

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

Question No: 135
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: 1.5
Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: Code of practice - killing joeys
Hansard Page:
Question Date: 01 April 2015
Question Type: Written

Senator Rhiannon, Lee asked:

1. The current federal Code of Practices for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies stipulates that kangaroo joeys must be killed by a forceful blow to the head; or stunned and then decapitated; and at-foot joeys should be shot.

The RIRDC's recent report Improving the humaneness of commercial kangaroo harvesting finds that: shooters rarely euthanize young-at-foot dependent joeys, leaving them to die in the field for up to 10 days, and that many shooters swing pouch joeys against their ute tray to kill them.

However, in the study's experiments testing the effectiveness of bolt guns to kill joeys, not one of the 23 live joeys was killed outright; 13 out of 23 joeys were not rendered completely insensible, and all joeys had to be consequently euthanized by other means (p54).

Given that joeys are not killed immediately or at all via careful blunt head trauma in a controlled situation, is the department concerned at the clear cruelty and trauma being suffered by joeys in the field?

- a. What is the Department doing about this, given the proven cruelty of suffered by joeys from kangaroo shooting?
 - b. Does the Department advise importing governments that commercial kangaroo shooters ensure a quick death of joeys?
 - c. How is this justified given the above results provided by scientific experiments?
 - d. Will the Department be advising importing governments of these research results? If not, why not?
2. Has the Department included the results of this 2014 paper in its advice to the Californian government which is deliberating on whether to continue allowing kangaroo product imports? If not, why not?

Answer:

1. The trial on the use of captive-bolt devices was conducted as part of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation report and is not a method used by licensed harvesters under the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes. The report outlines the result of the trial, and concluded that the most suitable currently available method is the approved method for joeys under the Code of Practice.

- a) The Australian Government Minister for the Environment has written to ministers in each state and territory seeking their comments on whether to review the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes. All jurisdictions except the Northern Territory have responded to the Minister's correspondence. The responses support a review of the code, except for the Western Australian Government, which has instead suggested developing standard operating procedures.
 - b) The Department provides information to industry, government and stakeholders regarding the harvesting of kangaroos under the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes. The code includes the methods for the humane treatment of kangaroo joeys.
 - c) Refer to answer 1, above.
 - d) The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation report "Improving the humaneness of commercial kangaroo harvesting report" is publicly available at <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/downloads/13-116>
2. No. The report for the California Government was sent in April 2014, which was before the release of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation report in June 2014.