

Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Meeting #25
Cascades Motor Inn 147 Cobra Street, Dubbo
29 October 2015

Present:

Chair: Stephen Wolter, Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH)
Brad Purcell (OEH)
Ray Scott, NSW Farmers Association (NSWFA)
Greg Bates, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)
Lachlan Gall, Pastoralists Association of West Darling (PAWD)
David O'Shannessy, (RSPCA NSW)
Patrick Medway, Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc (WPSA)
Nathan Cutter, Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
Steve McLeod, Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS)
Doug Jobson, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)
John Farr, NSW Kangaroo Harvesters' Association

Adoption of Minutes of Meeting # 24

The minutes were ratified. Moved Greg Bates. Seconded David O'Shannessy

Item 1. Review of actions from meeting #24

Action 1: Stephen Wolter will send a formal letter to the NSW Harvesters Association addressing the issues raised by Harvesters' Association in the previous minutes.

Done.

Action 2: Stephen will make changes to display of information on graphs on pages 14, 15 & 16 of the annual report.

Done

Action 3: Brad to email Greg Bates (KIAA) with a list detailing the members on the Chief Executive Committee of OEH.

Done

Action 4: Brad to email panel members with a document summarising information about removal of the S121 Occupiers licence.

Done

Action 5: Brad to email Greg Bates (KIAA) and Lachlan Gall (PAWD) information pertaining to risks created by skin only shooting.

Done

Action 6: Brad Purcell will distribute the publication by McLeod and Sharp on welfare of euthanising joeys to all panel members.

Done

Action 7: Stephen Wolter will send a confirmation letter to all KMAP panel members confirming their 12 month extension on the panel.

Done

- *There was also an invitation extended to Arthur Snook (Compliance) to attend this meeting but unfortunately Arthur is on leave.*
- *Lachlan Gall (PAWD) questioned whether KMP is still running as a Business Unit.*

The Kangaroo Management Program has been returned to a recurrent funding model. Which means we are now allocated a budget for operational purposes.

Item 2: 2015 tag allocation and harvest update

- Allocation to date is 345,000 animals which is 12% of the quota
- Take is 250,000 animals – 8% of the quota
- This about 60,000 animals less than this time last year and has virtually had no impact on the quota.

Item 3: Industry Update

Animal Welfare

- Macro have recently had a meeting with Mark Pearson (Animal Justice Party) and Dr Christine Townsend to discuss the reasons for Macro implementing a “male only” cull. One reason suggested was the perception of the Joey destruction. This is relatively untrue. It was also suggested Macro stop the male only cull until further studies have been done as to how this would affect the population long term.
- The meeting corrected wrongs and Doug offered to take Mark Pearson on a kangaroo shoot and to also give him a tour of the works.
- Hygiene was also brought up. Hygiene was not the portfolio for the meeting, but Macro offered to take Mark thru the Code of Practice for Hygiene that Macro operate under.

California

- In 1971 a ban was put on the sale of kangaroo products in the States. This ban was placed on hold in 2007 after lobbying from the Australian Government, but it has had an every 5 year sunset clause which is due to expire at the end of 2015
- There is a bill before the California Senate to end the ban, but the Bill has not yet been voted on so access in 2016 is uncertain. It is currently not illegal to import into the States but it is illegal to sell Kangaroo Products.
- Effects: The skin market is not buying and Qld are dumping skins. The price of skins has dropped \$14 from their height in 2008.
- The Industry has had a lot of support from both the State and Federal Governments.

China

- Macro meats are still convinced the China market will happen.
- The Chinese have shown a real interest in the meat, but are nervous about making a decision. To give them absolute confidence in the meat, KIAA, Department of Agriculture and Barnaby Joyce, Minister of Agriculture will take Kangaroo meat to China for a demonstration. The next meeting will maybe determine when a trial can take place.

Industry Projects

- Macro currently have 3 projects they are looking at:
 1. Lactic acid as an aid in the skinning room. This is currently used as a manufacturing aid in beef products and may help with access to micro-markets.
 2. Evaluation on steam vacs – steam sanitises
 3. Moving to a “scanned” tagging system. OEH is also currently looking at a scanned tagging system in the review.

Domestic and export market trends

Domestic Markets

- Minimal growth.
- Macro have hired an agency to assist with an intense marketing program over the next 18 months to see if they can increase domestic use.
- Macro have already worked with the supermarkets to take Kangaroo meat out of the pet food sections.

Export Markets

- Demand is better. The currency (soft dollar) has helped. Belgium is the largest Exporter.
- Higher beef prices has also helped.
- Manufacturing meat is still slow. Some demand into Europe.
- Export into Japan is slow but going in the right direction.
- Macro are focusing on the health aspects of the meat.
- Doug believes Kangaroo Wholesalers need to have more confidence in the product and be more pro-active. He believes a grading system and branded products is the way of the future.

Other Industry REPs

- Nathan Cutter (DPI) asked that skin only shooting be tabled to be considered as an option in the review process. This will be discussed in Other Business.

Item 4: Review of Program

Update on review (presentation)

- **Recap of the previous year**
- **Biodiversity Legislation Reform**
- **Code of Practice**
- **Management Plan**

○ **Redesigning aerial surveys**

- The program is currently being reviewed to find ways to reduce red tape and costs and to find efficiencies in the delivery of the Program.
- The biggest issues identified were:
 1. Business
 2. Welfare
 3. Compliance
- The S121 was found to be the biggest burden to business. The S121 necessity will be taken away. Harvesters will still need the owner's consent to be on their property but this will move to a once per year consent, instead of each time the Harvester purchases tags.
- Legislative reform of the program will be conducted in line with the Biodiversity Review. A risk based approach to regulating people's interaction with wildlife would see the introduction of a tiered assessment and approval system under the proposed 'Biodiversity Conservation Act'. Relevant parts (including 7 to 9) of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* would be repealed
- The Independent Panel Review is guiding KMS through the review process
- The Independent Panel review identified significant amount of complex and bureaucratic regulations in the current approach to human-wildlife interactions. This included a high level of regulation.
- Recommendation 27 of the review was – Adopt a tiered approach to the regulation of wildlife management in NSW to credibly regulate high-risk activities and reduce red tape for low-risk activities. The four tiers would be:
 1. Exempt – no assessment, licensing or ongoing compliance required
 2. Complying – with legislative provisions, schedules and/or codes of practice and therefore not requiring assessment or licensing
 3. Assessable – assessed and licensed according to risk
 4. Prohibited
- A Code of Practice has been written for Kangaroo Management and this is currently with Legal. The Code provides mandatory conditions that MUST be complied with. A set of rules which explains how people working in a particular profession should behave. This is an enforceable Code and once you have registered then you will need to comply. This Bill was meant to go up with the Exposure Bill in November but is now looking more likely to happen in early 2016. It will then go out for public comment.
- Compliance Strategy: KMS will align with the Regional Operations Compliance Strategy, where risk is measured by:
 1. The likelihood of non-compliance and the consequences of not complying
 2. Quantify and qualify the risk to choose a management response
 3. Reactive and proactive management
 4. Measures of OEH and customer performance
- The Panel where shown a diagram of chiller sites and the chillers that, when using these measures were of highest risk.
- Redesigning aerial Surveys: OEH have contracted NSW DPI VPRU – internationally recognised leaders in population ecology research to redesign the aerial surveys. There will be an air observers training in Fowlers Gap in April or May 2016.
- Opportunities to comment: Provide written comments on Biodiversity Conservation Act Exposure Bill – including OEH's Code of Practice.
- The Commonwealth will assess the Draft KMP. The Commonwealth will seek public comment for the Draft KMP and request OEH to respond to the comments. Organisations and individuals can comment on the plan during the public exhibition period.

Joint Discussion

- Most of the Panel were concerned that they could only comment after the fact. They believe they are not being consulted and because of the absence of facts - everything they have heard is purely rumours. They believe key stakeholders need to be consulted.
- KIAA are opposed to skin only shooting and it has been rumoured that this is back on the table.
- John Farr (NSW Harvesters' Association) thought that skin only shooting should be back on the agenda as it is not only the Industry that is suffering – shooters are suffering as well and skin only shooting would give them another chance to benefit.
- Stephen Wolter (OEH) was concerned with the regulations involved with skin only shooting when the quota was under pressure.
- John Farr (Harvesters' Association) thought OEH's risk based approach to law enforcement would not work if the Industry was running at full capacity. Brad Purcell (OEH) agreed – when less than 50% the quota was being taken there were less risks. Steve McLeod (AWMS) thought this the ideal opportunity for OEH to use all the data they had collected over the years.
- The issue of Male only shooting was again raised. Females are just being shot and left in the field instead of being tagged and reported to OEH. OEH will let Harvesters know in their annual newsletter as to what the procedure is if they need to cull females when they are using male only chillers. They should tag all female carcasses and leave them in the field. They need to report this on their Harvester returns so the numbers can then come off the quota; or they can obtain a S121 non-commercial licence to cull the females that they cannot sell.

Action 1: OEH to advise Harvesters in a newsletter the procedure for culling female kangaroos and their options.

- The current position on the cap on Fauna Dealer licences was also discussed. OEH advised that this is also with legal and the position will not be known until the Exposure Bill is passed. Doug Jobson (KIAA) stated that current Fauna Dealers would want to be compensated if the cap were to be lifted. John Farr (Harvesters' Assoc) suggested that there had been no issues in Qld when Fauna Dealer Licences were opened up.
- OEH advised that everything is on the table. The Government has not made any decisions.

Action 2: Brad to distribute to Panel members dot points on today's presentation on the review.

Item 5: Draft Quota Report for 2016

Population and quotas – survey results

- Population counts across the Western Plains are down a little from 2014 counts. This was caused by the massive increase in 2014. It has now stabilised.
- Seasonal conditions have resulted in population decreases across the Western Plains for both Eastern and Western grey kangaroos. The Coonabarabran and Narrabri zones are the major areas where there is a decrease in Eastern greys and over the last 12 months. These areas have received below average rainfall.
- Population estimates in the SENSW are up. This area was surveyed in 2015 at a cost of \$120,000 for the sake of only two pet food chillers operating in the area. OEH have been told to rectify this.

- Steve McLeod (AWMS) suggested that the move to Line Transect sampling which will happen as part of the review, will increase the accuracy of the estimated population.
- Greg Bates (KIAA) asked if the change in survey methods would affect trends. The trends will not change at all – but will inform what the cull should be and also project into the future.

Item 6: Updates

Compliance Issues (compliance position)

- With compliance now having their own unit, investigating Kangaroo related incidents has not been easy. OEH's last Compliance Officer – Chris Knight – finished at the end of March. Since then Arthur Snook has been carrying out some chiller inspections.
- OEH is currently in the process of recruiting a new compliance officer who will specifically investigate Kangaroo Management issues
- 2015 has seen 8 PINs issued and a further 3 offences pending investigation.

New KMAP for 2016

- The current KMAP has been extended twice and cannot be extended again.
- OEH will now go through the process of forming a new Panel. This is currently underway. Organisations will receive letters soon asking them to nominate a candidate.
- The new Panel will need to be finalised by 31 March 2016

Item 7: Other Business

- Stephen Wolter (OEH) attended a meeting in Hobart earlier this year which included Management programs from all States plus representatives from the Commonwealth.
- There will be another meeting in 2016 in Adelaide. It is hoped a representative from Victoria may attend.
- The meeting discussed a review of the current Code of Practice. No one is sure who would sign off on a new code. The Department that reviewed the current Code of Practice has disbanded and a new Department will be needed in order for this to happen.

Action 3: Doug Jobson (KIAA) proposed (seconded David O'Shannessy (RSPCA)) that the Code should be urgently reviewed and that Stephen Wolter (OEH) should take this proposal to the next meeting of the Management Programmes in 2016

Skin only Shooting

- The KIAA with the exception of 1 member are against the return of skin only shooting. The KIAA believe a return to skin only shooting would be a backward step and that this would reduce the concept of kangaroos from being a marketable asset to a pest.
- John Farr (NSW Kangaroo Harvesters' Association) made the point that the return for Harvesters' should also be a priority and that if the China Markets are not picked up, the Harvester loses again.
- Macro believe that by signing up the Chinese Market, the price to Harvesters for their product would then increase. If the product is marketed properly there will be a top end price for the right goods. Times are hard at the moment, but the rewards are there and this will build a better industry.

Male only Shooting

- Doug Jobson(KIAA) believes more research needs to be done on the long term effects of Male only shooting
- Steve McLeod (AWMS) suggested that Male only shooting would skew the population toward female biased, which would eventually increase the population.
- Lachlan Gall (PAWD) believes the culling of male only animals is of no benefit to Graziers as Harvesters are having to go onto other properties to make a load. He also believes if farmers are not happy with the level of control from Commercial Harvesters then other control methods will be used.

Removal of S121 in the review and issuing a 12 month approval to Harvester to cull on a property

- OEH are keen to remove the S121 from the licencing procedure as it was listed by IPART as 32nd out >776 NSW licences reviewed to determine if they impede business due to red tape. This procedure is still a work in progress and nothing is set in stone. Landholder consent for Harvesters to be on their property will still have to happen and this can be for example – 12 months (with a disclaimer) or 4 months as it is now.
- Lachlan Gall (PAWD) again asked to be sent more information on how this would happen and how it would work so he can sell the idea to his organisation. He does not want to see a concentration of shooting around high population areas and believes the removal of the S121 while saving costs on the licencing side, will increase compliance costs.

Action 4: Brad will send Lachlan dot points on the removal of the S121 and obtaining the landholders consent.

- Stephen Wolter (OEH) asked Ray Scott if his organisation (NSW Farmers) has any view on the removal of the S121 from licencing procedures. Ray will report back with his organisations' views.

List of Actions:

Action 1: OEH to advise Harvesters in a newsletter the procedure for culling female kangaroos and their options.

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