

Submission
No 171

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

Organisation: Discovered Wildfoods

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DISCOVERED

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**Chair of the NSW Upper House
Portfolio Committee 7 - Planning & Environment
Legislative Council**

ATTN: portfoliocommittee7@parliament.nsw.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Submission to the inquiry into the health and wellbeing of kangaroos in NSW

Firstly we would like to acknowledge and apologise that this submission is outside the deadline prescribed by the Committee. We would be grateful if the submission can still be considered - as a recent entrant (August 2020) to the wild game industry in the retail space, Discovered Wildfoods was unaware of the inquiry until extremely recently.

(1) Introduction - Launching an Australian Wild Game Retail Brand

Our business was born from a simple desire to use what is on our plates to make positive change for our environment, health & communities. As carnivores, we were increasingly concerned by industrialised farming practices and wanted to reconcile ethical practices and sustainability with what was on our plates. After much research, we were shocked to realise the extent to which large herds of both invasive (wild deer, boar, goat) and native (kangaroo, wallaby) animals had been overlooked by the mass market as a sustainable source of protein.

With the drastic changes we have already made to the Australian landscape since colonisation, and without natural predators to curb their numbers, these species - including kangaroos - are overpopulated and damaging Australia's native habitats & agricultural land at an alarming rate. Vast taxpayer sums have been spent attempting to reduce numbers. Expensive tactics like aerial and national park culling have had limited impact, and leave thousands of kilos of edible meat left to waste in the process.

We realised the opportunity to create a business that was sustainable in all senses of the word. By engaging professional harvesters, we could create regional employment. By remunerating farmers & landowners for wild game removed from their properties, we could reward them for pest control and ensure it was done at an ethical standard, instead of on their own time and money. By removing the animals, we could conserve native habitat. By building a retail brand

around the product, we could provide a healthy, local source of animal protein that was near carbon neutral and far lower impact than any other red meat.

We initially formed Discovered Wildfoods as a branded wild venison purveyor - the first issue we wanted to address was the rampant overpopulation of Sambar and Fallow deer in Victoria and New South Wales. In order to set up a collection network for these species, we partnered with one of Australia's oldest game harvesting companies - Wild Game Resources ([Wild Game Resources Australia](#)) - who had wide experience in both kangaroo and boar harvesting across New South Wales.

Since our launch in August 2020, and in partnership with WGRA, we have expanded our range to also offer wild boar and kangaroo from New South Wales, and wallaby from Tasmania.

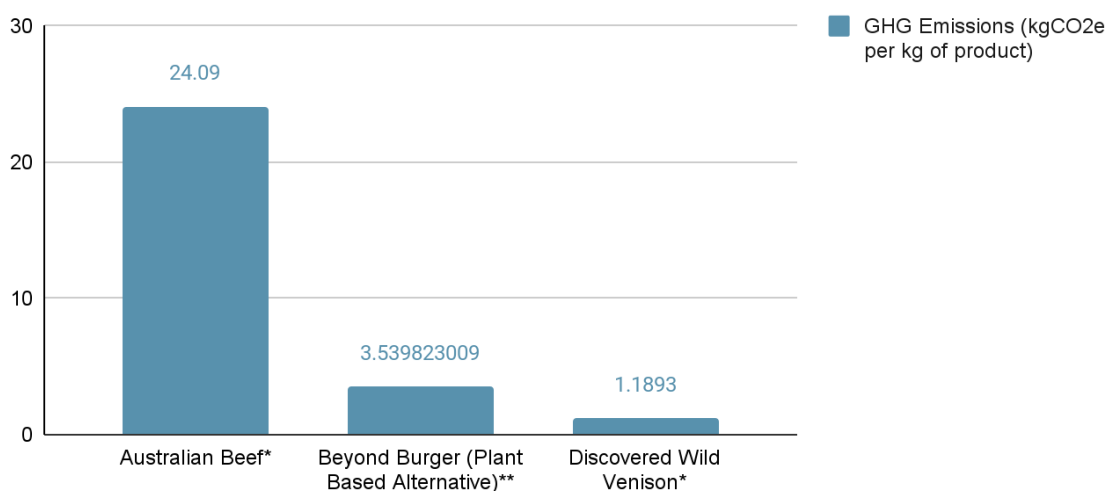
(2) Life Cycle Analysis - Wild Game & Carbon Neutrality

One of the most powerful learnings we have made through Discovered is the footprint of Australian wild game meats.

We conducted a thorough Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) of our debut product line - wild Sambar venison - with the [Carbon Reduction Institute \(CRI\)](#) in 2020. CRI's assessment relied upon site-specific data from our operations (e.g. fuel, power, water consumption, waste generation), as well as published sources of relevant data and emissions factors. It also followed the standards outlined by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard (1), as well as the series of international standards for LCAs: ISO 14040 and ISO 14044.

A copy of the LCA is attached in Annexure, as well as a copy of another third party LCA from Beyond Meat - a major international manufacturer of plant based meat alternative "Beyond Meat". Side by side, these studies clearly show that wild game meats can have less emissions on a per kg basis than Australian farmed beef, or even plant based alternatives.

Carbon Footprint of Wild Game, Traditional Proteins & Plant Based Alternatives



*Per Discovered Wildfoods LCA - Carbon Reduction Institute (2020)

**Per Beyond Meat LCA - University of Michigan (2018)

After completing the LCA, it was an easy choice to pursue carbon neutral certification as the amount of offsets we needed to purchase was extremely minimal. We are currently undergoing a similar study of the footprint of kangaroo. Given that the operational setup of kangaroo harvesting by WGRA is extremely comparable to the collection of wild venison, we are extremely confident of a similar outcome with respect to the carbon footprint of kangaroo.

(3) Harvesting - Commercial vs. Private and the Risk Space

Through our partnership with WGRA, and the process of recruiting, vetting, on-boarding and managing networks of commercial harvesters and property owners to source wild game meats, we have also learnt the following:

(a) The commercial game harvesting industry is held to an incredibly high standard.

There are extremely strong regulatory and commercial mechanisms in place which ensure commercial harvesters deliver high ethical standards in the field.

In order for a harvester to become qualified, they must undergo rigorous accreditation processes, including training on the ethical treatment of animals, sharpshooting tests, protocols for tagging, population control quotas, and food safety. There is a considerable cost to this effort in terms of both time and money.

Once accredited, harvesters can only sell animals which have been tagged in accordance with the regulations and harvested to certain standards - e.g. headshot only, harvested from a property where quotas are still open. Regardless of the harvesters personal views, there is zero incentive for them to deviate from these standards, as otherwise their effort, time and investment in the field will go unrewarded.

This licensing and tagging protocol also means all animals harvested by the commercial industry are traceable and audited.

(b) The highest risk to animal welfare and effective population control is the lack of regulation of pest control on private properties.

By contrast to the commercial industry, private landowners and farmers are essentially able to cull kangaroos and other invasives with extremely little oversight.

Private landowners and their workers need no special accreditation or training to conduct kangaroo culls on private property. There is nothing in place to ensure that kills are made as swiftly and ethically as possible. There are no effective policies in place regarding tagging, carcass disposal, humane treatment of females with dependent young, or to otherwise ensure managed quotas are complied with. We have personally witnessed disturbing incidences of private culling by landowners who have no regard for the policies in place for the commercial industry.

We also believe that allowing unmanaged private culling of kangaroos is a huge loss of an opportunity for Australia from both a national carbon footprint and regional economic development perspective.

If private landowners needed to allow commercial harvesters access to their properties for kangaroo culling, there would be a guarantee that this could be done to a high and audited standard. The landowners would receive remuneration for the access given, instead of spending time and money to conduct their own culls. The meat could then be used commercially for either pet food or human consumption markets, providing a far more sustainable source of protein and avoiding contaminants being left in a field to rot.

Should you have any questions in regards to this submission please do not hesitate to contact me. I would also be happy to appear at the inquiry hearing should the opportunity arise.

Many thanks,

Tara Medina

Director
Discovered Wildfoods

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