

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2015

**Agriculture**

**Question:** 95

**Division/Agency:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** Kangaroo markets

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator RHIANNON asked:**

1. California is currently re-examining its ban on the import of kangaroo products, with its 5 year sunset legislation recently introduced. The RIRDC 2010 report California, New York, the World and Kangaroos recommends that “in consultation with DFAT and the Australian Counsel General in Los Angeles ... further work be initiated at the end of 2014 .... To seek to have a further Bill passed ... which carries no sunset clause”. It further states that “A similar level of activity is likely to be needed, meaning once again attempting to convince an uninformed audience that it is possible, and in fact necessary, to protect the environment by killing native wildlife” [as preparation for the upcoming 2015 Californian legislation].

The report also stated that “Extensive supportive documentation on the [kangaroo] industry was supplied by the project [the Californian lobbying effort by KIAA, RIRDC & Govt] including “co-ordination of written support for the kangaroo harvest from appropriate Federal Ministers”:

- a. May I have a copy of that written support?
- b. May I have the details and records that are relevant to the “consultation” between the Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia (KIAA), DFAT and the Australian Counsel General in Los Angeles since the 2010 Californian legislation was passed?
- c. May I have details of all the “further work” by government personnel that was initiated since 2010 “to seek to have a further Bill passed”?
  - i. This includes meetings, information packages, reports – dates etc.
  - ii. Activity undertaken any Australian or other government officials or MPs
  - iii. Lobbyists and researchers
  - iv. Kangaroo industry representatives.
  - v. Representatives of Californian industries where partnering Australian interests.
- d. Which materials were funded by the RIRDC (Rural Industries Research Development Corporation)?

**Question: 95 (continued)**

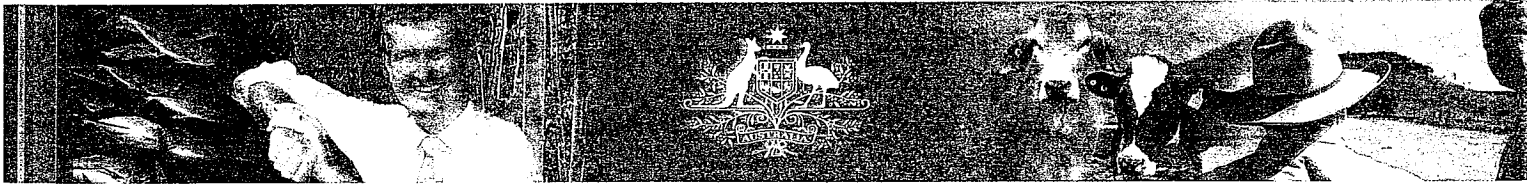
- e. Are recipients of materials, papers and documents made aware of which lobbying materials are funded or commissioned by the KIAA (Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia) – such as RIRDC reports? If not, why not?
- f. May I have a copy of the science and information provided to Californian interests to support the statement that shooting kangaroos is “necessary to protect the environment”?
  - i. Does the Australian government check the veracity of this science so the methodology is checked by government to ensure it’s correct?
2. What information is provided to overseas markets to address concerns about the contamination of kangaroo meat? Could you please supply the documentation that deals with this issue?
3. Are Californian interests advised that kangaroo meat for human consumption is not tested for zoonotic diseases known to be present in kangaroo meat – such as Toxoplasma Gondii or Salmonella Sp ?
4. Which countries are currently being lobbied or encouraged to import kangaroo products? Please supply the answer in terms of which products (eg skins, meat etc) are being promoted in which country.
5. Please provide updates on the work being undertaken to open up trade in kangaroo products in the Chinese market: where are the discussions up to; what specific barriers have been identified; what specific funding, personnel and strategies have been/are undertaken?

**Answer:**

1.
  - a. Attached are copies the two letters of support from the Hon. Tony Burke MP, the then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry dated 5 May 2009. The letters are to Senator Gilbert Cidello of the California State Senate and Assemblyman Robert K Sweeney of the New York State Assembly.
  - b. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) has not been provided with this information.
  - c. RIRDC has not been provided with this information.
  - d. None of the supportive documentation materials were funded by RIRDC, nor were the materials developed within the project. RIRDC funded the project to allow the project leader to collate and distribute the materials, consistent with delivery of the project objectives.
  - e. The KIAA does not fund or commission RIRDC reports.
  - f. RIRDC has not been provided with this information.
2. RIRDC has not been provided with this information.
3. RIRDC has not been provided with this information.

**Question:** RIRDC01 (continued)

4. RIRDC has not been provided with this information.
5. RIRDC has invested in a project known as *Kangaroo meat export market access analysis* that will assist the industry to develop an export plan. The project is due to be completed by the middle of 2015.



## The Hon. Tony Burke MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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Assemblyman Robert K. Sweeney  
Chair  
Environmental Conservation Committee  
New York State Assembly  
LOB 625  
ALBANY NY 12248  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

05 MAY 2009

Dear Assemblyman Sweeney

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Environment and Conservation Committee of the New York State Assembly in support of Australian industry exporting kangaroo products to the United States.

I understand that the relevant legislation in New York State—the Environmental Conservation Law—lists kangaroo as a prohibited species for sale in New York. It is a matter of concern to me and to Australian industry that globally exported products derived from a sustainably managed species find difficulty in gaining access to the New York State market when federal law does not bar their entry to the United States.

Australia has successfully exported kangaroo products to several countries, including the US, over many years. The value of Australian exports of kangaroo products was more than A\$86 million in 2008.

Australia's trading partners can be assured that the export trade is backed by the ecologically sustainable management of kangaroo species. Australian state and territory governments are responsible for the management and commercial harvest of kangaroos.

Commercial kangaroo harvesting in Australia is strictly monitored and occurs in the most humane way possible. Kangaroo populations fluctuate naturally. They are surveyed regularly and quotas are set scientifically as a percentage of the population.


Kangaroo products may be commercially exported only if the animals are harvested in accordance with a wildlife trade management plan or wildlife trade operation approved under the Australian *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. These plans or operations must demonstrate that the harvest will not have a detrimental impact on either the harvested species or their ecosystem.

The Australian Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website at [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/wild-harvest/kangaroo/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/wild-harvest/kangaroo/index.html) contains up-to-date information on the sustainable harvesting of kangaroo and wallaby species.

On behalf of the Australian Government and industry, I ask the authorities in New York State to consider the impact of the State Environmental Conservation Law on an important export industry for Australia.

I have sent a copy of this letter to Mr Steven Liss, Legal Counsel to the Committee, New York State Assembly.

Yours sincerely



Tony Burke



## The Hon. Tony Burke MP

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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Senator Gilbert Cedillo  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5100  
SACRAMENTO CA 95814  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

05 MAY 2009

Dear Senator Cedillo

I am writing to you to acknowledge your efforts to amend or repeal section 653o of the California State Penal Code via Senate Bill 753. I understand that your bill, if passed, will maintain access to a significant market for the Australian kangaroo industry.

Australia has successfully exported kangaroo products to several countries, including the United States, over many years. The value of Australian exports of kangaroo products was more than A\$86 million in 2008.

Australia's trading partners can be assured that the export trade is backed by the ecologically sustainable management of kangaroo species. The Australian state and territory governments are responsible for the management and commercial harvest of kangaroos.

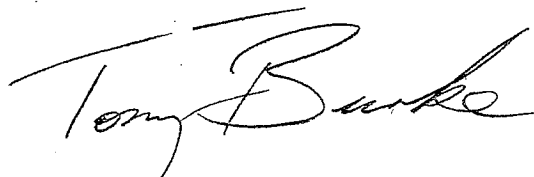
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The Australian Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website at [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/wild-harvest/kangaroo/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/wild-harvest/kangaroo/index.html) contains up-to-date information on the sustainable harvesting of kangaroo and wallaby species.

On behalf of the Australian Government and industry, I would once more like to acknowledge the positive impact that the passing of Senate Bill 753 to the California State Senate will have on ensuring the continuation of a significant market for Australia's kangaroo products.

Yours sincerely



Handwritten signature of Tony Burke in cursive script.

Tony Burke

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2015

**Agriculture**

**Question:** 96

**Division/Agency:** Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** Cruelty to joeys

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator RHIANNON asked:**

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 RIRDC concerned at the clear cruelty and trauma being suffered by joeys in the field?

- a. Will the RIRDC be advising importing governments of these research results? If not, why not?
- b. Has the RIRDC 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?
- c. Will the RIRDC be ensuring the current Code of Practice is amended? If not, why not?

**Answer:**

- a. The report is available via Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's (RIRDC) website.
- b. RIRDC has provided no advice to the Californian government on this issue and does not intend to do so. It is not RIRDC's role to provide such information to the Californian government.
- c. No. It is not RIRDC's role to amend the Code of Practice.