

**6 July 2007**

## **Wildcare presents a non-lethal alternative proposal for kangaroos on Defence properties**

Wildcare welcomed the opportunity yesterday to present to the Department of Defence and other interest groups its proposal for a non-lethal alternative solution for the kangaroos at the Belconnen Naval Transmission Station, and the Majura Firing Range.

Wildcare applauds the announcement last night by Defence to defer any decision to cull the kangaroos at the Belconnen and Majura sites for the immediate future, in order to gain more information on suitable long-term kangaroo management strategies. Wildcare supports only the humane treatment of all native animals.

The Wildcare proposal advocates a whole-of-ecosystem, phased, multi-method strategy based on the best available knowledge and involving ongoing dialogue between key interest groups. The strategy represents an ethical and environmentally-sustainable alternative to the simplistic one-off euthanasia response advocated by some institutions and individuals.

Eastern Grey Kangaroos are an integral part of the Australian landscape and environment and cannot be treated as a pest species, or 'managed' as though they are livestock. They have managed themselves, as part of a balanced ecosystem, for tens of thousands of years. The kangaroo is also the internationally-recognised symbol of Australia, as well as of many organisations, institutions and government departments, including Defence.

Wildcare has extensive experience in the handling and husbandry of Eastern Grey Kangaroos and has offered Defence a three phase plan, with the involvement of team members potentially across a range of relevant ecological sustainability and animal welfare disciplines. Summaries of each of the phases are provided below:

### **Phase 1 Immediate**

- Conduct an accurate Eastern Grey Kangaroo population census at the Belconnen site (to quantify numbers by gender, age and stage of development) and assess the current health of the population.
- Identify short and longer-term actions to assist threatened and endangered species.
- Determine sustainable Eastern Grey Kangaroo numbers for the site.

**Phase 2 Medium term**

- Based on the assessment of a sustainable Eastern Grey Kangaroo population profile, determine and implement an appropriate mix of humane translocation and reproductive interventions.

**Phase 3 Long term**

- Implement longer-term ecosystem monitoring and regular assessment of the captive Eastern Grey Kangaroo population.
- Commission research and monitoring of any translocated population by a reputable research organisation or university.
- Develop a whole-of-ecosystem management plan.
- Establish an expert panel to provide ongoing advice and support.

Wildcare believes that Defence has a unique opportunity to replace current euthanasia responses with innovative non-lethal methods, founded on ethical and environmentally-sustainable principles.

Wildcare can assist by coordinating the available expertise, new medications, proven equipment, available release areas and specialised personnel to assist with translocation and reproductive interventions. The lessons learnt could easily be applied to other Defence sites, as part of a visionary approach to their ongoing environmentally-sustainable management.

Defence can be assured that thorough dialogue with an expert advisory panel will offer a knowledgeable and constructive approach, not only to the present circumstances at Belconnen and Majura, but more broadly. The best outcome will come from a convergence of proven scientific and practical knowledge predicated on ethics and sustainability.

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