

A.C.T. RURAL LANDHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION (EST. 1927)

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The ACT Rural Landholders Association has previously stated its concerns regarding the inquiry into Eastern Grey Kangaroo (EGK) populations and lowland native grasslands management to the Commissioner.

This submission and the earlier statement form the compendium of our concerns and support for the ongoing managed process of kangaroo populations in the ACT.

The RLA considers that kangaroo population removal from conservation management areas is desirable. However the commercial costs of such relocation prevent this as a viable response to EGK population explosions and consequential environmental degradation and adverse impacts on other protected species such as Grassland Earless Dragons. This option could only be supported were the costs of relocation absorbed by the ACT Government.

Rural lessees and associated land care groups support the current ACT culling guidelines as a sustainable alternative to permitting the unnecessary adverse environmental effects of uncontrolled EGK populations.

As land managers with stewardship of the ACT non urban lands the members are very concerned at the environmental impacts from the explosion in kangaroo population in the ACT. These impacts threaten the years of significant investment and infrastructure in developing land management practices that protect significant habitats.

The RLA encourages the ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope to ensure a holistic management approach is adopted to actively manage Kangaroo populations in all reserve and conservation areas and adjoining lease areas. RLA members understand that culling of any animal is a difficult decision and that existing Kangaroo culling guidelines represent a workable solution to EGK population.

The RLA members understand the land and the importance of balance in nature and that EGK no longer have any natural predators. To maintain ecosystem balance, ACT land managers need to manage these top herbivores and bring the populations back to sustainable levels - by active reduction in current populations. Culling is only one of a range of potential solutions however it can address the current and urgent requirement for an immediate response. This interim solution enables scientific solutions to be developed that may provide long term and less aggressive control techniques.

To this end the RLA encourages the ACT Government to apportion a percentage of its windfall revenue from urban land sales towards joint scientific programs with leading universities and scientific organisations to develop biological solutions to EGK population management.

The RLA and associated land care groups support the ACT Government in developing a comprehensive approach to this issue and seek a firm commitment from the Government to respond with a comprehensive policy and monitoring solution.

The RLA supports a clear and consistent framework for the ongoing management of EGK populations applied to all areas of conservation significance to the ACT.

The RLA encourages the clear mandate and appropriate funding of the appropriate government agencies to implement a program that efficiently and effectively manages the EGK population.

The RLA requests that the Office of Sustainability and the Environment establish a set of environmental indicators that enable predictive population growth rates of the EGK to enable early interventions in population numbers in reserve areas.

Rural Landholders Association
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