

Supplementary
Submission
No 376a

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 26 April 2021

Partially
Confidential

Inquiry into the health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales.

Further to my confidential address to the Committee I would like to provide details from my personal experience which relate to points included in the Terms of Reference.

I will refer to a 'Licence to Harm Kangaroos and other Macropods' as 'Licence' in this document.

While I only address some points in the Terms of Reference, and from a semi urban location as compared to large remote properties, the same/similar problems exists with the Licencing process. However in the large remote properties there usually are no independent 'witnesses' to what takes place during the killing of kangaroos and other macropods. In both situations there is no process in place to establish the numbers of kangaroos or other macropods killed by landholders.

I believe my lived experience strongly highlights many of the shortcomings and failures in the current process of determining if a Licence should be issued and the deficiency/absence of relevant follow up by the issuing agency to ensure requirements and Licence conditions are being adhered to.

What I have been told about the issued Licence:

A Licence to Harm Kangaroos was issued to landholders in my immediate area
Included in the application
was the applicant's property (adjoins my property),
claimed to be the 'occupier' of the
property. The landowners of all properties were classed as 'Primary Producers' regardless of the size of their properties or the size of their business operation. It appears this status enabled them to apply for the Licence.

- I was informed by a police officer that the Licence to Harm Kangaroos issued to the applicant was a Commercial Licence.
- I was informed by the NPWS officer who approved the Licence the 'quota' allowed 25 kangaroos/wallaroos to be killed over the period of the Licence.
- The application for the Licence showed incorrect details of the properties involved, in fact including a property belonging to another Landholder who was not aware their property had been included in the application.
- It appears from what I have been told that the application grossly exaggerated the number of livestock (mainly cattle) which was being grazed on those properties and impacted by kangaroos and other macropods and causing loss of income.
- On questioning the NPWS officer who had approved the licence there was no clear identification of what (if any) 'non-lethal methods' the landholders had used to 'mitigate' the problem prior to a Licence being approved.
- The NPWS officer informed me that _____ had acted correctly in approving the Licence, in spite of the valid reasons for denying the Licence presented in this document, including the geographical location of the properties and the danger to Public.
- The applicant is required to notify the Police and neighbours before killing kangaroos and other macropods. **The applicant did not notify myself or other neighbours in the immediate area.** The NPWS have no procedure to ensure this happens.
Notification to Police and neighbours should be mandatory.

Should this Licence have been issued by the NPWS?

The area where this Licence was issued is a semi-urban area in close proximity of _____, with public school, shops, cafes and over 60 houses *less than 500 metres from the properties included in the application*. In fact one of the properties included in the Licence adjoins residential housing _____.

_____ is a busy road servicing all the properties included in the issued Licence and 3 connecting streets/roads _____. The road services:

- Residential homes on house blocks;
- Acreages of varying sizes but mainly between 5 acres and 25 acres, often interspersed. Some have more than one house on them;
- _____ facility where church, other forms of religious study and retreats are held regularly during the week and at weekends;
- _____ a very popular tourist spot
- A 'Wildlife Corridor' sign is on the outer verge of the road
- The majority of one property is recognised under NSW planning as 'Terrestrial biodiversity' and a wildlife buffer.
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Clearly livestock could not be contained in this property with the fencing almost non-existent. Did the NPWS officer who approved the licence actually inspect this property before approving the Licence?

I have spoken to many people over the past 3 years who have been totally shocked by a Licence being approved in our area and by the very organisation that most Australians believe protect and advocate for our wildlife, the NPWS. I have also spoken to retired and current employees of NPWS, who prefer to remain anonymous, who were shocked and greatly disturbed by the issuing of this Licence.

Terms of Reference;

1(b) the accuracy with which kangaroo, and other macropod, numbers are calculated when determining population size, and the means by which the health and wellbeing of populations is assessed,

Kangaroos and other macropods are migratory which makes it difficult to calculate population size both in a semi-urban area and particularly in more remote areas.

So how was the population size in my area calculated? It seems very unclear how the population could be calculated. I believe from my enquiries that the information obtained from the applicant stating the numbers of kangaroos and other macropods in my area were used as the basis of the Licence application. To my knowledge it appears the NPWS officer did not speak with any surrounding landowners to compare/verify those numbers.

Term of Reference;

1(c) threats to kangaroo, and other macropod, habitat, including the impact of:

- (i) climate change, drought and diversion and depletion of surface water sources,**
- (ii) bushfires,**
- (iii) land clearing for agriculture, mining and urban development,**
- (iv) the growing prevalence of exclusion fencing which restricts and disrupts the movement of kangaroos,**

I live in an area which due to constantly increasing development, including extensive residential development, resulting in massive land loss, having significant impact on kangaroos, other macropods and all wildlife. Larger acreages are being sold and various development is taking place resulting in partial or total loss of habitat for wildlife, creating real threats to their health, wellbeing and their survival. My area has numerous smaller 'lifestyle' acreages. Many of these are purchased as 'hobby farms', where the aim of the landowner is to enjoy more open space. Most of the landowners opt to restrict entry from most/all wildlife and feral animals such as deer.

Exclusion fences can include post and rail, mesh, 5-6 rows of barbed or plain wire, all disrupting or preventing the movement of kangaroos and other wildlife.

Dams and waterholes are being filled in to enable development therefore wildlife are forced to travel further and often take more risks to their safety, particularly in drought times, to find sufficient water to survive.

Our area was experiencing a severe drought when the Licence was issued to the applicant.

Our area is a Wildlife Corridor with a 'Wildlife Corridor' sign clearly displayed

Terms of Reference;

1(d) current government policies and programs for kangaroo management, including:

- (i) the method used for setting quotas for kangaroo culling,**
- (ii) the management of licences to cull kangaroos,**
- (iii) temporary drought relief policies and programs,**

With an application for a Licence it is not sufficient for an applicant to state 'details' on an application without verifying documentation. Proof should always be required eg the number of stock a landholder states he has; a map of the general area not just the relevant properties. Validating with comprehensive documentation from the applicant must be a mandatory requirement by the agencies issuing licences.

The present Licence application system is a flawed system based almost solely on 'honesty'. Adequate protection for Kangaroos, other Macropods and all other wildlife is being severely compromised and diminished. The current system is naïve at best but my experience in my area shows that the system is deficient and the agencies involved, including the NPWS, appear to be negligent and fail their duty of care to the Public's safety by issuing a Licence in

a geographical location where there is a real risk from firearm use to the Public's safety. But in particular, they fail to protect Kangaroos and other Macropods by issuing a Licence in a Wildlife Corridor, in critically endangered

How was the quota of 25 kangaroos determined by the NPWS officer?

It is unclear how the quota of 25 kangaroos and other macropods (migratory wildlife) was set.

As stated in my address to the Committee my observations verified shooting by a minimum of 2 shooters most nights, all night or most of the night and shooting often in the days, during this Licence period and does not correlate with the applicant's statement of kangaroos or other macropods killed.

Furthermore could the applicant renew the Licence (by phone or email) even though the 'need' was totally questionable? Yes the applicant could reapply for another Licence and most probably be issued one as it appeared the Licence conditions had been met.

Under Licence conditions the applicant was required to notify the NPWS if his firearm licence was suspended/revoked. The applicant had not notified the NPWS. *It appears there is no mechanism in place for the NPWS to check the status of an applicant's firearm licence before re-issuing a Licence to Harm Kangaroos.*

Terms of Reference;

1(f) regulatory and compliance mechanisms to ensure that commercial and non-commercial killing of kangaroos and other macropods is undertaken according to the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and other relevant regulations and codes,

1(g) the impact of commercial and non-commercial killing of kangaroos and other macropods, including the difficulty of establishing numbers killed by landholders since the removal of the requirement for drop tags,

The fact that a Licence is issued under an 'honesty system' where the applicant will provide accurate numbers and type of kangaroos and macropods killed. It is naïve at best for governing bodies and licencing agencies to believe that the numbers of kangaroos and other macropods killed stated by applicant is accurate if there is no system in place to verify those numbers. If there is money to be made by selling carcass or parts of the carcass eg skin, tails etc and demand is high then clearly a lucrative market would exist and could/would lead to inaccurate numbers being presented. We are well aware the demand for products obtained from the kangaroo carcass is in great demand in Australia and overseas

The welfare of kangaroos and other macropods is not genuinely being considered if it is left up to the applicant ONLY (or their representatives) to declare the numbers they have killed. The system is a 'cop-out' with the Licence administering agencies requiring ONLY a 'tick the

box' response from the applicant before a phone call or an email will renew their Licence and the process of killing kangaroos and other macropods can start over again. And possibly be repeated many times over many years.

Summary

The Inquiry enables a scrutiny and review of the processes. Shortcomings of agencies, including the NPWS Licencing procedures need to be addressed and real changes endorsed and made mandatory.

To provide more funding for NPWS or other relevant agencies without those changes would be guaranteeing that a flawed system would be further empowered and the real losers for many years to come would be the Kangaroos, other macropods, all other wildlife.

Our kangaroos, other macropods and all wildlife deserve better.