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Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel

Minutes - Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel #4

Meeting #28

Cascades Motor Inn 147 Cobra Street Dubbo
Wednesday 15 March 2017

Panel Members: Dr Steven McLeod (Australasian Wildlife Management Society), Ray Scott (Western Division, NSW Farmers), Chair-Dr Robert Mulley (Emeritus Professor, Western Sydney University), Ray Borda (President, Kangaroo Industries Association Australia), Ken Harrison (Regional Director Western, Department of Primary Industries), David O'Shannesy (Chief inspector, RSPCA NSW), Jason Wilson (Aboriginal Communities), Dr Tanya Stephens (Australian Veterinary Association), Mr Greg Bates (Group General Manager, Vacik Distributors Pty Ltd and Southern Game Meats Pty Ltd)

KMP Staff Attending: Stephen Wolter (Senior Team Leader, Kangaroo Management Section), Brad Purcell (Project Officer, KMS), Sandra Ryan (Support Officer, Kangaroo Management Section),

Proxy: Julie Knight (Aboriginal Communities), Doug Jobson (Manager, Macro Meats) Nathan Cutter (Technical Specialist Vertebrate Pests, Department of Industry)

Additional invitees: Robert Oliver (Biodiversity Implementation Manager – Wildlife, NPWS), Tim Gilbert (A/Director Community and Compliance, OEH)

Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

Apologies: Jason Wilson, Ray Borda, Ken Harrison, Greg Bates, Nathan Cutter

- Panellists and proxies provided a brief introduction
- No recognised conflicts of interest

Previous minutes and Business Arising:

- Previous minutes ratified – Ray Scott; Seconded Rob Mulley. Minutes will now be put onto the web site for public record.

Action 1: KMAP member list will be circulated to the Panel. Completed

Action 2: Send the completed Quota Report to the Panel with a due back by date. Completed, due back date unnecessary.

Action 3: OEH will write a letter to the Chief Executive before Friday 25 November 2016 for the Panel to review the Code and submissions before they go on public exhibition. Not completed as the legislation was/is still under review. OEH will seek confirmation of the regulatory approach to new licences from the current Minister and this action will be carried over to the next meeting for advice.

Action 4: Ken Harrison will seek approval of the Executive for the summary of the results of the Cobar workshop to be appended to these minutes. Approved and sent to KMAP. A link to the report is now available on our webpage attached to the minutes of the November meeting.



Action 5: Rob Mulley will put his case to the Chief Executive as to why Non-Government members should receive a sitting fee. The letter has been written and will be put before the Panel today in General Business, for amendment.

Action 1: OEH will seek advice from the current Minister as to the regulatory approach to new Licences.

Updates from KMAP members

Industry

- The rain in mid-October and the ‘unexplained deaths of kangaroos’ slowed the take of the quota in 2016. Most sites are now open again and moving along.
- Domestic markets are fine. Overseas export markets are soft.
- There have been no issues from animal welfare groups; and with male only shooting and no joey deaths to explain, it has been easier to market the product overseas.
- Macro meats sent their first load of kangaroo meat to Thailand late last year but with the death of Thailand’s King in October, communication has slowed. Macro are still confident with this market.
- China are asking further questions and Macro will exhibit Kangaroo meat in Tokyo and China later this year.
- Skins have no commercial value. Some skins are being dumped.
- The Californian kangaroo product access has been lost. The Bill was never put before the American Parliament and the Australian Government has not done much to facilitate kangaroo markets. The KIAA are working through strategies at the moment to put before the Parliament to win back California.
- Adidas have also been bombarded with animal welfare issues which have stopped use of kangaroo leather in their products.
- The Global Financial crisis in 2008 dropped the price of roo skins and they have never recovered.

Landholders

- Large numbers of Kangaroos are putting pressure on landholders.
- Kangaroos are starting to venture onto roads and are starting to become a problem to motorists.
- There were a lot of unexplained deaths during and after the wet months – deaths seemed to be from insect bites.

Natural resources and conservation

- No facilities to respond quickly to death reports.



Welfare

- No issues.

Aboriginal

- This forum will change perspective about kangaroos and their use by the aboriginal people.

Academic

- Interested in starting a general welfare assessment for Kangaroos

Annual report, current status of harvest activity and compliance:

- The Annual report for each year shows commercial activities for the previous year.
- Once KMAP have endorsed its contents it will be sent to the Chief Executive for approval
- The Annual report shows:
 - The harvest compared with the quota and the quota compared with the population
 - Sex bias for each zone
 - Average carcass weights (a sudden drop in carcass weights could mean a problem within the population)
 - The non-commercial take within the commercial zones (in South East Zones the non-commercial take can equal the commercial take or may actually be more)
 - Compliance statistics.

KMAP endorsed the 2017 Annual report and accepted its findings which they found to be comprehensive. KIAA stated the New South Wales document was far better than any other state.

Comments from the Panel

- Not everyone is aware of the requirement to apply for non-commercial tags; there is a lot of culling happening without a licence.
- Farmers are waiting too long for non-commercial tags to be issued and are not receiving the amount of tags they have requested. There are big inconsistencies between Area offices.
- How accurate is the male/female bias from the take, and does OEH just accept the Harvester returns? OEH does not validate the data but it is a good question for OEH compliance audits.

Identified Risks or Controversy

- The wallaroo surveys may be inaccurate and is an area for improvement using an independent validation. There is also a large number of male wallaroo being culled in proportion to the take.
- In some places the non-commercial cull is higher than the commercial cull i.e. exceeds the quota. OEH need to consider the non-commercial take and the commercial take being operated alongside each other.



- There is a long wait for non-commercial tags to be issued after the property owner has made a request. There needs to be a greater consistency between Area offices and a more standardised approach across the State. Non-commercial culling is not included in the Kangaroo Management Plan and OEH would have to get permission from the Commonwealth to include it.
- Animal welfare checks need to be done on commercially and non-commercially culled animals.

KMAP Business

- Correspondence received or sent:
 - Nil

Approved Kangaroo Management Plan:

- Completed and available on line
 - the plan has been condensed from 54 to 32 pages
 - will be updated in the next few months to be consistent with the incoming Biodiversity Conservation Act.
- Proposed changes include:
 - Discontinue requirement for harvesters to work with landholders who have occupier's licence to harm.
 - Require licensed Harvester to obtain occupier's consent before applying for tags.
 - No changes to registration of premises.
 - New wildlife management system with online applications for licences and registration, fee payments and data returns.
 - Other possible changes are – review cap on number of available wholesaler licences subject to Minister's approval; and review on the conditions for interstate import/export of carcasses to reduce red tape for harvesting operations in border regions.
 - Quota will still be managed and allocated by zone – but OEH do not want the zone or property to restrict accessibility to quota by harvesters.
 - Compliance will be managed on a risk basis not a pre-determined basis. Current plan (2017-2021) says OEH will inspect chillers once per year – not four times per year as required by previous plan. Inspect processing premises three times per year.
 - Use OEH the resources instead to target areas of high-risk.

OEH restructure, the biodiversity reforms, the OEH risk-based approach to compliance

- OEH structure:
 - NPWS
 - Heritage
 - Regional Operations Division
 - Six regions
 - Conservation Programs Branch – central support



- Policy
- Science
- Legal, IT and governance services via DPE
- OEH Compliance. The Kangaroo Management Program compliance has been transitioned. Now have regionally based compliance teams with 24 compliance staff. The Compliance teams currently undertake compliance for:
 - Native vegetation
 - Threatened species
 - Kangaroo Management
 - Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Compliance Framework- application to kangaroo Management.

Outcomes

- Maintain ecologically sustainable kangaroo populations.
- Harvesting is conducted humanely.
- Maintain public confidence.

Risks

- Sustainable population
 - Harvest relative to quota
 - Tags
 - Reporting
 - Carcass weight.
- Humaneness
 - Body shot
 - Joeys.
- Public confidence
 - Culpability
 - Public interest.
- The final outcome will be to help people comply and regulate.
- OEH are building an audit function which will identify and drive voluntary compliance.

Panel Comments:

- OEH are aware that there needs to be a lot of consultation with landholders about managing kangaroos on crown land free of charge by shooting with a non-commercial licence.
- KIAA believe landholders need to be educated on how to euthanise joeys humanely.
- Public perception does not distinguish between Professional Harvester and the 'weekend warrior'.



Broader licensing framework for wildlife management under the Biodiversity Conservation Act.

- The current regulatory framework for kangaroo harvesting is the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*:

Offences

- To harm, buy, sell, import/export or possess protected fauna.

Defences

- Action authorised by a licence
 - the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
 - Export of kangaroo products requires Commonwealth Government approval
 - Kangaroo populations remain ecologically sustainable
 - Methods of harvesting kangaroos for commercial use are humane
 - All harvesting to comply with National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes.
- The future regulatory framework will be the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.
 - Apply risk-based approach to regulating wildlife activities – low-risk (exempt from specified wildlife offences); medium-risk (comply with enforceable Code of Practice) and high-risk (maintain licensing requirement). Kangaroo Harvesting, first thought to be medium-risk has now been changed to high-risk because of stakeholder concerns.
 - Improve community education programs to promote compliance.
 - Focus compliance resources and activities on higher risks.
 - Reduce red tape
 1. Risk-based record keeping and reporting requirements
 2. Improved online application and reporting systems.

Offences

- Consolidates and simplifies NPW Act offences.
- Risk-based penalties with significant increases to maximum penalties.

Defences

- Existing exemptions from harm offences.
- Actions authorised by licence.
- Implementation: (The new Act has already passed Parliament)
 - Stakeholder consultation early mid-2017



- Implementation- mid-end 2017
 - Commencement -1 January 2018.
- Timeframes are subject to change.

Panel Comments:

- Industry asked if 'Skin Only' shooting was being considered and how they could become involved in the process of determining the removal of the Fauna Dealers cap.
- There will be no 'Skin Only' shooting; the proposal for removing the cap is already before the Minister and OEH will respond to KIAA when the new Minister makes a decision.

Action 2: OEH to send out copies of both the OEH restructure and the Biodiversity Conservation Act presentations to the Panel

Report of meeting with Cross Border Commissioner

- OEH have had a few requests from Harvesters that live close to state borders to be able to present their roos to interstate chillers because of convenience.
- OEH have had a meeting with the NSW Cross Border Commissioner, James McTavish and the other states.
- The findings were positive and some suggestions were:
 - MoUs between States to accept kangaroos under these conditions
 - Statewide Firearms Accreditation Licences that have National approval.

MoUs with other Government departments

- MoUs are moving forward
- MoUs are all about sharing information with other Agencies and not doubling up on audits.

Draft Far West Regional Plan and Cobar Workshop update

- The Report is now final and there is a link in the previous KMAP minutes on the OEH website
- Some outcomes from the meeting were:
 - Reforms for Non-Commercial culling and the inconsistencies between Area offices.
 - Reducing red tape and online reporting.
 - Educating and community awareness about the perception of kangaroo culling and the impact of kangaroo grazing for landholders; also, the benefits of the final kangaroo products.
 - Landholders coming together and dealing with kangaroos in their area.



- As a result of the Cobar workshop a new report has emerged – ‘Far west Regional Plan 2036’ which identifies areas – Cobar, Brewarrina and Bourke – where processing plants for kangaroos can be established to help with employment for aboriginal people.

Success of the new aerial survey methods and training

- The previous method of counting – Strip sampling – was less precise than new methods, with about 50% of kangaroos not counted. There were correction factors attached to the numbers to offset this.
- The new method of Mark Recapture Distance sampling along transect lines is more accurate, easier on the counters and does not need correction factors.
- Although the population counts have not increased by a lot – there is more data gathered and this is helpful in population dynamics.
- The information collected is collated in real time and the population counts are determined almost immediately saving weeks of data entry from OEH staff.

General business

Sitting Fee (Chair)

- OEH suggested the letter be sent to the Chief Executive – but are still not certain if this Panel fits within the scope. The letter can proceed on OEH Letter head.
- The Agency as a whole will consider and decide if it is precedent setting.

Action 3: OEH will forward the Sitting Fee letter to members for amendment and review. Comments back by 25/3/2017

Proposed research to assess distribution of eastern and western greys and update correction factors

- This was last done in 2000-2001
- OEH to work on

Date for next meeting

- 15 November 2017

Actions:

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