



# Australian Wildlife Protection Council

A voice for wildlife

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Ref: MINO13307  
1 April 2016

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Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated 8 March, regarding the Commercial Harvesting of Kangaroos. You write that each year DELWP authorises the control of kangaroos to reduce the *damage they are causing to commercial crops, and the financial loss to landowners*. We question, however, how rigorous is the requirement that **all practical, non-lethal control options are exhausted before an ATCW is issued?** You claim that all ATCWs have strict conditions to ensure animals are controlled humanely. Without employing professional shooters, and RSPCA supervision, just how accurate can landowners be? We do hear of horrendous injuries to animals, that suffer from non-lethal shots from amateur shooters.

You say that site inspections to assess the actual numbers and status of the wildlife populations in question, *yet DELWP does NOT undertake landscape scale management plans for common wildlife populations in question*. So, we assume that DELWP does not know at any time how many kangaroos are in Victoria, so it would be impractical for the Department to know, and whether the site inspections by Wildlife Officers are the norm, or the exception?

On one hand you commend kangaroos as being an integral part of Victoria's natural ecosystems, and are protected under the Wildlife Act, 1975. Later, you claim that the Kangaroo Pet food trial will continue, using "waste" from ATWCs issued! There's a conflict of ecological benefits, over short-term monetary gain from their deaths.

The executive and members of AWPC are concerned that there are glaring conflicts of interests, in DELWP being the protector of wildlife, administers of the Wildlife Act, and at the same time distributing landholders ATCW to destroy them. With commercial interests involved, and the seemingly "pest"-control basis of the ATCWs, more of them are likely to be requested and issued – based on industry and monetary gain from the pet food industry! It then becomes a de-facto introduction of a commercial kangaroo meat industry for Victoria, something that was denounced by previous governments, and the CSIRO, back in the early

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1980s as being unsustainable – due to insufficient animals, and intensive farming.

- We are also concerned by the lack of transparency, and a Review process with stakeholders to question the validity and thoroughness of the issuing process
- We wonder just how frequently and regularly do site inspectors actually, and exhaustively, advise landholders of alternative measure to avoid lethal controls
- without wildlife corridors, just how much land is safe, connected and reserved for wildlife, even “common” animals such as kangaroos, numbers can decline – and there are many cases of once common animals becoming extinct.
- The Victorian fires in 2008, and subsequent fires, claimed the lives of huge numbers of wildlife.
- Thousands of kangaroos and other wildlife are killed or injured in road accidents each year. Kangaroos feed in the early morning and late afternoon at dusk and are often hit when crossing from one part of a grazing area to another on the opposite side of the road. In the years ended 30 June 2015 and 2014 we recorded over 6,000 animals hit by vehicles in the state of Victoria with the two preceding years recording 4,655 and 3,801 respectively. (Wildlife Victoria)
- Minister Peter Walsh said that he “did not expect the processing of Victorian kangaroos to lead to any more kangaroos being killed in Victoria, but once there's monetary gain from the carcasses, there's no limit to how many landholders will see kangaroos as agricultural “pests” - and have them lethally “managed”. -The number of Eastern Grey kangaroos allowed to be killed in Victoria has more than doubled in the two years the government has permitted the commercial processing of kangaroo meat. (The Age, March 10, 2016) We suggest that this increase is no accident, but motivated by the \$1.4 million pet food trade.
- Without knowing just how many kangaroos in Victoria at any time, and assuming fluctuations due to climatic conditions, it remains a subjective and arbitrary assessment to what level of killings is sustainable.
- We are concerned by the kangaroo meat lobbying, that with declining numbers of kangaroos in NSW, their interests are in extending the industry to Victoria.
- On what statistics is this Government basing their figures and their assumption that Victoria is able to sustain the slaughter of up to 70,000 kangaroos each year? Prior to this trial it was accepted that the annual number of Kangaroos shot under permit was around 30,000, but there has never been a comprehensive count of kangaroos in Victoria because the terrain makes it too difficult.
- Councils can see an opportunity to add to their coffers, and thus support a “cull”.
- Applicants for a ATCW do not pay a fee. The cost falls onto Victorian tax payers. If landholders were required to pay for their permits and numbers issued would be drastically reduced.

Thank you for you response, and we look forward to challenging the State Government over the flexibility of distributing ATCW, and vested interests of landholders/industry in killing kangaroos.

Sincerely  
Maryland Wilson, President  
Vivienne Ortega, Secretary

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