

## 11. NOTICES OF MOTION

### 11.1. NOTICE OF MOTION 003/2023 - BANNING OF COMMERCIAL KANGAROO HARVESTING IN MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

#### MOVED COUNCILLOR GARDNER

**That Council advocates for the banning of commercial kangaroo harvesting in Mount Alexander Shire Council to the Victorian Government, relevant Ministers and Departments.**

#### Rationale

I am asking Council to support advocating to ban commercial killing of kangaroos in our Shire for the following reasons:

- Kangaroos are a native species and form part of the Shire's attraction and beauty.
- There is no economic benefit for our Shire on this. Most of the hunters are not from within the Shire and no or minimal jobs will be created. In fact, it can have the reverse affect, as people visit the Shire to see the natural environment including at hotels, bush camps and farm stays – they want to see kangaroos and native animals.
- Shooting will take place at night using spotlights and high-powered rifles with the potential to cause injury to people and shooting does cause distress to some people and definitely children.
- Despite there being rules around harvesting there has been many stories, documented evidence that a large number of killings are done inhumanely with animals suffering and leaving offspring to die.
- The community in this Shire has a close connection to kangaroos, we have the wildlife shelters and Maldon recently had displays of kangaroos in shop front windows for the Maldon in Winter festival.
- Allowing kangaroos to be harvested is not in line with Council's own strategic documents including:
  - The Shire's 10-year vision and aspirations of "preserving our natural environment means living sustainably and caring for country"
  - Under the Council's recently approved Climate Strategy–We have a pillar: *An environment for people and nature*
  - Council's Environment Strategy 2015-2025 Priority Area 7: *A long-term goal of the natural environment is health and thriving.*

#### Officer Comment

In Victoria, all wildlife is protected under the Wildlife Act (1975). It is illegal to disturb or destroy wildlife without an appropriate authorisation, licence or exemption.

The Kangaroo Harvesting Management program began in Victoria on 1 October 2019, to enable the harvesting of Eastern and Western Grey Kangaroos in Victoria on private land in

seven designated harvest zones. The program is designed to enable authorised harvesters to take kangaroos in a sustainable manner by limiting the harvest, using annual quotas at no cost to landholders.

The Kangaroo Harvesting Management program is implemented alongside the Authority to Control Wildlife system for landholders. The Authority to Control Wildlife program allows landholders to undertake kangaroo control for damage mitigation purposes. The program allows an individual to shoot, wilfully disturb or trap wildlife where it is damaging property, crops or other wildlife habitat or for the purposes of management, conservation or protection of wildlife. Land managers must exhaust all practical non-lethal control options before applying for an Authority to Control Wildlife for lethal control, which is a last resort.

The management and administration of the Kangaroo Harvest Management program is split across two state government departments and involves four entities.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, is responsible for maintaining the program, including managing kangaroo population surveys and quota-setting. They are also responsible for decisions to reduce or suspend quotas as indicated by population threshold models.

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions and its agents are responsible for administering the Kangaroo Harvesting Program in line with the requirements of the Victorian Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan, and with monitoring and enforcing compliance of program participants.

The Game Management Authority[1] is an independent authority responsible for the regulation of game hunting in Victoria. The Authority is delegated the authorisation of licences to harvesters and leads compliance and enforcement of the Kangaroo Harvesting Program.

PrimeSafe (the Statutory Authority responsible for regulating meat, poultry, seafood and pet food in Victoria) issues licenses and monitors compliance for Game Meat Processing Facilities, Pet Meat Processing Facilities, Field Depots and Harvest Vehicles, when facilities are required to be licensed under the Meat Industry Act (1993).

The administration of the program, including issuing authorisations, monitoring harvest quotas and linking landholders with harvesters is managed via an online system by Service Victoria.

The Victorian Government designates zones across Victoria which are assigned quotas that specify the number of Eastern and Western Grey kangaroos that can be controlled in any one area to ensure the sustainability of kangaroo populations. Annual quotas are set by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action for the Kangaroo Harvest program and allocations are released in stages throughout the year.

Annual quotas for the Kangaroo Harvest Management program are calculated by deducting the estimated Authority to Control Wildlife system numbers from the maximum recommended level of population reduction. To ensure sustainable kangaroo populations, no more than 10

percent of the total Victorian kangaroo population should be controlled each year across both the Kangaroo Harvesting Program and the Authority to Control Wildlife system.

Mount Alexander Shire is located within the Central Zone under the Kangaroo Harvest Management Program. In 2023 the Central zone has a quota of 65,100. It is estimated that the total economic benefit from this activity (total for Victoria) is about \$2.8 million.

The Kangaroo Harvesting Management Plan 2021-2023 is set to expire at the end of 2023. The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action are seeking public feedback on the existing program and will use this to inform the development of the future plan. The public consultation period ends on 11 July 2023.

If Council resolves to write to the State Government seeking a ban on commercial kangaroo harvesting within Mount Alexander Shire, it is recommended to:

1. Request the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to accept a submission from Mount Alexander Shire Council to the consultation on the Kangaroo Harvesting Management Plan 2021-2023 after 11 July 2023,
2. Write to the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Ingrid Stitt, and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation the Hon. Sonya Kilkenny, outlining Mount Alexander Shire Council's position on the Kangaroo Harvest Management Program.

[1] The Game Management Authority reports to the Minister for Outdoor Recreation