

**MINUTES OF THE 8TH MEETING OF THE NSW KANGAROO MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY PANEL**

OEC CENTRE, DUBBO –17TH OCTOBER 2006

PRESENT: Joshua Gilroy – Chair (DEC), Nicole Payne (DEC), Sarah Carr (DEC), Sandy Bright (PAWD), Marie Russell (RLPB), Geoff Woods (DPI), Mike Cavanagh (KIAA), Steve Coleman (RSPCA), Greg Bates - alternate (AGMPA), Dick MacFarlane (Dubbo Field Nats)
Guests: Peter Ampt (FATE), Alex Baumber (FATE)

APOLOGIES: Rosemary Barnes (NSW Farmers Assoc), Marsha Isbester (NSW Farmers Assoc – alternate), Dr Tony English (AVA), Dr Andrew Hanson (AVA – alternate).

1. Formalities

Adoption of Agenda.

FATE presentation to be moved forward to agenda item 4. The members felt that the FATE presenters should not be a part of internal discussions.

Ratification of Minutes #7

- No changes requested.
- Minutes for Meeting #7 were formally adopted.

Review of Actions from Meeting #7

Action 1: The draft document from DEH was supplied to all members at the meeting and will be sent to those not in attendance.

Sent on the 23rd August.

Action 2: The Group asked that Joshua write to the Commonwealth with a letter of concern as to the lack of progress with the Code of Practice review.

This was done on the 23rd August. A copy of the letter was supplied to the members. The only response to date was acknowledgment of the letter, stating that this concern was also raised at the hearing in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal regarding Tasmania's macropod harvest plan.

Action 3: DEC will examine the data (male/female) and look at trends over the years.

Charts were supplied. This data indicated no significant trend. A dip in male bias in 2003 was related to the drought.

Action 4: DEC will encourage field officers to check the numbers of female/male in chillers.

This will be discussed in other business.

Action 5: DEC should attempt to have a one on one meeting with those representatives that could not be available for today's meeting.

Representatives were given the opportunity for this to happen but declined.

Action 6: DEC will ask FATE to make a presentation to the Panel at the October meeting.

Presentation today.

Action 7: Each group will make a submission to DEC before meeting #8 (October 17th) on how they believe tags should be allocated in next years issue. These will be circulated to the group and a discussion will be held at the October meeting.

Only four responses were received by DEC. These have been circulated to the group.

Action 8: Standing Agenda Item. DEC will report to the Panel at every meeting on compliance matters and the MoU between DEC and NSW Food Authority.

This will be addressed in other business.

Action 9: Analysis of Issues Document draft to be supplied to all KMAP members on completion by DEC.

The draft has been completed and the Panel will receive a copy when the Minister has signed it off.

Action 10: Send current tag allocation to all KMAP members ASAP.

Sent 23rd August.

2. Latest statistics

Tag allocations

- Most zones are fully allocated in main species. Tibooburra is the only zone where main species quota is still available. Griffith has red kangaroo quota available and Coonabarabran has western grey quota.
- Total commercial quota is 94% allocated statewide.
- As unused tags are returned to DEC the unused quota is being re-allocated.

Commercial Harvest

- There are still current tags in most zones, meaning that the industry is still operating.
- To date there have been 33,000 unused tags returned to DEC offices. Quota cannot be re-issued until the unused tags have been physically received.

Action 1: Summary of returned tags to be emailed to the Group.

- A newsletter will be sent to all Trappers with their renewals explaining how to apply for returned tags.
- Because of an over allocation in 1996 DEC is now more accountable with re-allocations.

3. 2007 Quotas

- DEC is still waiting for estimates for the SE NSW zone, but the impression is that there will be very little change.
- The panel was given population estimates for 2007 for the Western Plains and Northern Tablelands.
- Effectively there is no change statewide, although in some zones there are quite significant changes. Similar quota to 2006 – approx 900,000 animals.
- There has been a decline in red kangaroo populations in the Tibooburra Zone, but an increase in the Bourke and Broken Hill Zones. This may mean that the reds have moved because of rainfall patterns and food availability.
- The low density of grey kangaroos in the Lower Darling Zone is raising questions among some of the public. Grey kangaroos are more vulnerable than red kangaroos to drought conditions, particular in areas into which they have expanded due to increased availability of surface water.
- Because there will be a new style of report associated with the new management plan. The 2007 quota report has not been finalised, as the new Kangaroo Management Plan has not yet been approved. Everything will be available on the web page when finalised.
- Sandy asked the question – because numbers are not as low now as they were in the 1984 drought, does this give us more “teeth” when the questions of sustainability is raised?
- Joshua explained that his opinion was that after a year of fairly average climatic conditions he would expect that the populations would decline.
- A fairly lengthy discussion on epidemic mortality followed and what would happen if a “big wet” did follow the drought. DEC does not have any protocols in place at the moment should this happen, but this is a project that Sarah Carr will be working on next year. The panel will be kept up to date when this project commences.

4. FATE proposal

- Presentation by Peter Ampt and Alex Baumber regarding the proposal. An electronic copy of the presentation will be made available to panel members.

Questions asked by the panel after the presentation

- Michael Cavanagh: Who are the representatives for the shooters group and the CMA?

FATE: Shooter Rep: Charlie Girdler
CMA Rep: Louise Turner

- Marie Russell: Will the landholder employ the shooter who has the licence?

FATE: This has not yet been resolved. It was thought that the Barrier Area Rangecare Group (BARG) may apply for a Fauna Dealer licence, and then sell to the processor. The landholders would manage the chillers and be paid for their work.

- Michael Cavanagh: Was any research done into the similarities between this project and the South Australian program and why the shooter numbers have deteriorated there?

FATE: There was not a large amount of detail available on why it went wrong in SA. FATE has had no direct contact with people in SA but have looked at studies and will be looking into it more closely.

- Michael Cavanagh: Who ends up with the negotiating power between the shooter and the processor?

FATE: Unresolved but the key to success is that this is managed efficiently.

- Marie Russell: Can shooters export interstate directly?

DEC: Shooters must sell to a NSW Fauna Dealer. Most chillers are licensed to a Fauna Dealer who can directly ship across a border.

- Mike Cavanagh: Is the funding received by FATE for this project directly?

FATE: Yes.

- Dick MacFarlane: Will the roos shot be for human consumption or pet food?

FATE: The focus will be on human consumption and products used in Australia rather than in export products.

- Greg Bates: What is the value of the BARG proposal to the Processor when a dollar value has to come out of either the Fauna Dealer or the Shooter's pocket to fund payments to the landholders? How will this work?

FATE: If BARG cannot raise a return then the trial will fail. Landholders are happy enough at the moment with having better arrangements to manage roo numbers.

- This was the most commonly asked question by the panel – where was the extra dollar going to come from to pay the landholders?

- Sandy Bright: Of all the native animals – why choose kangaroos when there is already a commercial harvest in place?

FATE: Easier because a commercial program has already been established. Just looking for a way to get landholders more involved.

- Most of the panel are of the opinion that the Kangaroo Management Program as it stands was not a barrier to the system that the FATE program is proposing.

FATE: AT the moment there is no sharing of tags, no collective agreement and no transferring of tags. The trial will create a greater amount of flexibility and this will make a difference to the landholder.

- Joshua Gilroy: What outcomes are you looking for?

FATE:

1. Picture of harvesting over the properties involved
 2. Landholders want greater control over management. Will this method work for them over kangaroos in high populations?
 3. To generate work values
 4. Incentives – by increasing areas managed for conservation.
- DEC asked FATE to outline what their next step would be and to aim for a point in time when the proposal is on the table.
 - It was decided that FATE would await the outcome of the S120 licence proposal that has been put before DEC's Legal Services Branch for advice. If this issue is resolved in FATE's favour they would then present a definite proposal with a summary of the outcomes to be tested. This would then be sent to all organisations within KMAP for consideration. Each organisation would have the chance to respond.
 - Marie Russel asked FATE if they had any objections to the members speaking to members of BARG. FATE offered no objections, but cannot provide contact details due to privacy constraints. However, as some panel members already know some BARG members this is not an issue.

5. Tag Allocation methods.

- Because of low quotas over the last 3-4 years administering the quota has been a real challenge. If DEC did not intervene and left the quota allocation to its own devices most or all zones would be fully allocated and run out of quota before winter crops are needing protection.
- DEC has decided that methods of allocation that promote trappers lining up at Area offices are inappropriate and will not be continued in 2007. In 2006, the "first in, first served" method of allocation resulted in landholders in some geographic areas not being serviced. It was also an occupational health and safety issue for the DEC officers in these areas.
- Submissions were invited from the group before the meeting. Only four were received, these being from PAWD, State Council (RLPB), DPI and the kangaroo industry. These were copied to the rest of the panel. State Council's submission included verbal advice received from trappers contacted by Marie, and a written submission from trapper Brian Bambrick.
- A discussion of the suggestions made in the submissions followed.
- Some suggestion could not be considered due to legal reasons:
 1. *DEC refusing to issue licences nominating trappers who do not have their returns up to date.*
A discussion with DEC's legal branch has suggested that this is disadvantaging landholders rather than shooters.
 2. *Limit the number of trapper's licences issued.*
Normal market forces will determine this. The sustainability of the harvest and kangaroo populations is managed via the quota, regardless of the number of licensed trappers. It is not DEC's concern to govern the number of licences issued, however every licence application must be assessed on its merits.

3. *Make trapper licences valid for one zone only.*

Circumstances because of the drought have changed trapper behaviour. More shooters have to travel to different zones to access available quota. Trappers are licensed to shoot anywhere within the commercial harvest zone provided they are the nominated trapper on an occupier's licence.

4. *Allocate licences for 2 months only to part time trappers.*

There is no capacity to distinguish between "part time" and "full time" trappers. All trappers have invested an equal amount in their accreditation, rack registration and licence, and it is therefore unfair to discriminate.

5. *Follow Qld approach where tags are valid for whole year, not species specific and can be used on any listed property.*

NSW legislation is different to that in Queensland, and dictates that tags are species-specific and are issued with an occupier's licence for use on a particular property.

6. *Allocate quota to trappers based on some proportion of their historical tag use.*

DEC cannot allocate tags to Trappers determined by the amount of quota they have used previously because each trapper's circumstances may have changed over this time. With about 850 trappers currently licensed, and a relatively high turnover of licensees from one year to the next, this would be a huge task and is not practical.

Processes already in place include:

1. One licence per property per month
2. Tag restrictions per property *eg.* size categories. Circumstances are different across the state, therefore restrictions vary from zone to zone.
3. Re-allocate unused quota as quickly as possible after tags are returned.
4. 40%-60% split of quota release in zones where cropping is widespread. The panel agreed that in zones where cropping is not significant, there is no need for this split release to provide for crop protection.

Cobar and Lower Darling zones are expected to fully allocate their quotas before the end of the year, and with some cropping in these zones, this could generate an increase in non-commercial culling. The panel agreed that it would be easier to relax restrictions rather than impose them mid way through the year. In these two zones 40% of the quota will be released initially, then the rate of allocation will be considered at the March KMAP meeting. If it appears that the first 40% of quota will not be allocated significantly before June, the restriction will be removed and the remaining quota will be allocated without delay.

KIAA also thought that the 1st June date for the 60% release date should be fluid, if for example crops were planted in May.

Other suggestions were:

1. *Lift the minimum weight.*

There is no conservation benefit in doing this.

2. *Stagger applications over the months*

This is difficult to administer, and could result in a less equitable distribution of tags.

3. *Shorter licensing periods with a blanket extension on all tags should there be unexpected weather conditions.*

Extensions are granted only in exceptional circumstances, and require every licence to be amended individually in the customised database. Reducing the duration of licences would increase the risk of some situation (such as significant rainfall) preventing trappers from using tags, and would thereby increase DEC's workload unreasonably. Four months is still seen as a good compromise between minimising the risk of unforeseen events, and providing for re-allocation of unused quota within a reasonable timeframe.

4. *Property by property allocation of tags*

5. *Postpone start date of quota release 1st January 2007*

Many trappers and landholders may not have had access to commercial quota for several months, and delaying the start of 2007 quota will further reduce access.

- After all suggestions had been considered it was thought that a ballot system of release was the only way DEC could stop the line up of trappers at some DEC offices. It was decided that if by the

15th December 2006, applications were received for more quota than is available, then applications would be randomly selected until the available quota was fully allocated.

- It was also decided that the 60% of release in June would be staggered, with 30% to commence in June and 30% in July.
- DEC would work out of session on finalising a quota allocation strategy and send to panel members.

Action 2: DEC to determine what marks the boundary between zones six and seven and send to the members.

6. Other Business

Sex Ratio

- A report has been done by DEC and this was handed to the panel members. There has been only a slight change in the ratio of males to females harvested, with 2003 the most prominent.
- Drought conditions tend to reduce the opportunity of trappers to be selective, as larger animals (therefore males) seem to have a higher mortality and females comprise a larger proportion of the population available to trappers.

Compliance Update

- 70 fines have been issued for the year to date.
- Pending legal advice, one trapper's licence is about to be cancelled for repeated breaches of licence conditions.
- A decision in the Tamworth Local Court resulted in \$1700 of fines, which DEC thought was disappointing. The media coverage resulting from the Court's decision however was positive.
- One case of illegal shooting locally is being finalised and should be in Court by the end of 2006.

Non-commercial Shooting.

- Statistics for the non-commercial cull as % of commercial quota were handed to the panel members.
- Overall this was equivalent to 2.8% of the commercial quota. Non-commercial culling **does not** come out of the commercial quota, this statistic is simply used to compare the scale of culling with that of the commercial harvest.
- The issue of non-commercial shooters having the same accreditations as commercial shooters was again raised.
- Legislation administered by the DEH states that all kangaroos shot must be done so in accordance with the Code of Practice, and DEC can prosecute if found not to be (licence condition).

Next Meeting

Suggestions for dates will be emailed to Panel members.

List of actions.

Action 1: Summary of return tags to be emailed to the panel.

Sent 1 November 2006.

Action 2: DEC to determine what marks the boundary between zones six and seven and send to the members.

Sent with covering letter and amended draft Minutes #8 on 15 November 2006.

Attachment: Copy of Powerpoint presentation by Peter Ampt and Alex Baumber of the FATE project.