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Australian Government

National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for

Commercial Purposes

Endorsed by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Code

This Code has been produced to ensure that all persons intending to shoot free-living kangaroos or wallabies for commercial purposes undertake the shooting so that the animal is killed in a way that minimises pain and suffering.

1.2 Definitions

In this Code, the terms 'kangaroo' and 'wallaby' mean all species of the family Macropodidae within the superfamily Macropodoidea which includes kangaroos, wallaroos (or euros), wallabies and pademelons.

For the purposes of this Code, a commercial purpose is where the animal shot is to be used as product to be sold within Australia or overseas.

1.3 Legislation

All shooting of kangaroos and wallabies, whether on public or private land, is subject to law. As the laws may differ between states and territories, shooters must contact the relevant government authority in the state or territory in which the shooting will occur for appropriate advice. Except where specifically exempted by law, states and territories will require the shooter to have a licence or permit issued by a relevant government authority. The licence or permit will specify any conditions or restrictions that may apply.

The requirements of this Code do not override state or territory animal welfare legislation. A lack of knowledge of relevant state or territory animal welfare legislation is no defence against prosecution for animal welfare offences.

2.4 Conditions

The minimum specifications for firearms and ammunition are set out in Schedule 1. The following conditions for the shooting of kangaroos and wallabies must be met. **Where the conditions set out below can not be met, or where there is any doubt about achieving a sudden and humane death, shooting must not be attempted.**

Goal

- (i) When shooting a kangaroo or wallaby, the primary objective must be to achieve instantaneous loss of consciousness and rapid death without regaining consciousness. For the purposes of the Code, this is regarded as a sudden and humane death.

Firearms and Ammunition

- (i) Kangaroos and wallabies must only be shot with a combination of firearms and ammunition that complies with or exceeds those minimum specifications in Schedule 1.
- (ii) The combination of firearm and ammunition selected for the environmental conditions in which the shooter operates must ensure that sudden and humane death of the target animal is consistently achieved.
- (iii) A rifle must be fitted with a telescopic sight and be sighted in against an inanimate target before commencing each day or night's shooting. The telescopic sight should be re-adjusted on an inanimate target as often as required during each shooting session.
- (iv) Self-loading or semi-automatic rifles must not be used at any time.
- (v) Sub-sonic ammunition must not be used.

Shooting platform

- (i) Kangaroos and wallabies must not be shot from a moving vehicle or other moving platform.

Target animal

- (i) The target kangaroo or wallaby must be standing (injured animals excepted) and clearly visible.
- (ii) The target kangaroo or wallaby must be stationary (injured animals excepted) and within a range specified in Schedule 1 that permits accurate placement of the shot.
- (iii) Shooters should avoid shooting female kangaroos or wallabies where it is obvious that they have pouch young or dependent young at foot except in special circumstances (i.e. the female kangaroo or wallaby is sick or injured or needs to be killed for management and/or ecological reasons).

Point of aim

- (i) A shooter must aim so as to hit the target kangaroo or wallaby in the brain (see Schedule 2).
- (ii) A shooter must not aim so as to hit the target kangaroo or wallaby in any other part of the body than that specified in (i) above.

Follow-up

- (i) The shooter must be certain that each kangaroo or wallaby is dead before another is targeted.
- (ii) If a kangaroo or wallaby is still alive after being shot, every reasonable effort must be made immediately to locate and kill it before any attempt is made to shoot another animal. The injured kangaroo or wallaby must be euthanased in accordance with the methods outlined in Section 4.

- (iii) If a female kangaroo or wallaby is shot then any dependent young at foot must be shot as soon as possible to avoid dispersal in accordance with the methods in Section 5.
- (iv) Once a female kangaroo or wallaby has been killed then its pouch must be thoroughly examined and any pouch young must be euthanased in accordance with the methods in Section 5.

3. SHOOTING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

At present five states have approved management plans for commercial kangaroo or wallaby harvesting for export – New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia. The species currently commercially harvested are:

- red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*), harvested in NSW, Qld, SA, WA
- eastern grey kangaroo (*M. giganteus*), harvested in NSW, Qld
- western grey kangaroo (*M. fuliginosus*), harvested in NSW, SA, WA
- common wallaroo or euro (*M. robustus*), harvested in NSW, Qld, SA, WA
- bennett's wallaby (*M. rufogriseus rufogriseus*), harvested in Tas.
- Tasmanian pademelon (a species of wallaby) (*Thylogale billardierii*), harvested in Tas.

In all commercial situations kangaroos and wallabies must be shot in accordance with the conditions described in Section 2.4 above. Commercial kangaroo and wallaby harvesting is regulated by state legislation and commercial kangaroo and/or wallaby shooters are licensed under that legislation. As a condition of their licences commercial shooters can only sell carcasses of animals that have been shot in accordance with this Code. Shotguns cannot be used for commercial harvesting in any state.

3.1 Competency

Commercial kangaroo and wallaby shooters are required to pass a competency test before they are permitted to shoot kangaroos and/or wallabies. The standards for the competency test vary between states and territories, but all must demonstrate that a shooter can consistently place shots into a suitable sized target area at the distances used in the field. The distance to the target and the size of the target used in the competency test may vary depending on the species and calibre of rifle being used. The purpose of the testing is to ensure that each person is capable of shooting with sufficient accuracy to meet the animal welfare standards set out in this Code. Prior to competency testing shooters should have received training in both shooting kangaroos and the euthanasia of pouch young.

4. EUTHANASING INJURED KANGAROOS AND WALLABIES

Injured kangaroos and wallabies should be euthanased quickly and humanely to alleviate suffering, in accordance with the conditions described in Section 4.1.

4.1 Conditions

The minimum specifications for firearms and ammunition are set out in Part A or B of Schedule 1. The following conditions apply:

- (i) Injured animals must be killed by a method that will achieve a rapid and humane death, preferably by a shot to the brain (see Schedule 2).
- (ii) Under circumstances where a shot to the brain of an injured animal is impractical or unsafe, a shot to the heart is permissible (see Schedule 3).
- (iii) In circumstances where, for dispatch of an injured kangaroo or wallaby, a shot to either the brain or heart is impractical or unsafe (such as when the animal is moving but not able to stand), a heavy blow to the base of the skull with sufficient force to destroy the brain (see Schedule 2) is permissible.

To ensure a humane kill, a suitably hard and heavy blunt instrument must be used.

- (iv) If the kangaroo or wallaby that is shot is female then any dependent young at foot must be shot as soon as possible to avoid dispersal, in accordance with the methods outlined in Section 5.
- (v) Once a female kangaroo or wallaby has been killed then its pouch must be thoroughly examined and any pouch young must be euthanased in accordance with the methods outlined in Section 5.

5. EUTHANASING POUCH YOUNG AND YOUNG AT FOOT

All target female kangaroos and wallabies, including injured and sick animals, must be thoroughly examined for pouch young. If a pouch young or young at foot is present, euthanasia must be carried out, and in accordance with the methods outlined below. These measures are to prevent the inhumane death of young that cannot survive on their own.

5.1 Conditions

The following conditions apply.

- (i) Where euthanasia is carried out using a blow to the head, the blow must be delivered with force sufficient to crush the skull and destroy the brain. The blow should be delivered with a suitably hard and heavy blunt instrument. The shooter must confirm that there has been lethal damage to the brain and that the animal is dead.
- (ii) Immediately after euthanasia, the shooter is required to examine each animal to confirm death. The shooter must check that there is no body movement, breathing and heart beat to indicate that the animal is alive. The shooter must also check that there is no corneal reflex (where this is observable).

Description of Young	Acceptable Euthanasia Method
Small furless pouch young (fits within the palm of the hand)	<p>Single forceful blow to the base of the skull sufficient to destroy the functional capacity of the brain.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Stunning, immediately followed by decapitation by rapidly severing the head from the body with a sharp blade.</p>
All furred pouch young	Single forceful blow to the base of the skull sufficient to destroy the functional capacity of the brain.
Young at foot	Single shot to the brain or heart where it can be delivered accurately and in safety using the firearms and ammunition specified in Part A or B of Schedule 1.

6. SHOOTING FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

6.1. Shooting of animals in circumstances where it might be unsafe to use firearms listed in Schedule 1 Part A

In some cases, there may be a reason for shooting kangaroos where it is necessary to use combinations of firearms and ammunition other than those described in Part A of Schedule 1 of this Code. When a relevant government authority determines that it is not safe to use the firearms specified in Part A of Schedule 1 it may authorize licensed and competent shooters to use firearms specified in Part B of Schedule 1, so long as the goal of sudden and humane death can still be achieved in accordance with the conditions set out in this Code. Kangaroos and wallabies shot under these circumstances may, at the discretion of the relevant government authority, be used for sustainable purposes rather than left to lie in the field or be buried in accordance with local government requirements.

6.2 Conditions: shooting of animals in circumstances where it might be unsafe to use firearms listed in Schedule 1 Part A

The following conditions are limited to the shooting of animals where it might be unsafe to use firearms listed in Schedule 1 Part A and where approval from the relevant government authority has been provided.

- (i) The provisions of this Code apply to the shooting of kangaroos and wallabies except in certain circumstances where the use of firearms specified in Part A of Schedule 1 might pose a safety risk to humans. In such circumstances the requirements of Part B of Schedule 1 apply.
- (ii) Approval of the relevant government authority is required for each circumstance and location.
- (iii) The waiving of any requirements of this Code shall not relieve the shooter of the absolute requirement to provide a sudden and humane death for the target kangaroos and wallabies.