



PRESS RELEASE - NSW GOVERNMENT DECLARES “OPEN SEASON” ON KANGAROOS

The Animal Protectors Alliance deplores the NSW government’s cynical and vicious decision to relax licensing requirements for slaughtering kangaroos.

“Essentially, the government has invited every bloodthirsty thug with a gun to blast away at these gentle, innocent beings” said spokesperson, Frankie Seymour “The government has sentenced untold thousands of animals to a cruel and dreadful death: adults to slow death from poorly aimed shots or deliberate wounding; pouch joeys to inexperienced head bashing; unweaned at-foot joeys to death from starvation, dehydration or exposure; and even the survivors to suffering and death from stress, grief and myopathy.”¹

“Governments, farmers and many journalists use nonsensical terms like ‘overrun with kangaroos’ and ‘plague proportions’, to justify this brutal attack on native animals,” Ms Seymour continued. “And members of the public fail to question this preposterous excuse for a wholesale massacre. People observe the current drought driving vastly depleted populations of kangaroos to roadsides and peri-urban areas in search of food and water, and assume there must be ‘millions of them’”.

Independent experts estimate that numbers of eastern grey kangaroos (EGKs) in NSW have already dropped to around 11% of their numbers at the time of European settlement. This is a slow-breeding species: they mature slowly; females can only bear one baby per year, and most of those are taken by predators (mainly foxes) before they are weaned; and they do not breed at all when food is scarce. When a kangaroo population is not under pressure from ‘culling’ and ‘harvesting’, it stabilises in equilibrium with its environment.²

Unlike sheep and cattle EGKs do not damage the environment because they bound on soft feet and bite grass off above the ground, rather than gnawing down to soil (like sheep) and ripping grass out by the roots (like cattle). They can travel long distances using relatively little energy. They consume far less water and release only a small proportion of the methane released by sheep and cattle.²

Kangaroos are recognised as a keystone species because the way they ‘engineer’ the grassland is essential to the survival of other native species, many of which are already recognised as endangered².

“Already reduced by an order of magnitude since European settlement, kangaroo populations are suffering a further crash in the current drought,” observed Ms Seymour. “This open slaughter policy may well ensure that this beautiful and iconic but slow-breeding, and heavily persecuted species will never recover from the current drought.”

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¹ References for this information are on the following page.

² Scholarly sources for this information are in the following page.



References or kangaroo facts

Issue	Reference
Kangaroos a keystone species	Wilby A, Shachak M, Boeken B 2001. Integration of ecosystem engineering and trophic effects of herbivores. <i>Oikos</i> 92: 436-444
Kangaroos vs sheep: water consumption	A.J. Munn, T. J. Dawson, S. R. McLeod, D. B. Croft, M. B. Thompson and C. R. Dickman, 2009, <i>Field metabolic rate and water turnover of red kangaroos and sheep in an arid rangeland: an empirically derived dry-sheep-equivalent for kangaroos in Australian</i> , in <i>Journal of Zoology</i>
Kangaroo vs sheep and cattle: methane emissions	Vendl C, Clauss M, Stewart M, Leggett K, Hummel J, Kreuzer M, Munn A, 2015, <i>Faster digestion in kangaroos reduces methane emissions</i> , in <i>Journal of Experimental Biology</i>
Kangaroo teeth vs sheep and cattle teeth	Dawson, T, 2012, <i>Kangaroos</i> (2 nd Edition), in <i>Australian Natural History Series (CSIRO)</i>
Kangaroo cessation of breeding when food is scarce	Burnie, David, Don E. Wilson, 2001, in <i>Animal</i> , pp. 99–101
K a n g a r o o reproduction	Dawson, T, <i>ibid</i>
Predation on kangaroos	Peter B. Banks, Alan E. Newsome and Chris R. Dickman, 2000, <i>Predation by red foxes limits recruitment in populations of eastern grey kangaroos</i> , in <i>Austral Ecology</i> , 25(3) p283
Left alone, kangaroos maintain stable populations in equilibrium with their environment	Arnold, GW, Grassia A, Steven DE & Weeldenburg JR 1991 <i>Population ecology of western grey kangaroos in a remnant of wandoo woodland at Bakers Hill in southern Western Australia</i> , in <i>Wildlife Research</i> 18 (5): 561-575 Coulson G, Alviano P, Ramp D, Way S 1999 <i>The kangaroos of Yan Yean; history of a problem population in Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria</i> 111(1): 121-130
Crash since European settlement	Mjadwesch R, 2001, in <i>Kangaroos at Risk: Counting Kangaroos</i>
Frequently not killed by first shot	Regional Friends of Wildlife submission to Environment and Sustainability Commissioner Robert Neil, December 2014 . pp 20,162 Attachment K (photographs from the ACT government's kangaroo burial pit 2012); and . pp 20, 159, Attachment J, autopsy report by Doctor Howard Ralph on body recovered from the ACT government's kangaroo burial pit 2012
Pouch joeys bludgeoned to death by law	Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, <i>National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-Commercial Purposes</i> , p13 Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, <i>National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos for Commercial Purposes</i> , p13
At foot joeys routinely orphaned	ACT Administrative and Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Transcript of Hearing on ACT Government Kangaroo Cull 2014 (evidence from Dr George Wilson, observer engaged by ACT government to witness shooting during the 2012 ACT government 'cull').
Impacts of kangaroo shooting on survivors	Garlick S and Austin, R, <i>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Kangaroos</i> , at Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference, 2014