortality rate of kangaroos is high and has the population has been affected significantly. When viewed in parallel with the examples above where several domesticated dogs attack kangaroos and the devastating effect that had in a short amount of time, I believe a strong inference can be concluded that dogs domesticated or not have the same or greater effect in other areas of the state.

### **Possible Solutions**

Suggestions to mitigate of assist with the above could be the following:

1. Greater resources allocated for firefighting and hazard reduction processes to minimise habitat lose when bush fires occur.
2. Education of motorists of what to do when an animal is struck. This could involve basics conveyed such as, who to report it to, checking the pouch of deceased animals, simple care instructions such as keeping the joey warm in the first instance.
3. Better street lighting in areas which are 'black spots' for vehicle and kangaroo collisions.
4. Education for dog owners of their responsibilities.
5. Investigation and action when reports are made and proactive actions by public services regarding dog attacks on native wildlife in the form of education, fines, and declaration of dangerous dogs when the definition is fulfilled.
6. Trapping programs targeting dogs and other non-native species that prey on kangaroos to be implemented.

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<sup>9</sup> *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 33(1)(d).

<sup>10</sup> *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Companion Animal Act 1998* (NSW) s 34.

I am willing to be a witness at any hearing if required and I have no reservations to having this submission published given that Parliamentary privilege is attached. However, I do request that all my contact details to be redacted. If any other information is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Matthew MORRIS

WIRES Volunteer, Clarence Valley Branch



Annexures 1.1 & 1.2



Annexures 2.1 - 2.6









Annexures 3.1 - 3.7









