



Wildlife Victoria flags major animal welfare concerns with State's Kangaroo Harvesting Program

Wildlife Victoria, the state's leading emergency wildlife rescue service, is reporting a 55 percent increase in gunshot wounding-related cases since the inception of the Kangaroo Harvesting Program in 2019.

"The increase in suffering we're seeing inflicted through gunshot wounds on our iconic kangaroos and their beautiful little joeys is incomprehensible and simply unacceptable.

Kangaroos are being shot and wounded, often in the leg, abdomen, or jaw, and then left to suffer a prolonged and painful death." **Lisa Palma, Wildlife Victoria CEO**

The Victorian Government financially incentivised the killing of kangaroos for pet meat and leather in 2019, though the program now extends to kangaroo meat for human consumption.

Concerns for kangaroo welfare have been under heavy scrutiny overseas, with states across the US moving to ban the importation of kangaroo skins, meat, and products.

Closer to home, Victorian local governments, including Mount Alexander and Mornington Peninsula shires, are lobbying the state government to have their municipalities removed from the harvesting program.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action is currently undertaking a scheduled review of the program with an updated plan expected to commence in January 2024.

The National Code, the minimum standard which shooters must maintain to avoid animal suffering, mandates shooters to kill kangaroos outright with a bullet to the head.

But with shootings occurring at night on private properties, and no regulations in place to register when or where shooter activities take place, the Government's ability to enforce shooter compliance and ensure neighbourhood and community safety is limited.

Wildlife Victoria volunteer, Glenn, attended a case earlier this year after a member of the public reported an injured kangaroo inside a recently developed housing estate. On arrival, Glenn found that the kangaroo had been shot and its lower jaw was hanging off its face.

"I have been a volunteer wildlife rescuer for eight years now. We see so much suffering already – wildlife hit by cars, caught on fencing, attacked by dogs – it's tough enough without the added burden of having to euthanise kangaroos with limbs hanging off or completely missing. **Glenn, Wildlife Victoria volunteer**

There is also concern for community members who are left to find dead or dying kangaroos, or their remaining body parts after shooters leave heads, hands, and tails after shooting in their local area.

“The suffering of kangaroos under this program is immense, but we are also deeply concerned about the impact this is having on community members’ mental health and safety, and wildlife volunteers who are left to clean up the mess.

Wildlife Victoria once again calls on Dan Andrews and the Labor Government to immediately end the killing of kangaroos for commercial purposes.” **Lisa Palma, Wildlife Victoria CEO**

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For additional information or interview requests, contact Wildlife Victoria’s media team at 0447 193 121 or email media@wildlifelifevictoria.org.au