

MINUTES OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE NSW KANGAROO MANAGEMENT ADVISORY PANEL.

OEC CENTRE, DUBBO – 1st June 2006

PRESENT: Joshua Gilroy – Chair (DEC), Nicole Payne (DEC), Sarah Carr (DEC), Jodie Saville (DEC), Sandy Bright (PAWD), Rosemary Barnes (NSW Farmers Assoc), Geoff Woods (DPI), Marie Russell (RLPB), Michael Mulligan (AGMPA), Michael Cavanagh (KIAA), Andrew Hansen (AVA - alternate), Tony English (AVA), Steve Coleman (RSPCA) (arrived 9.50 am)

APOLOGIES: Nil

- Phil Cameron has advised that he is no longer able to commit to the panel and an alternative representative for the Dubbo Field Naturalists will be sought.

Introduction of new Project Officer

Sarah Carr is the new permanent Project Officer, KMP. Sarah replaces James Lehane who was seconded to DEC, and has since obtained a position with the Commonwealth government as an environmental investigator. Sarah came from DEC in Tumut, and has experience in wildlife management.

Andrew Hansen is the alternative representative for the Australian Veterinary Association. This is Andrew's first meeting.

Arrangements for the Meeting

Travel claims *etc* available, Nicole to organise and collect.

Adoption of the Agenda

Ros Muston not here today, but will be with us through the draft of the new program and the changes, she will be back to facilitate at later meetings after all have discussed the draft with their organisations.

1. Formalities

Ratification of Minutes #4

- The minutes for Meeting #5 were formally adopted.

Review of Actions from Meeting #5

- **Action 1:** A Draft of the literature review will be sent to Panel members as soon as it is available.
Sent 24 March 2006.

- **Action 2: Provide final total allocation figures for 2005 to the KMAP members.**
Sent 16 March 2006.
- **Action 3: DEC to email an electronic version of the report into the feasibility of re-introducing skin-only shooting in NSW to all Panel members.**
Sent 3 March 2006
- **Action 4: An electronic copy of the FATE program to be sent to all Panel members.**
Sent 8 March 2006
- **Action 5: An electronic copy of “Management Action and Performance Indicators” to be sent to KMAP.**
Sent 3 March 2006
- **Action 6: DEC will send a letter to each organisation first week in May so that they can organise their response to the launch of the draft KMP 2007-11.**
Copy of draft KMP 07-11 sent with covering letter 31 May 2006.

2. Draft KMP 2007-2001

Changes from current program

Pg 2: name of Commonwealth legislation updated, inclusion of Euro, specifically stated that non-commercial culling is not regulated by this management plan.

However, non-commercial statistics are reported to Commonwealth and taken on board when assessing the commercial quota.

Pg 4: Commonwealth legislation that relates to the trade/conservation status and ecosystems. Note that this legislation covers more than just kangaroos. Benchmark noted regarding minimising pain and suffering.

Pg 6: map of commercial zones now includes SE NSW (this is a trial until 31 December 2007).

Pg 7: Fig 2 text boxes referring to non-commercial culling have been removed.

Pg 8 – 11: minor changes to boxes, which now state what each licence type allows in the context of harvesting kangaroos. Provision has been made for replacement version/s of the Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos. Slight adjustment to wording such as TAFE course completion, current for life.

Pg 12: expands the plan and considers the biology and ecology of kangaroos. Rather than attempting to summarise the huge volume of published information, the plan provides key references to where it can be found. The wording of the Commonwealth legislation is important, some sections say the plan must contain specific information, other section simply say that an assessment must have been made, implying that the plan itself doesn't have to contain the information (it just needs to be publicly available). Further information has been included on the conservation status of the species harvested. Both

Commonwealth and NSW Acts have lists of animals that are of conservation concern, these species of kangaroos are not on either list as they are not threatened.

Threats – references provided to reports that contain this information.

The rationale for keeping the plan as concise as possible is to improve its robustness to legal challenge. Regular review is needed to determine any changes to the threats to the species.

Pg 14-15: The overarching goal and aims are carried forward from the current plan, but the aims have been re-ordered to be more logical.

Pg 16-32: New section detailing Actions and Performance Indicators for each Aim.

The question of a chiller operator's handbook was raised. Work has been started on a draft, to help the chiller operators and fauna dealers. This should reduce the time spent by KM staff trying to sort out problems with returns submitted.

Action 1: When preparing the handbook for chiller operators, include consultation with AQIS (Canberra) – Steve Roberts 62716438 – industry first contact, as well as NSW Food Authority etc.

Appendix A: This is a checklist to ensure the KMP 07-11 covers all relevant sections of the EPBC Act. Those parts of the table that are not relevant have been shaded, the relevant fields have been completed. The right column makes reference to documents and shows how each issue has been addressed in the plan.

Pg 39 Note 1: The Commonwealth government requires that adherence to the Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos applies to animals taken under this plan.

The current Code of Practice has been included in this plan as per current program. Some discussion regarding the status of the review of the Code followed.

Josh pointed out that when the Code was included in the current program, it was probably the first time that many people had been exposed to the Code. Since then, the Code has been supplied to all industry licensees. However, in its current form, the Code is confusing because it also includes provisions for situations other than kangaroos killed for the commercial industry. It would be preferable for a separate Code to be developed that just covers the four large species being taken commercially.

Nicole (DEC's representative on the working group) indicated that the majority of members on the working group reviewing the Code prefer a single code because the requirements are essentially the same (eg. shotguns can only be used to euthanase an animal that has not been killed outright from the first shot).

Josh questioned whether the Code should document the standards of the commercial industry, such as reference to the accreditation standards.

Nicole confirmed that in all states some form of competency testing is required. There is a distinction between compliance and competency, you can test for competency beforehand. In NSW, applicants need to do a written test to demonstrate that they understand the Code – this test will shortly be expanded to include questions relating to DEC legislative and policy requirements.

The Memorandum of Understanding with NSW Food Authority has just been upgraded to reflect organisational restructures and name changes, and to clarify roles of each organisation. It is mainly about the swapping of information to the other, it does not allow either organisation to enforce the legislation administered by others.

Industry was asked if it requires all carcasses to be prepared as for human consumption processing – no, it does not.

Industry was also asked if all vehicle racks and trays need to be stainless steel. This is not compulsory for either human consumption or pet food carcasses. SafeFood NSW previously required stainless trays, but this requirement was inconsistent with National standards and was successfully challenged. It was noted that when NSW Food Authority licenses chiller boxes, they are licensed for either pet food storage or human consumption storage.

The ability to trace carcasses back to licences was questioned. Because tags are individually numbered and are recorded against particular property licences, tag numbers can be used to trace carcasses back to individual properties. However, because the DEC tag stays with the skin, once the skin is removed meat carcasses cannot be traced. Industry advised that some meat processors are able to trace carcasses back to the property because meat is batched in 10 minute lots with barcodes, which allows them to traceback.

Action 2: Updated MOU to be provided to all members.

Performance indicators included in the plan do not put any additional requirements on licensees, but they do require DEC to be more transparent and accountable. It allows DEC to show that the program has been administered in accordance with the plan's provisions. We assess our performance against the indicators in the report annually, and a major assessment will be done in the last year of the plan.

Industry representatives summarised the new plan : the panel agreed to only fix what needed to be fixed. Simplified the introduction of the document, the accountability factors strengthens the document.

DEC needs to deliver the plan as written, or it can be appealed. The current program had more issues, there were more contentious issues, and many people seek direct meetings with the Minister as a result.

However, the Actions and Performance Indicators simply formalise a lot of what DEC already does rather than requiring additional administrative measures.

Positive responses during the public submission period are also encouraged. Submissions need not criticise or request changes to the plan, submissions supporting the provisions are equally important in gaining feedback from stakeholders.

The Ministers always make the final call. DEC gives information about major issues/contentious points, however the Minister is provided with a copy of every submission in full, regardless of whether it is supportive or not.

The Land covers a large proportion of country readers that don't collect the SMH, still need to do rural media coverage, with Media releases and have spokesperson. Tends to be a flow on effect with radio stations, as they read their media reviews.

Terminology was raised as an issue. "Harm" is defined broadly in the NPW Act – can also relate to non-killing harm, such as disturbance of animals. The plan needs to use the terminology that is used in the NPW Act because the licensing provisions that make the plan possible are derived from this Act. Amendments are proposed to change the title of "Trappers" to "Commercial Harvesters". The terminology hasn't been updated since the original fauna protection legislation in the 1960's.

The issue of trapper numbers was raised. Industry commented that in the past a trapper licence wasn't issued unless the applicant had a letter of introduction/support from fauna dealer to buy their product. This was never a requirement in any of the previous management plans, although it was an informal policy. This practice was abandoned about 5-6 years ago as it was not working. If the industry association wishes DEC to take it up again they need to raise it again.

There is currently no body representing professional kangaroo trappers. It is likely that Government assistance would be required to facilitate the formation of such an organisation. However, it is likely that those who are interested will be "full time" trappers who are not necessarily representative of the whole group. There would also be difficulties associated with the vast geographic spread of licensed trappers and the diversity of their issues.

There are lots of difficulties associated with how to define a "full time" or "part time" trapper. These issues will come up on how to determine measures that could limit the number of trappers. Experience has shown us that as obstacles are raised (such as the compulsory accreditation), people can rise above them, and the numbers increase again. Should there be a blanket number of trappers, to limit numbers? Within NSW, the "full time" trappers are in the minority, the majority of kangaroo carcasses are coming from those shooting on average less than 1500 per year. The industry believes that it is more likely that 80 percent of carcasses are taken by 20 percent of the trappers. However, in zones where the quota is limiting, data is distorted because some trappers are restricted to shooting lower numbers by tag availability rather than choice. The recurring theme is the difficulty in managing the quota itself during a low quota period.

The KMP has no good reason to give preference to "full time" vs "part time" trappers because every trapper has the same Professional Trapper's licence. KM staff have not observed that "full time" trappers provide better quality returns or maintain their equipment better than "part time" trappers. Much hinges on the definition of "professional", is it full time vs part time, or who makes a profit?

Utilisation rates of the quota are seen as a flag for discussion.

Industry asked if there will be any impact on the new plan from the review of the fauna dealer licensing policy. The decision by DEC and agreed by KMAP not to make a recommendation to the Minister at this time will not affect the provisions of the new KMP.

People will see this as a point to challenge. The restriction on the number of Fauna Dealer licences is a policy and is not dictated by legislation. There are no plans to make a recommendation at this stage, due to continued drought and rapid change in the industry. The circumstances that prevailed at the time the consultant did the review have changed. In the past 18 months 5 or more licences have changed hands, compared to the previous rate of approximately one per year.

3. Other Business

Tag Allocation Update

Current to 15th May, doesn't included those issued for June 1 start.

Bourke zone is fully allocated on all species - doesn't have the 40:60 split as cropping is not important at the zone level and the late quota release is not necessary to reduce non-commercial culling associated with cropping. Suspect that the impact of shooters entering from other zones may be exaggerated. There may also be returned unused tags when current licences expire, which can be allocated to new licences.

Bourke-Narrabri survey block will be flown commencing Monday 5 June.

Numbers of returned unused tags can be significant – for example 3,000 currently returned for Narrabri zone and will be re-allocated. This indicates trappers “over-buying”, which we try to discourage by placing limits on tags per licence. Other zones have very few returned tags.

Trappers sometimes accuse DEC of revenue-raising by selling returned tags. However, as administrative costs are incurred in processing new licences and supplying new tags after returns are received, this process is entirely justified.

Difficult period that started in 2002 has continued longer than we thought as a result of the continued drought. Large quotas are easy to manage because demand rarely meets supply and zones are rarely fully allocated.

Industry asked if these issues can be looked at between now and October, plus the past needs to be looked at. Is there a role of the panel to help decide?

DEC indicated that we also need to look at consistency and how we can address the submission issue – be prepared and bring answers. Remember that there is not enough quota to go around. From a different viewpoint, landholders may see that the industry is working well, as total quotas are being met.

Licences are processed according to the request for tags from property owners/trappers. Historically if Bourke zone runs out of commercial quota, there is not a huge increase in non-commercial culling. These commercial licences are valid for four months. If the

unused tags are returned at the end of the licence, then we can reallocate them. Not providing automatic refunds for returned tags reduces the practice of trappers hoarding excessive numbers of tags and then returning them for a refund. This helps to keep the flow of product to processors more even.

Action 3: Non-commercial statistics for the year to date to be supplied.

The question was asked: if a trapper buys more tags than he/she can use before expiry, can a new application be lodged (6 weeks out), and can the trapper keep the excess tags for the new period? No, all returned tags go into a general pool, and are allocated to the first valid application in the queue. Tags are not necessarily re-allocated to the person who returned them.

Under normal circumstances (*ie.* quota not limiting), the landholder's signature is valid for 6 weeks, and trappers can post in the application. The Area office will date stamp it and process it on 1 July as normal. There is no disadvantage. During limited quota, there is some disadvantage to those who live further away from zone offices.

One option that was considered was a random ballot. This would entail trappers being asked to get applications in by a certain date. After that date, applications would be drawn randomly from a box until all available quota was allocated. This would make lining up outside the office pointless, and would provide equal opportunity for people who routinely post in applications.

Each year the issue is different as we try to work out how to allocate. To learn from this, do we have random allocation, this alleviates strain on the office etc.

Different systems in different zones is confusing for trappers. There needs to be consistency across zones, to make it easy to describe. However, this makes it more difficult to take local circumstances into account, on top of current climatic issues.

Industry commented that based on current allocation rates, it would appear that at least 5 zones will shoot out by September, due to rush on tags. For industry this will mean a "stop-start" supply as we wait for unused tags to come in and then go back out. If we have consistency this will iron this out.

It was suggested that the panel looks at this in the October meeting, including what has been done over the last few years.

One issue is that the eastern trappers have gone west, and quota is fully allocated. In 1986, 1999 and most likely in 2006, industry has taken virtually all the quota in most zones. This is very uncommon, and is new territory for all. When there is a population increase (or decrease in demand), the quota is high and utilisation rates fairly low. The plan aims to achieve long term sustainability for the species in wild. This means that the commercial quota will run out, and we are facing the prospect of this happening again for a couple of years because kangaroo populations probably will not rise significantly until late 2008, even if we have a good season this year.

Tag allocation statistics are updated on or shortly after the 15th of each month and are supplied to KMAP, Fauna Dealers and Area offices. Statistics are placed on the KMP

web page shortly after. There have been some recent problems with updating the web page but these should be sorted out now.

Commercial take to 5th April was also provided.

Compliance Update

So far in 2006, KMP has issued 23 fines, majority for failure to submit returns. The process is – first polite letter, then second letter with fine warning, then third has fine attached. The same process of warnings for failure to return unused tags is used.

Compliance staff have inspected 64 chillers so far. This number will increase this month as inspections underway now.

Prosecutions – 2 matters have gone to court recently. One found guilty of two charges, has been fined for one and has a warrant out for arrest for sentencing on second charge. The second case regarded sale of a carcase containing a bullet wound. The charge was proven but the Magistrate did not record a conviction or impose any penalty due to confusing licence conditions. As a result, proposed new conditions are being checked by Legal Services branch, and when finalised will be sent to all licensed trappers.

Another matter to be heard 23 June – unauthorised species shot. A case is being prepared for a second intended prosecution for the same offence.

Fines for breaches of licence conditions are \$300. One person has been fined \$500 for falsifying an Occupier's Licence application.

FATE Program

Few comments were received on the FATE proposal provided at the previous meeting. Sarah is working on information that FATE people have supplied to us, however there is very little detail of how the project's aims will be achieved. DEC is not clear on exactly what is wanted or how it will be done, it is therefore difficult to determine if it will work. From the information that has been supplied, it appears that a lot of what the project wants to achieve is achievable under the current plan, so there is no need to change the plan or Act. Some potential mechanisms may not be possible under the legislation as it stands.

The proposal has been around for several years in one form or another and has had several name changes. The original proposals included ideas for broad biodiversity outcomes, however in recent times the focus seems to have narrowed to kangaroos only. An important ongoing issue that has been pointed out previously is that unless the value of the end product can be increased significantly, it is unlikely that landholders will profit from the proposal.

The project proponents have been working with the Barrier Area Rangecare Group (BARG) to develop a trial.

Much of the information provided so far refers to harvesting kangaroos to better manage total grazing pressure, but does not detail how it will be measured. A further difficulty is that there is considerable debate over the relative grazing pressure of kangaroos compared

to sheep (*ie.* the DSE rating of kangaroos). A project that aims to address this question is in the pipeline, and the proponent has been put in touch with the FATE project people.

Funds for the FATE project seem to be coming from RIRDC and NHT.

Chiller Registrations

Sandy had received a letter from the Milparinka RLPB on behalf of a trapper. The complaint is that each time the trapper moves his registered chiller, a registration fee is charged. The RLPB and trapper believe that it should be single registration for the chiller.

There are about 18 trapper chillers registered in NSW. All trappers, even those with their own chillers, must sell carcasses to a Fauna Dealer.

Under the NPW Act, it is the site rather than the chiller box itself that must be registered. The site can have one, none or many chillers located on it. Each location must be registered. If you have multiple locations you should have registration of each location it is registered. It is critical for DEC to know where each chiller is located for compliance inspection purposes.

Without more precise information about the trapper and how he operates, DEC cannot make any decisions or give more detailed advice.

Action 4: Sandy to pass on to the RLPB that the trapper needs to contact DEC and discuss the issue further to determine if any changes can be made.

4. Next Meeting

Date for next meeting - previously Aug 8-9th and/or 15-16th had been identified. **Tuesday 15th August, 8 am start** was agreed. Members agreed it would be nice for all to get together for dinner the previous evening, as people will need to arrive the day before.

Action 5: KM staff will meet with the Commonwealth DEH to ensure all issues that have been raised to both the Commonwealth and DEC are considered before finalising the draft.

Action 6: All submissions plus summary table to be collated and sent at least a week prior to the meeting.

List of Actions

Action 1: When preparing the handbook for chiller operators, include consultation with AQIS (Canberra) – Steve Roberts 62716438 – industry first contact, as well as NSW Food Authority etc.

Noted for when chiller handbook is being prepared.

Action 2: Updated MOU to be provided to all members.

Sent with draft Minutes #6 on 20 June 2006.

Action 3: Non-commercial statistics for the year to date to be supplied.

Attached as Appendix 1 to draft Minutes #6.

Action 4: Sandy to pass on to the RLPB that the trapper needs to contact DEC and discuss the issue further to determine if any changes can be made.

Action 5: KM staff will meet with the Commonwealth DEH to ensure all issues that have been raised to both the Commonwealth and DEC are considered before finalising the draft.

Meeting scheduled 9 August.

Action 6: All submissions plus summary table to be collated and sent at least a week prior to the meeting.

Submissions and summary to 26 July sent. Expecting late submissions from NSW FA and DPI.

**Appendix 1: Number of animals authorised for non-commercial culling to
19 June 2006 (not actual cull)**

Zone No.	Name	E/Grey	Red	W/Roo	W/Grey	Total	Commercial Quota 2006	% of Commercial Quota
1	Tibooburra	0	0	0	0	0	114,906	0.00
2,3,5	Broken Hill	30	85	10	75	200	117,776	0.17
4	Lower Darling	0	20	0	30	50	37,825	0.13
6	Cobar	0	0	0	0	0	61,782	0.00
7	Bourke	100	100	0	50	250	64,649	0.39
8	Narrabri	1,345	310	25	0	1,680	93,545	1.80
9	Armidale	630	0	93	0	723	37,727	1.92
10 ²	Coonabarabran ²	2,050	255	150	210	2,665	128,392	2.08
11,12	Griffith	450	5	5	90	550	152,340	0.36
13	Glen Innes	1,005	0	390 ²	0	1,395	30,942	4.51
14	Upper Hunter	875	0	95	0	970	19,374	5.01
	Sub-total	6,485	775	768	455	8,483	859,258	0.99
16 ¹	SE NSW ¹	7,848	0	60	0	7,908	43,868	18.03
	Total	14,333	775	828	455	16,391	903,126	1.81

Important notes:

1. SE NSW commercial zone is situated within several administrative areas for the purposes of issuing non-commercial licences. The total area covered by these is **larger** than the commercial zone. Not all of these licences will actually fall within the SE NSW commercial zone.
2. There are several large properties in the Coonabarabran zone that choose to cull non-commercially regardless of the availability of commercial tags. This is the landholder's choice. This also occurs in other zones, and is especially obvious where non-commercial licences have been issued even though commercial quota is has been available for that species (eg. wallaroo tags in the Glen Innes zone have been available all this year).