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HUMANE
ECONOMY**

Sussan Ley

Minister for the Environment
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Brussels, 22 October 2021

Dear Minister Ley,

Considering the findings from the parliamentary inquiry on the New South Wales kangaroo hunting industry, we - the undersigned organisation - jointly call on the Australian Government not to approve the New South Wales (NSW) Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2022-2026.

As the EU is the first destination of Australian exports of kangaroo-based products, European animal protection organisations, jointly with their Australian and US counterparts, have been scrutinising the commercial kangaroo hunting industry for several years. They have already [called upon](#) the EU to put an end to these imports, based on animal welfare concerns.

On 15 October, the Parliament of New South Wales (NSW) published the results of an in-depth parliamentary inquiry on the [Health and Wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in NSW](#). The findings of this inquiry are a clear confirmation of the ethical concerns surrounding the commercial kangaroo industry, and of the need to put an end to the trade in kangaroo meat and skins.

The report from the inquiry provided ample evidence on the cruel treatment of animals stemming from kangaroo hunting. Animals are shot at night, in remote areas without scrutiny or enforcement, leading to non-lethal shots that cause horrific injuries and a slow death. If females are killed, dependent joeys endure a cruel and violent death, or are left in the field to suffer exposure to starvation or predation. The Australian and NSW government admitted in the inquiry that there are no records kept on how many baby joeys are killed every year by the commercial killing of kangaroos. They are the forgotten part of this trade of wildlife.

As an illustration, the following are observations made by the inquiry committee on the animal welfare dimension of kangaroo hunting:

- *“Given that the breeding cycle of kangaroos means many females shot would have dependent young at any time of the year, it is readily apparent that the **killing of otherwise healthy young animals is the reality of the kangaroo industry.**”*

- *“Nevertheless, we are concerned that the **prescribed method of killing** with a single head shot is sometimes **not achievable in a real world scenario**, where kangaroos are shot in the dark at a distance. The committee notes evidence that some kangaroos, even those killed by commercial shooters, are not being killed with a fatal head shot.”*
- *“The committee is concerned by reports of animal cruelty going unexamined, leading to lack of confidence in the management of both commercial and non-commercial kangaroo killing.”*
- *“There is a **lack of monitoring and regulation at the point-of-kill during both commercial and non-commercial killing** of kangaroos.”* There is thus no supervision in the field to verify that killing was done humanely.

From a conservation perspective, the inquiry also found that the NSW government's methods of counting kangaroos was not transparent and population estimates used to establish the annual commercial kill quota are likely to be overestimated. The correction factors used increase each year and current figures seem unlikely considering the slow reproduction rate of kangaroos and other environmental factors (such as drought, fires and loss of habitat). The recent inquiry also placed doubt on reported population numbers and recommended independent scrutiny of the population estimate methodology and quota setting:

- *“The current methodology used by the DPIE to produce estimates of NSW macropod populations lacks transparency.”*

The findings of the NSW parliamentary inquiry also include the following on the impact of this industry on indigenous people:

- *“The draft NSW Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2022-2026 makes reference to taking into account the interest of Aboriginal communities but the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment was **unable to demonstrate how Aboriginal concerns about kangaroo welfare and spiritual importance are being addressed.**”*
- *“The **shooting of kangaroos has a profound impact on the mental health of some Aboriginal people, kangaroo carers and rescuers.**”*

Considering that all these findings confirm the significant impact of the NSW kangaroo hunting industry on animal welfare, conservation and on indigenous people, we strongly call on you not to approve the NSW current plan for the commercial killing of kangaroos, as these proposed quotas do not take into consideration the results of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Eurogroup for Animals

LAV

GAIA

Fondation Brigitte Bardot

Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals [Dierenbescherming]

Pro Wildlife

The Center for a Humane Economy - US

Voiceless

Kangaroos Alive - Australia