

# **Minutes of Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Meeting #13**

**Churchill Room – Cascades Motor Inn**

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009**

**Present:** Josh Gilroy (DECC), Nicole Payne (DECC) Marie Russell (LHPA, formerly RLPB) Sandy Bright (PAWD), John Farr (NSW Kangaroo Harvester's Association Inc), Dick MacFarlane (Dubbo Field Naturalists & Conservation Society), Michael Mulligan (AGMPA), Dr Tony English (Australian Veterinary Association) Ray Scott (NSW Farmers' Association), Greg Markwick (DPI), Patrick Medway (Wildlife Preservation Society)

**Apologies:** Michael Cavanagh (KIAA), Ben Mannix (NSW Farmers' Association), David O'Shannessy (RSPCA NSW)

## **Formalities**

- Ratification of Minutes #12. Accepted.
- Adoption of Agenda. NSW Kangaroo Harvesters' Association would like mobile chiller registration and licensing added to Other Business.
- Review of Actions from #12

## **Action 1 :Done**

- *All submissions on fee review must be received by Manager, KMP by 17<sup>th</sup> October.*
- *Submissions will be circulated to all KMAP members*
- *Fee illustration spreadsheet to be sent to KMAP members for information*

## **Action 2 : Circulated -Done**

- *Manager KMP to send OzArk report to KMAP members once edits completed.*
- *Submission to be received by Manager KMP one month later*
- *All current harvesters will be sent renewal notices for 2009*

## **Action 3 : Done**

- *All submissions regarding proposed new zone must be received by Manager KMP by 17<sup>th</sup> October. Will need to make comment on Moratorium and impacts on the potential new zone.*
- *Submissions will then be circulated around all KMAP members.*

## **Action 4 : Done**

- *All submissions regarding ballot process must be received by Manager KMP by 17<sup>th</sup> October.*

## **Action 5 : Done. (Agenda Item in Other Business)**

- *Manager KMP to email documents to KMAP members and telephone those who could not attend to discuss matter with them.*
- *All submissions regarding trigger point for harvest suspension must be received by Manager KMP by 23 October. DECC will review and provide revisions to KMAP members by 31 October.*

**Other Business:** (Discussed out of agenda order – three Panel Members delayed at Sydney Airport: Mike Mulligan, Tony English and Patrick Medway)

**Administrative Appeals Tribunal:**

- A copy of the Administrative Appeal Tribunal's decision has been sent to all Panel members.
- The decision was that the Plan be varied to include a new action which states if kangaroo populations decline to specific trigger points, the commercial harvest of particular species in particular zones will be suspended.
  - When the harvest recommences it will be at the lower rate of 10% not 15% of the new population estimate for the remainder of the calendar year.
  - Surveys can be rescheduled to accommodate if required.
  - There are a few zones that are already close to the trigger point. ie. Eastern Greys in Glen Innes – lowest in recent history and if the population drops below the threshold in the next survey – harvest will be suspended; Wallaroos in Upper Hunter; Eastern Greys in Armidale.
- New South Wales Farmers Association raised the question of non-commercial shooting and whether the trigger point would affect farmers being allowed to shoot for damage mitigation.
- Non-commercial shooting would not be stopped but the continued shooting would of course slow the recovery rate of the species.
- DECC feels that the Tribunal's decision was partly due to a lot of differing information which was put before them by the expert witnesses.
- The Harvesters' Association asked if the disruption to Russian markets and the subsequent move to pet food and not human consumption be enough to trigger a significant decline in harvest? Do we need to report this on harvester's returns?
- DECC believes historical data has proven that the sample sizes are large enough to absorb this drop in weight.

**New Code of Practice for Commercial and Non-Commercial shooting.**

- Panel members have been provided with link to web access of the new Code of Practice.
- There are now separate codes for non-commercial and commercial shooting which separates the competency and ballistics issues associated with each option.
- There were not many viable options when it comes to Joeys and young at foot issues. These issues are nearly impossible to resolve.
- NSW Kangaroo Harvester's Association asked if stun guns had been considered. DECC believes stun guns are an option in Europe and are happy to look at whatever is practical in the field.
- Shotguns are still a hot issue. The Government is to look at how widely they are used and to look at alternative options.
- There are also moves to standardise the competency testing for commercial harvesters. DECC believes the NSW accreditation is of the highest standard and would not like to see a national standard that is less stringent.
- DECC has offered support to a proposal for research into euthanasia of pouch young and young at foot.

- The Harvester's Association raised concerns about an AQIS Meat Notice that was circulating amongst some shooters, threatening large fines for breaches. Most shooters are not even aware of the circular.
- DECC is not aware of any changes to AQIS legislation but will ask them if they would like us to distribute the information to shooters on our database.

(Michael Mulligan, Dr Tony English and Patrick Medway arrived from Sydney at 10.35am)

- Industry was asked if it is aware of the AQIS Meat Notice - would like the opportunity to investigate further and will report back with any comments.

### **Compliance Update**

- 2009 -
  - 2 prosecutions well advanced.
  - 1 Harvester Licence cancelled
  - Notice of intent to cancel chiller registration
  - 9 fines – 8 contravene conditions of licence  
1 Harm protected fauna.
- 2008 -
  - Fine of \$5000 for 27 untagged kangaroos shot on unauthorised property;
- DECC is working with Police to educate their officers as to what is and isn't an offence under DECC's legislation.
- Fraudulent applications are an offence, but DECC needs the assistance of the landholders involved to be able to prosecute. Minimum action taken is cancellation of the occupier's licence.
- The Harvesters' Association asked if the shooter could sign the application by proxy. DECC is not prepared to accept this.
- Landholder Panel representatives need to make their members aware that they are responsible for the conditions on the Occupier's licence being adhered to.

### **FATE/BARG progress**

- Noni McCarthy who was handling the reporting from the project has left DECC – so this is not up-to-date and final cull figures for 2008 are not available at present.
- There were two licences issued in 2008 and 7,600 of 8,000 issued were eventually shot on the first licence.
- The standard of record keeping is a problem – the inconsistencies between harvester and chiller returns are significant.
- Feedback from the harvesters involved has not been positive.
- There has been one licence so far for 2009, with 4,000 tags allocated to date.
- The project is due to conclude in June 2009.

**Action 1:** *Invite Peter Ampt (FATE) to address the next KMAP meeting*

## **Annual Report**

- The annual report is due to the Commonwealth Government at the end of March. At this point it is incomplete as analysis of data recently received is yet to be finalised.

### Discussion of key points:

- Name change last year with Kangaroo Trappers now being called Harvesters.
- Quota Allocation: Four zones went to ballot in 2008 in the cropping zones, which meant 40% - 60% allocation with staggered start dates.
- A large number of tags were returned because of rain and chiller closures. A large number of licences were extended by DECC in 2008, some lasting for as long as 8 months.
- Provision is made for returned tags. They are returned to the quota. In 2008 only 70% of the quota was used and most zones had available quota all year.
- The harvest is predominantly male biased. From 1997 – 2007 it ranged between 67-87% male harvest. As a response to claims that recorded data is inaccurate, compliance officers have been recording male/female carcasses in chillers.
- Average weights increased in 2008. This is probably due to the weight limits being lifted by 2kg and the Industry's tiered payment system.
- DECC is still required to report on Non-Commercial shooting where it overlaps commercial zones. Numbers are relatively low in comparison to commercial cull. In 2008 it was 5.5% of the quota and 9.6% of the harvest.
- Even when commercial tags are available some farmers will opt to use non-commercial tags.
- Compliance audits. Cross State border checks involving Police and NSW Food Authority.
- AGMPA will arrange for a copy of the Qld Food Authority requirements to be sent to DECC.
- DECC's performance indicators are being met.
- When the Annual Report is complete, a copy will be placed on the website and sent to all Panel members

### **2009 tag allocation and take.**

- Allocation to date slower than previous years. 2009 likely to be below 2008.
- Of the ten processing sights across NSW only five are operating.
- Entering a period where quotas will be increased and a smaller proportion harvested.
- Only one zone went to ballot (Armidale)
- Three other zones are nudging 40% and should be fully allocated this month.
- The downturn is affecting the Program, as the main source of income is from tag revenue.
- Program is running at a loss.
- Early days with centralisation – the next three to four months will be spent getting established. After that staffing capacities may need to be looked at.
- Difficult decisions to make and if the Industry does not recover DECC will have to respond with reduced costs.

### **Centralisation of licensing and new fees.**

Update of arrangements and preliminary indications:

- Only early days – and not much feedback at the moment.
- Another three months maybe before we comment.
- The temporary licensing staff in place while permanent recruitment happens.
- Definitely more efficient. The fixed costs are reined in with the flexibility to reduce costs even further.
- Harvesters will need to be more organised and will take a while to adjust.
- There is no advantage to any Harvester – there is no over the counter service.
- Feedback from Panel members:
  - The Kangaroo Association has had quite a bit of feedback and has recently had 10 new members join.
  - One shooter in Broken Hill had complained to LHPA that it was inconvenient.
- Harvester opinions will be sought by DECC via the Harvesters' Association.
- The Harvesters' Association indicated that it will pass information on to non-members as well as its members.

### **Central Tablelands zone.**

- Approval has been given to DECC to open a new zone around the Mudgee/Merriwa area.
  - The new zone will be administered from the Dubbo office.
  - This will not be a trial zone as was SE NSW. The 2007-2011 Management Plan allows for new zones to be added.
  - This will now make about 85% of the State in the commercial harvest area.
  - There will still be monitoring of Non-Commercial shooting.
  - This KMAP meeting is the first forum for the approval of the new zone to be announced and members were advised they could now take the information back to their organisations.
  - DECC will now talk to other interested parties, and will arrange for information sessions in the new zones. Representatives from Industry, Harvesters and Food Authority will be invited to speak at these sessions
  - Media will be advised
  - Members of the Panel will be kept up to date
- The process has taken 18 months.
- LHPA thanked DECC for their efforts. All other members agreed.

### **Harvester Licence Moratorium.**

- The approval of the new zone will change the recommendation which was to continue the moratorium but exempt Occupier Harvester's licences.
- New submissions were called for from the Panel, taking the new zone into consideration. How do we service the new zone / is it possible to make a hybrid policy that accepts new applicants in the new zone but not elsewhere?
- Points for the Panel to consider:
  1. Is it possible to accommodate the new zone without removing the moratorium? How?
  2. DECC does not believe it is tenable to limit new applications to those who reside in the new zone.

3. Are the problems that lead to the moratorium starting to dissipate? ie. only one zone going to ballot in January 2009
- The Harvesters Association felt that the moratorium should continue with Landholders and the new zone being exempt.
  - Industry – open up to new licensing and the balance will be automatic.
  - DECC asked Panel members their committee's opinions on the moratorium prior to the new zone decision.
    1. LHPA – maintain moratorium but exempt new occupier harvesters.
    2. Harvester's Association – maintain moratorium but exempt new occupier harvesters.
    3. PAWD – no moratorium
    4. KIAA – no moratorium
    5. Others – no strong opinions
  - The OzArk Report - no clear view. No evidence to support either maintaining or removing the moratorium.
  - DECC asked if in light of the information on demand and trends at the moment will delegates change their minds?
  - DECC would like to make a final decision by the end of April.

**Action 2:** *Final submissions from the Panel as to what they think will work and how we can accommodate the new zone. Due by Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009. Legal will then look at the submissions and advise DECC as to what is possible.*

#### **Proposed new zone – Bombala.**

- Small area with insignificant records of non-commercial culling of kangaroos. About 40% of the area is small properties less than 10 ha.
- On the basis of available Information, does not justify a survey, even if done in conjunction with the SENSW zone.

**Action 3:** *Panel to discuss with their organisations and come back to DECC with comments within 3 months.*

#### **Small Holdings**

- There have recently been several complaints in relation to shooting on small holdings. ie noise, spotlights
- The proportion of small holdings in the commercial database (properties of less than 10 ha) is 0.7%.
- Because we issue in batches of 50 tags this is not feasible on a 10 ha property and legislation does not allow neighbours to collaborate.
- Lowering of the calibre will not be accepted by animal welfare groups.
- DECC has suggested as a policy that for properties of less than 25 ha, permission from the police must be sought before we will allow a commercial licence to be issued. It is envisaged that the same provisions will apply to non-commercial licences, which have the same firearms requirements.
- This policy suggestion was unanimously supported by the Panel.

## Other business

### Code of Practice

(Discussed out of order earlier when three Panel members were absent)

- The Australian Veterinary Association would like to see the new non-commercial Code of Practice recognise “chest shots” over non-lethal head wounds. This would be preferable because non-commercial shooters are not competency tested and may not be shooting regularly, making chest shots easier and cleaner.
- The RSPCA agrees and would like to see this change made.
- As this is not the responsibility of this group it needs to be taken up with PWG.

**Action 4:** *AVA will call the DECC Manager, Wildlife Licensing to discuss.*

### Mobile chillers

- The Harvesters Association asked DECC about the possibility of allowing harvesters who own licensed mobile chillers to move these chillers from property to property by using the “transfer form” which is available to Wholesale chillers. This could also be done via a log book.
- This would be more economical to harvesters by saving them the expense of running back and forth and would enhance the product, and would be an advantage to the new zone before infrastructure is in place.
- DECC’s problem with this is not knowing at any one time where the chiller will be, making inspection impossible.
- DECC’s registration applies to a place not a chiller box and states that every place that kangaroos are stored must be a registered site.
- Food Authority and AQIS are against the use of mobile chillers. AQIS is also looking at taking over the legislation for chiller box licences from the Food Authority.
- DECC asked the Harvester’s Association to put something together in writing for discussion.

**Action 5:** *Harvesters’ Association to put a proposal regarding mobile chillers in writing for discussion.*

### For Industry information

- DECC will cancel registration sites if the infrastructure on the site cannot be used for storing kangaroos.
- Industry has no objections to this and feel some wholesalers will have an unfair advantage if this is not done.

Meeting closed 2.30pm

### List of Actions:

**Action 1:** *Invite Peter Ampt (FATE) to address the next KMAP meeting*

**Action 2:** *Final submissions from the Panel as to what they think will work and how we can accommodate the new zone. Due by Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009.*

*Legal Services Branch will then look at the submissions and advise DECC what is possible.*

**Action 3:** *Panel to discuss with their groups and come back to DECC with comments within 3 months.*

**Action 4:** *AVA will call the DECC Manager, Wildlife Licensing to discuss.*

**Action 5:** *Harvesters' Association to put a proposal regarding mobile chillers in writing for discussion.*