

# working together for healthy, sustainable landscapes and kangaroos



## KMT RECOMMENDATION

**Landholders applying for Licence to Harm Kangaroos permits to reduce grazing pressure from kangaroos should consider engaging Professional Kangaroo Harvesters.**

## BACKGROUND

NSW is currently heading into drought at the same time that market demand for red meat is hitting record lows. Landholders who would normally consider reducing stocking rates to prepare for drought, may risk retaining livestock and goats on their properties for longer periods in the hope that markets might recover. Kangaroo harvest rates are currently also very low and the combination of high levels of grazing pressure from livestock, goats and kangaroos will reduce landholder capacity to prepare for the impending drought.

Overgrazing at the onset of droughts leads to faster depletion of pastures and reliance on other sources of fodder. It also exposes landscapes to the loss of perennials and groundcover, leading to soil erosion and environmental degradation, loss of soil carbon and generally ensures a longer, slower recovery for both production and biodiversity when drought conditions finally ease.

Another major consequence of drought is poor animal welfare outcomes, particularly for kangaroos. While landholders have a legal obligation to uphold welfare standards for livestock and can be prosecuted for breaching that obligation, kangaroos are protected native animals and deemed to be the property of the Crown as outlined in the [Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 Division 4, 2.18](#). While licences are required to harm kangaroos, and cruelty is prohibited under the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979](#), there is no agency or group charged with oversight of the general welfare of wild kangaroos when conditions deteriorate during drought. It is estimated more than 3 million kangaroos perished cruelly in NSW during the 2017-2018 drought and while some may see this as a “natural” phenomenon, farmers and rural communities who witness large numbers of kangaroos dying slowly from starvation know just how cruel it is. Unless mitigating measures are implemented, similar die-offs will undoubtedly occur in this and all future droughts.

Reducing total grazing pressure now may help alleviate some of the worst impacts of the drought on production and economic resilience. Perhaps even more importantly, it could help preserve long-term landscape health, biodiversity and Natural Capital and reduce the extent of kangaroo suffering. Landholders aiming to reduce grazing pressure from kangaroos can apply for a Licence to harm kangaroos through NPWS and anyone undertaking culling practices must comply with the [National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-Commercial purposes](#).

Where possible, the KMT recommends that landholders should consider engaging Professional Kangaroo Harvesters to undertake approved damage mitigation culling aimed at reducing grazing pressure for landscape and drought resilience. Professional harvesters are highly skilled and trained to uphold the highest humaneness standards, improving animal welfare outcomes while also alleviating some of the financial pressure on harvesters impacted by reduced harvest rates, decreasing returns and increasing operational costs.

The KMT recommends the NSW Government consider implementing a drought relief cost-sharing approach to assist landholders engage professional kangaroo harvesters to undertake animal welfare and damage mitigation culling of overabundant species of kangaroos, demonstrating the Government’s commitment to both kangaroo welfare and supporting drought resilience. The Government currently supports landholders in addressing the impacts of deer and pigs without the additional consideration of ownership or welfare.