

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the ACT's next kangaroo management plan.

1 The draft document:

I have read the draft document and have the following comments:

I note that the draft plan addresses the impact of the kangaroo population on the territory's "environmental, economic and social assets." (my emphasis). In fact the plan is based wholly on kangaroos' "unacceptable impact" on these assets. I was annoyed and amused to see a plan for managing native fauna to use jargon like "assets". But importantly, if you do wish to do so, there is no recognition in the document of kangaroos themselves being an asset, no cost/benefit analysis of the benefits to the ACT of our kangaroos (tourism, bush capital..) - just a starting assumption that they are a problem (after a principle that they are integral to the ACT, one that is soon disregarded).

The document then addresses each of these categories (environmental, economic and social assets), with very little evidence to support numerous claims. For example, I was left wondering about the relevance of currawong predation on smaller birds...?? Does this somehow prove the deleterious impact of kangaroos on environmental assets? If so it certainly passed me by. Considerable weight is given to discussion of "economic assets" - doubtless the underlying reason for culling native fauna. Vehicles are paramount in a hierarchy of importance. Even so, the draft document has to concede there is no real evidence on kangaroo and vehicle collisions. In the section on kangaroo impact on social assets, there is a statement about "concerns in the community" about kangaroos . Once again, there is no evidence or substantiation for this claim.

In summary - this draft management plan is flawed in its basic assumptions and approach and lacks evidence for many of the so-called "unacceptable impacts" on the territory's environmental, economic and social assets.

Therefore the proposal to continue to kill large numbers of the territory's kangaroo population is not only without foundation but totally vexatious and ideological in the extreme.

2 personal observations

I live close to the Pinnacle Reserve and walk there regularly. Prior to the first cull I used to walk past small families of kangaroos, lolling beneath shady trees or grazing peacefully. There weren't many groups but enough to fill me with happiness as I trotted past. After the first cull I saw no kangaroos at all, not one for many months. It was so saddening.

Gradually I saw one or two lonely creatures that quickly hopped away from me, no doubt frightened. As the annual culls continued the kangaroos have disappeared. I do wonder why you still send shooters to the Pinnacle, perhaps they manage to find a few remaining creatures.

My main concern however, and what prompted me to read the plan and make a submission, is about the behaviour of the shooters. After the cull before last, I stumbled upon burnt carcasses or parts of carcasses scattered across the reserve. A tail, a foot, a burnt skeleton - all randomly scattered. This was extremely distressing. Were they cooking and eating them?? They were certainly hacking off parts of kangaroo bodies. The evidence was there to see. For a resident, knowing the government is hiring shooters is one thing but seeing the evidence of slaughter is another, and it made me quite ill. In fact the experience made me go 100% vegetarian, which I have maintained. This is not a humane way to look after our native fauna.

Finally, now that there are no kangaroos to manage the grass, it grows waist height in some places and throughout the summer I am frightened to enter the reserve because of snakes. All this season I have walked along the wide track beside the reserve, behind the houses. When you fiddle with the natural way of things you create consequences - and this consequence is not even mentioned in your draft plan! So a social impact of your cull has been to deny this resident the use of the reserve.

I strongly recommend you review the draft plan to write a balanced document, assessing the benefits as well as any costs of maintaining kangaroos in the territory. The document starts nobly with a set of goals and principles, then goes on to disregard these completely! There is very little evidence for most of the claims and therefore I am not convinced by this document that a cull is necessary, certainly not an annual cull, and certainly not the inhumane goings-on that resulted in scattered kangaroo parts across our reserves.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to contribute and I hope my feedback will be taken into consideration.

