

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 30

**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates

**Outcome:** Outcome 5

**Programme:** Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division

**Topic:** Kangaroos – Independent Studies/Research

**Hansard Page:** N/A

**Question Date:** 27 November 2013

**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Rhiannon asked:**

Recent independent studies reviewing government data have shown that kangaroo populations have been grossly overstated, with a Nomination to the NSW Scientific Committee, with 2 supplementary submissions, showing the four large macropods are Threatened as a result of the commercial trade.

- a) In light of this research, how will the government address the issue of population miscalculation and kangaroo overkill that has been accepted unquestioningly by the states?
- b) The previous Minister stated that the precautionary principle in granting export licenses for macropod products is applied. Please give details of how the precautionary principle has been applied in relation to approving Kangaroo Management Plans and with references to the science and data in the NSW Nomination?

**Answer:**

- a) Best practice science and survey methodology continues to indicate that the four large macropod species are not threatened in any state. 'Overkill' is also highly unlikely, as the commercial harvests rarely match the annual quotas and are usually well below them.

Nationally, kangaroo numbers are greatly underestimated because they are not surveyed in the Northern Territory, Victoria or Tasmania, where commercial harvesting does not occur. In those states where management plans are in place, kangaroo numbers are not estimated outside of the management plan harvest zones.

- b) The nomination that was submitted to the New South Wales Scientific Committee was not reviewed in relation to the approval of the New South Wales management plan. That nomination is a matter for the New South Wales Government.

The New South Wales management plan includes a range of measures that require a precautionary approach to be taken when decisions are made in relation to the harvest of kangaroos. These measures include:

- Conducting regular (in most cases annual) monitoring prior to the setting of commercial quotas.
- Setting quotas at levels considered sustainable for kangaroo populations.

- Reduction of quotas to 10 percent when the population size estimates are between 1.5 to 2 standard deviations below the long-term average.
- Suspension of quotas when the population size estimates are more than 2 standard deviations below the long-term average.
- Incorporating adaptive management into the commercial harvest of kangaroos.