

KANGAROO PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

Kangaroo Management Social License Project - *A Kangaroo Conversation*

Final Report

June 2023



Prepared by the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia as contracted
by Kangaroo Partnerships Project (KPP)

Project Overview

'A Kangaroo Conversation' (AKC) was an initiative established by the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia as a social media campaign, with the aim of advancing the goals and themes identified by the Kangaroo Partnerships Project group. This project received funding as part of the larger 'Optimising kangaroo management in South Australia, a partnership approach for improving landscape and economic resilience' initiative, led by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board.

The AKC campaign aimed to enhance the KPP's core goals of 'engagement of champions for education and awareness raising around kangaroo management issues,' 'increased 'social license' for land managers and industry to operate ethically,' and the 'development of networks and partnerships that explore learning from other states and jurisdictions, collate and disseminate scientific data and evidence-based models of success.' Further, it sought to build on the core theme of 'improving social license, community understanding and acceptance.' These goals and themes align closely with the NCCSA's fundamental mission to speak for nature.

From these foundations, the AKC campaign was created. It sought to develop social media platforms and methods of engagement which would raise awareness about overabundant macropod populations in South Australia, and the implications of these populations on the environment. In particular, the campaign intended to introduce a conservation perspective into a discourse that was primarily dominated by social and economic arguments.

This study served as a pilot project, aiming to provide valuable insights into the most effective communication methods for influencing public opinion. The NCCSA, with its dynamic and independent nature, presented a unique opportunity to introduce these messages to a new audience.

This report aims to provide an overview of the execution of the AKC project, including its successful and unsuccessful outcomes, significant lessons learned, recommendations, and future aspirations.

Project Strategy and Execution

Research

The NCCSA conducted an exploration and synthesis of research on kangaroo populations and their management in Australia. We paid special attention to the valuable contributions made by organisations such as the Conservation Council of South Australia, the Department of Environment and Water, and relevant publications such as the special issue in the *Journal of Ecological Management and Restoration*, 'Optimum management of overabundant macropods.'¹ By conducting a comprehensive literature review, we established a valuable repository of resources that served as the basis for developing evidence-based content. This stage of the project played a crucial role in ensuring the credibility and reliability of the work presented.

This resource base informed the messaging of the campaign. The NCCSA identified three key themes to be communicated:

1. **Overabundance:** Human interference with Australian ecosystems has exacerbated natural macropod population cycles, resulting in overabundant populations.

¹ John L. Read, Graeme Coulson, James Q. Radford, George R. Wilson, *Special Issue: Optimum Management of Overabundant Macropods*, *Journal of Ecological Management and Restoration*, 22, 1. Available Online: [Optimum management of overabundant macropods: Ecological Management & Restoration: Vol 22, No S1 \(wiley.com\)](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jem.12511)

2. **Impact:** Overabundant macropod populations have detrimental impacts on biodiversity, economies, and communities.
3. **Management as a solution:** Proactive management techniques must be employed to control kangaroo populations and prevent them from reaching overabundant levels. This involves implementing lethal management methods, along with a range of other appropriate management approaches, in a coordinated manner at a landscape scale to achieve balanced kangaroo populations.

These three elements formed the basis of the campaign plan, which outlined how the NCSSA would utilise different forms of media to communicate these three themes throughout the course of the campaign.

Interviews

To identify key stakeholders and experts in kangaroo management, we proactively reached out to 'champions' and local experts through the extensive networks of the NCSSA. This involved communication through various channels such as email, phone calls, virtual meetings, and in-person interactions. Locating suitable individuals and establishing networks and relationships required a significant investment of time.

Collaboration was established with individuals who possessed expertise in the kangaroo narrative, aiming to enhance the NCSSA's understanding of the intricacies surrounding the issue. Many 'champions' expressed their passion for the issue by sharing their unique perspective. It highlighted just how much disparity there was between different stakeholders. Considering these different perspectives enabled us to approach the campaign with an informed and scientifically grounded perspective.

During the process of identifying kangaroo management 'champions' and local experts, we made extensive efforts to engage with a diverse range of individuals. We especially recognized the importance of involving Traditional Owners and First Nations communities in the project. Over time, we built relationships with members of the Adnyamathanha, Kurna, and Kokatha communities and ensured their perspectives meaningfully informed a campaign that was culturally sensitive.

Our outreach efforts encompassed over 30 different groups and individuals, including conservationists, ecologists, representatives from First Nations communities, pastoralists, advocates, and academics. This inclusive approach was undertaken to ensure a well-rounded perspective on kangaroo management.

A list has been provided below of individuals who were engaged for an interview. This is not comprehensive of everyone who contributed to the project, but these people are considered notable contributors.

- David Paton, Conservation Ecologist, University of Adelaide.
- John Read, Ecologist, Ecological Horizons.
- Patrick O'Connor, Associate Professor, University of Adelaide.
- Graeme Finlayson, Rangelands Ecologist, Bush Heritage.
- Rebekah Evers, Animal Welfare Advocate, RSPCA.
- Tom Kloedon, Regional Coordinator, Grazing Pressure Management, Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board.
- Iain Gordon, Researcher, ANU College of Science.
- Chad Cowin, Kangaroo Management Reference Group Field Processor.

- Katherine Moseby, Arid Ecologist, University of New South Wales.
- Janet Coulthard, Adnyamathanha Representative.
- Anthony Brady, Adnyamathanha Representative.
- Tanya Stephens, Veterinarian, Australian Veterinarian Association.
- Amanda McLean, Kangaroo Ecologist, Department of Environment and Water.
- Aaron Thomas, Chairperson, Kokotha Aboriginal People's Corporation Enterprise Arm.
- Liene Bruns, Environmental Scientist and Conservation Volunteer.
- Shannon Evenden, Environmental Science Communicator, Environment Institute.
- Grace Hodder, Ecologist, Department of Environment and Water.
- Donna Belder, Ecologist, Bush Heritage.
- Keisha Barrow, Kurna Representative.
- Tony Freshwater, Kokatha Pastoral Operations Manager.
- Bradley Bianco, Plant and Restoration Ecologist, BioR.
- Alice Frazer, Sales and Produce Manager, Something Wild.
- Kim Krebs, General Manager, Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board
- Rory Sinclair, Media Manager, Bush Heritage.
- Phil Cassey, Ecologist, University of Adelaide.
- Tim Jarvis AM, Environmental Scientist, Forktree Project.
- Elizabeth Blumer, Forktree Project.
- Bec Taylor, Community Engagement Officer, BioR.
- Jackie Taylor, Lifelong Habitat Restoration Volunteer, Change Your Super.

It is important to note that the engagement and participation rates from 'champions' fell short of our initial expectations. Of the 29 people listed, only 9 were able to participate in interview-style content for social media. This speaks to the ongoing challenge of finding ways to translate the information and expertise of the community into media content, which will be discussed more in the *challenges* section of this report. As the project progressed, we observed improvements in stakeholder engagement and participation, and many potential opportunities for collaboration were identified in the later stages of the campaign.

Survey

To assess public perceptions and anticipate potential reactions from the NCCSA's target audience, an online survey was conducted. The objective was to gather insights and opinions from a specific demographic that closely aligns with the intended reach of our social media campaign. By targeting individuals who are likely to be exposed to our messaging, we aimed to understand potential criticisms or positive feedback related to the materials, thus aiding in the design of our content. The feedback received through the survey played a pivotal role in shaping the content, ensuring that it resonated with the intended audience and effectively addressed their concerns.

A total of 568 survey responses were collected. Multiple links were used to distribute the survey, allowing us to identify how different demographic groups responded. However, it is important to acknowledge that there was a notable bias in the responses, primarily due to the survey's distribution through the networks of the University of Adelaide. Consequently, the respondents were predominantly young and educated individuals, with students aged 18-24 residing in Adelaide being the most common demographic.

While we recognized this bias, we did not consider it to discredit the survey results. Instead, we found value in engaging with this particular demographic, as their feedback was instrumental in tailoring social media content to their specific interests. Two of the key findings were that there were *mixed levels of awareness* and *mixed levels of acceptance* among respondents (see Figure 1). This supported the hypothesised theory that a large proportion of the public is open to learning about or supporting kangaroo management.

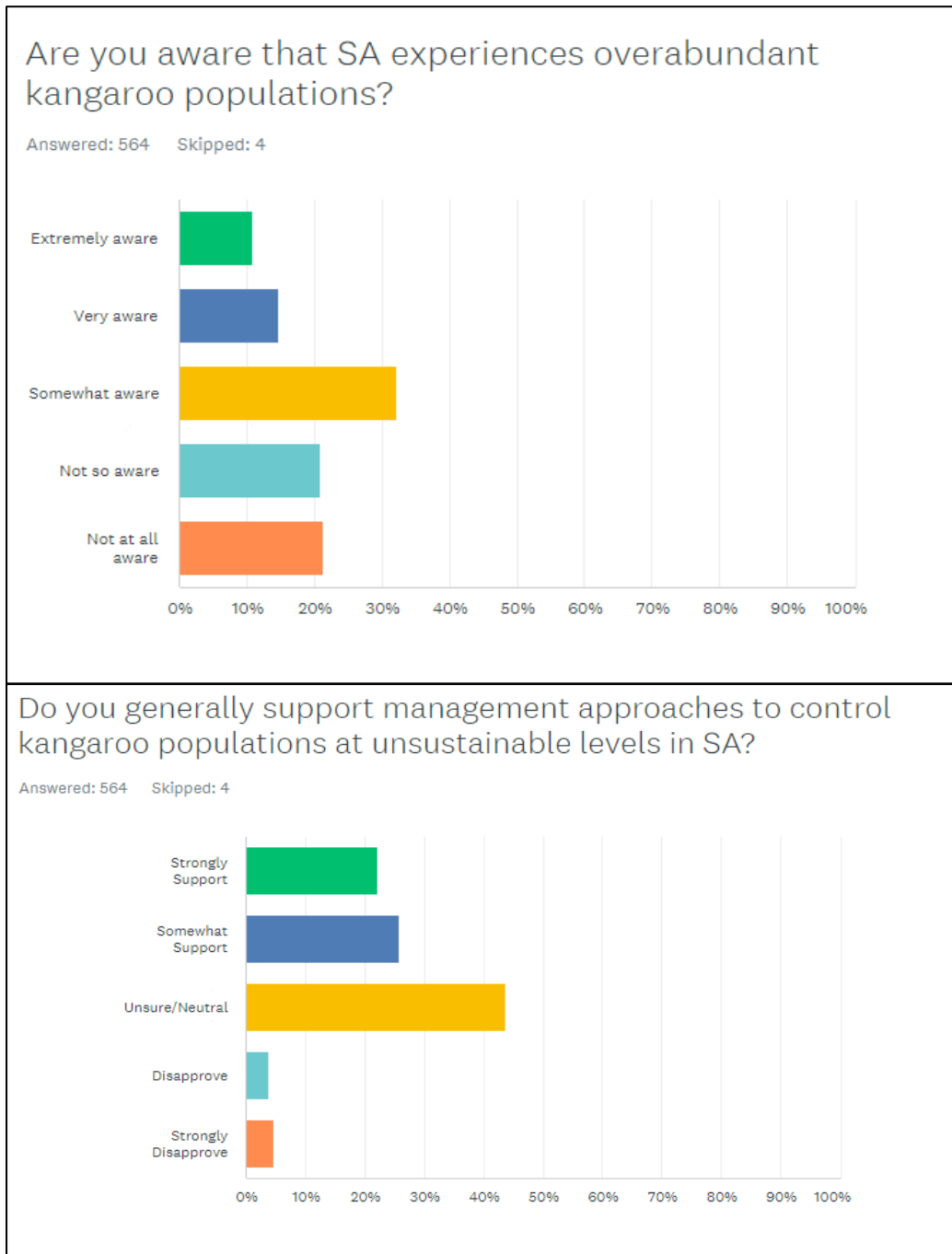


Figure 1) These bar graphs represent a survey of 564 participants posed with the question “are you aware that SA experiences overabundant Kangaroo populations?” (above), and “do you generally support management approaches to control kangaroo populations at unsustainable levels in SA?” (below).

Whilst there were some respondents who strongly disapproved of kangaroo management, they were in the minority. The survey was useful in identifying common concerns held by this majority or the public at large. These included disputing the science of overabundance, expressing disdain for

culling, and displaying an interest in learning more about the topic. Respondents also emphasized the need for increased support for landholders from government and industry, expressed concern for animal welfare, particularly during drought events, and questioned the accuracy of monitoring surveys. The NCSA made sure to note these areas of public concern as topics to focus education on.

Content Creation

Effective content creation is essential for engaging with audiences on social media platforms. This section explores the process of developing videos and images tailored to maximize impact and reach on each platform. By examining the content creation process for these platforms, we provide insights into the considerations, creative techniques, and optimization strategies employed to enhance the campaign's effectiveness.

The project placed emphasis on creating visually compelling content that effectively conveyed the core messages of the AKC campaign while aligning with the best practices and engagement strategies of each platform. We published content that showcased consistent visual imagery and successfully communicated the three core themes of the plan: overabundance, impact, and management as a solution.

Videos and Reels

For the majority of our content production process, we intentionally adopted a 'low-tech' setup, prioritizing simplicity and accessibility. Through analysis of well-performing content on social media, it was often simple phone-recorded videos that were the most effective and best performing. Our primary tools included a smartphone, a microphone, and a tripod equipped with a phone holder.

This deliberate choice was informed by our observation that content with a less polished appearance tends to resonate better on social media platforms. We recognized that overly professional visuals often fail to connect with our target audience in the social media landscape. By embracing a more authentic and relatable visual style, our aim was to create content that would engage and connect with our audience, fostering a sense of authenticity and approachability.

During the project, we utilized the video editing tool 'InShot' to refine and enhance our social media videos. InShot's user-friendly interface and comprehensive editing features allowed us to seamlessly trim and crop footage, apply filters and effects, adjust video speed, add text overlays, and incorporate captivating transitions. These capabilities enabled us to create visually captivating videos that effectively conveyed our campaign messages.

Images

In line with our approach to video content, we adopted a similar methodology for image production. We sourced visuals and text from secondary sources and skilfully edited them to create impactful tweets and text posts. By curating content from diverse sources, we ensured a varied range of visuals that resonated with our audience. Our aim was to maintain an authentic and relatable visual style while delivering engaging and informative posts.

To supplement our content, we also incorporated relevant videos sourced from secondary sources, providing a well-rounded multimedia experience for our audience. This approach allowed us to deliver dynamic social media content that captivated our audience and fostered a genuine connection with our campaign.

Additionally, we occasionally utilized Canva for editing photos and cover images. Leveraging Canva's intuitive editing tools, we enhanced the visual appeal of our imagery, further optimizing its impact on our target audience. By combining the capabilities of InShot and Canva, we successfully crafted compelling and visually appealing multimedia content that resonated with our audience across various social media platforms.

Metrics Impact

This section will offer insight into the social media metrics throughout the AKC campaign, with an analysis of Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok. Twitter will be excluded as it was not a goal to use it to influence public opinion but rather to explore trends, ideas, and wording from experts.

Meta (Instagram & Facebook)

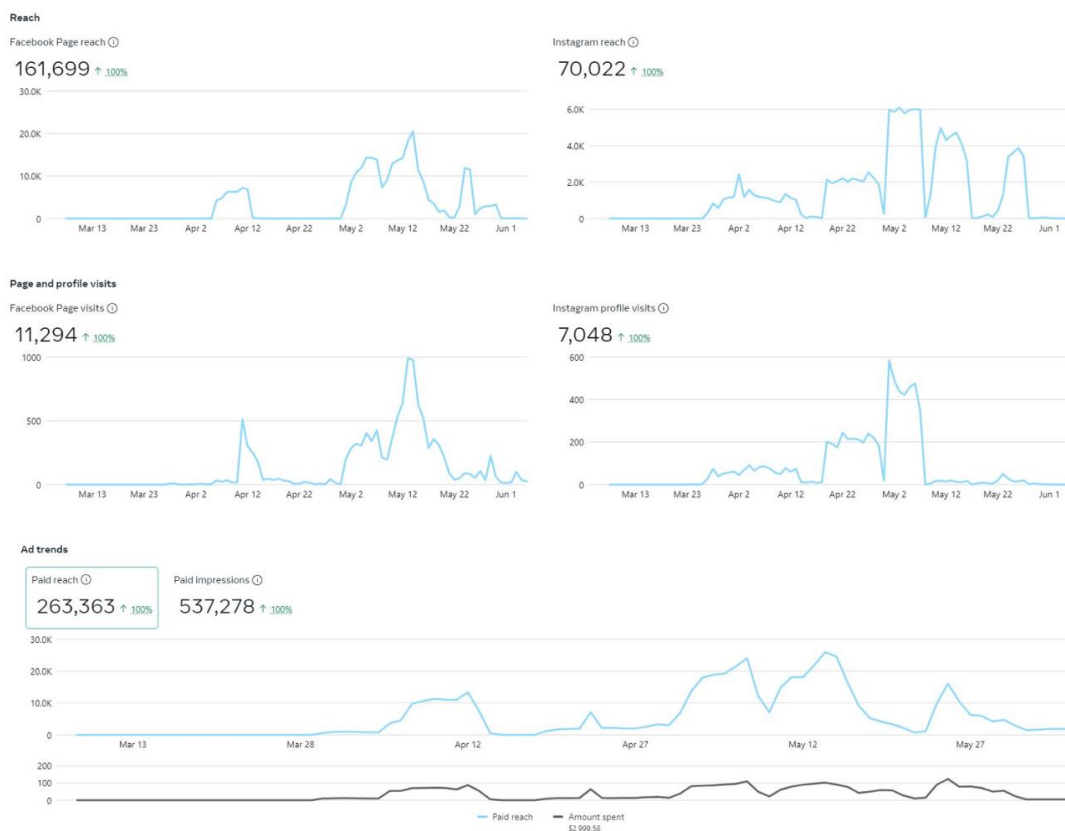


Figure 2) This graphic is a compilation of metrics from Meta (Facebook & Instagram), included is reach (the number of unique accounts that have seen a piece of content), impressions (the number of times a post was seen), profile visits (the number of times a profile was visited from seeing a piece of content), and ad trends (paid reach and impressions).

As seen in Figure 2, as of 8/6/2023, AKC organic (non-paid) content reached unique 161,699 Facebook accounts predominately in South Australia, and an additional 70,000 unique accounts on Instagram. Such a large number was due to several pieces of content being highly shared among Facebook groups, or to individual stories on Instagram. In Early May, AKC content was being heavily shared, especially content that presented the stark difference in Kangaroo Exclusion Zones, and

hence received many profile visits, leading to an increase in views on additional content. Inorganic (paid) reach and impressions were 263,363 and 537,279 respectively. AKC was satisfied with the impact of ads, which led to a significant amount of organic engagement.

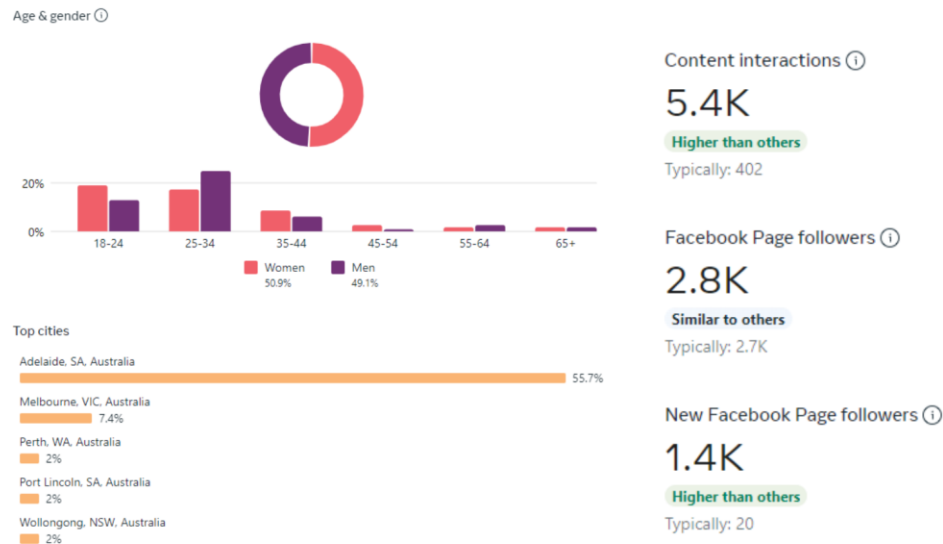


Figure 3) This graphic explains the demographics of individuals that have engaged with AKC, showing age and gender, city location, as well as quantifying content interactions and followers contrasted against competing pages.

As expressed in Figure 3, engagement across this binary metric of gender was evenly split between men and women, with a strong skew toward younger audiences. South Australia was the largest audience base with 55.7% of engagement being generated in Adelaide. Content interaction was a total of 5.4k, which Meta classed as ‘higher than others’ which refers to similar pages with similar followings.

Tik Tok

AKC on Tik Tok did not have any ad spend and henceforth all engagement was organic. There was a total of 28,000 views across the campaign with an average of 80 interactions per post which refers to likes and comments. This content was predominantly videos. This is continuing to trend upwards as the AKC continues to create more content.

Successes

The AKC project achieved significant successes in growing public awareness of the issues around kangaroos and generally promoting the consumption of kangaroo products.

Building Understanding

- A compilation of social and scientific research was created, providing valuable resources for informing the public about kangaroo management.
- Primary research into public perceptions through the survey indicated that a majority of the NCSSA’s audience is receptive to the concept of kangaroo management.
- The strengths and weaknesses of different social media platforms were identified, enabling informed decisions for future communication strategies.

Social Media:

- The AKC campaign successfully reached over 160,000 people organically and an additional 260,000 people through targeted advertisements.
- A total of over 100 content pieces were created across four social media platforms, with an average of three posts per week.
- To enhance public engagement with the research, a dedicated website was launched, providing additional resources and information.

Improving Social License:

- The campaign had a broad reach, bringing awareness and education to the minds of a very wide audience, the broad majority of whom responded in a positive manner.
- As the campaign gained credibility, more individuals identified themselves as champions, demonstrating an increased willingness to be involved, and confidence in the AKC campaign.
- Meaningful relationships were established, fostering Knowledge sharing and insight, including collaborations with First Nations groups.
- The campaign received positive feedback from numerous individuals who found the content to be educational, inspiring, and representative of their views. Some of the testimonials have been recorded in **Appendix A**. A qualitative analysis of the common themes from this feedback identified common themes:
 - Appreciation for education on a new topic.
 - Support from stakeholders who felt represented.
 - Emphasis on the benefits of kangaroo meat.
 - Appreciation from environmentalists who felt represented.
 - Praise for starting a difficult conversation.
- The campaign established a precedent for people to speak to the issue publicly, which will hopefully encourage more people to continue to uplift the conversation in the future.

The above achievements demonstrate the significant impact and success of the AKC campaign in reaching a wide audience, building social license, and developing communication resources that inform and engage the public on the topic of kangaroo management.

Challenges

Securing Engagement

There was notable difficulty in engaging champions in participation with content for social media. Many people initially noted that they were supportive of the cause but did not want to be seen to be publicly speaking out about it due to the reputational risks posed by being involved in such a controversial issue. For example, Alice Frazer, the sales and produce manager from 'Something Wild,' is involved in the sale of kangaroo and other wild meats and is very supportive of kangaroo management. However, noted that attempts to advertise the product in the past had negatively impacted their business, *"After advertising our kangaroo meat, our reviews on Facebook went from 5 stars to 1 star, in just a couple of days,"* Ms Frazer said. This reputational concern was shared amongst many smaller organisations. For others, particularly those from a government background, there were media policies in place that prevented them from participating.

As the campaign progressed, it became notably easier to engage individuals who were willing to participate. People expressed a greater willingness to get involved after witnessing the establishment of digital credibility and feeling inspired by others who were already delivering the

campaign message. An example of this is Aaron Thomas, one of our champions, who initially had reservations about participating due to concerns about conflicts of interest with his workplace and uncertainty about the campaign's messaging. However, as the campaign unfolded, his interest in being involved grew. He mentioned, "I watched the TikToks you've been doing and it's good stuff. I understand your message better now and feel confident about being part of it." We observed similar experiences with other champions, who felt more assured about getting involved when they saw that others had already taken part. This experience provided valuable insights into the most effective approaches for reaching out to potential participants, introducing them to the concept of engagement on social media, and mitigating associated risks.

Online Pushback

There was a large degree of online hate in response to some of the social media content in the early stages of the campaign. Responses tended to be from a specific community of animal rights activists on Facebook who were well-connected and targeted in their responses. Re-sharing has been prominent in groups such as "Kangaroo Truth: The Original" and "Kangaroo Industry: Dirty Graphic Truth." Comments have been captured in **Appendix B**, but the common themes are described below:

- **Refusal of Overabundance:** These comments were largely based on false or misleading "citizen science," and perpetuated the notion that kangaroo populations did not experience overabundance. Some argued that kangaroos were under threat or endangered, though such claims were largely unquantified.
- **Meat Safety:** Images of kangaroo carcasses without refrigeration were shared alongside the argument that there were health risks associated with kangaroo meat related to the hunting practices. Notably, this argument sometimes also critiqued commercial hunting as a colonial practice.
- **The Implications of Kangaroos:** There were a variety of arguments centered around defending that kangaroos could be a problem. This stream of messaging often focused on advocating for the protection of kangaroos for their inherent value, often through an emotional lens. Arguments also often compared European farming practices and compared kangaroos to introduced animals.
- **Refuting Independence:** These arguments were spread prolifically with the attempt of discrediting the AKC platform through attested bias from government and industry.

Destructive and targeted online attacks have the potential to damage the reputation and credibility of AKC, but secondarily NCSSA, the KPP, and associated organisations. These responses affirm some conceptions that Facebook tends to facilitate opinionated arguments rather than positive or organic engagement.

Addressing pushback and negative comments on social media is a challenging aspect of online communication. While each situation is unique, the following approaches proved to be effective in overcoming pushback in the AKC campaign.

1. **Blocking Offensive Behaviour:** When faced with unconstructive and toxic conversations, the primary focus should be on maintaining a positive and productive online environment. Much of the time, it is necessary to blocking individuals who consistently engage in harmful behaviour can help protect the community and prevent further negative interactions. It is also possible to 'hide' comments on social media, so that they are not deleted, but are hidden from everyone but the user who posted them. AKC found that hiding and blocking key offenders was useful in maintaining a positive online platform.

2. **Respond with Credibility:** When responding to criticisms, it is essential to maintain faith in the narrative and reinforce credibility. Backing statements with evidence from reliable sources and linking to higher research can help establish the organization's expertise and address concerns with information. AKC developed a website that was able to answer some key questions respondents had and direct them to further research.²
3. **Evaluate Engagement with Offensive Users:** Engaging with offensive users can have both positive and negative outcomes, and the decision to do so should be context specific. Pros of engagement may include increased engagement metrics and the potential to spark discussion. However, it is important to consider the potential risks to the organization's reputation and the resources required to engage in a meaningful dialogue. In the case of AKC, the NCSSA determined that non-engagement was the most suitable strategy to mitigate risks to the organization's broader reputational damage.

By adopting these strategies, we were able to maintain a respectful and constructive online environment, focus on credible communication, and effectively manage negative interactions on social media platforms. Over time, the level of pushback greatly decreased as offenders were gaining little traction, and the AKC platform gained more support.

Key learnings

The top 10 learnings from the AKC project have been summarised below. By incorporating these key learnings into a communication strategy, the campaign can continue to improve social license, engage with diverse audiences, and advocate for effective kangaroo management practices. Further detail on how these points may translate to action is provided in the social media guide below.

1. **Building a Social License Takes Time:** Establishing trust and credibility with the public requires consistent and ongoing efforts to engage and educate. It takes time for relationships to be built and reputations to crystallize, both online and through in-person interactions. The AKC project took approximately 3 months to establish its digital credibility.
2. **Coherent, Consistent, and Current Digital Space:** Creating a digital space that is coherent, consistent, and up-to-date is crucial for attracting and retaining followers. By maintaining a consistent voice, branding, and content style, we can establish expectations and build recognition and trust among our audience.
3. **Crafting a Collective Narrative:** While many voices may contribute to the conversation, it is important to maintain a single, consistent narrative. This includes aligning branding, headlines, tone, and engagement strategies to convey a unified message. It is helpful to have a consistent orator who contributes to the 'face' of the narrative.
4. **Simple Messaging for Complex Issues:** social media requires simplicity in messaging, even for complex issues. Concision is a key skill in communicating complex information effectively to the audience. Storytelling techniques can be employed to provide context, engage emotions, and connect with the audience. AKC found that materials with shorter duration were most appropriate on social media.

² [HOME | My Site 1 \(akangarooconversat.wixsite.com\)](#)

5. **Visual Appeal:** Utilizing visually enticing content, such as visual metaphors, recognizable branding, and captivating imagery, can draw people in and make the message more engaging. Visualizing data and presenting information in various formats, such as photos, videos, and graphics, helps to tell a compelling story.
6. **Know Your Audience:** Tailoring content to different social media platforms is essential, as each platform has its own characteristics and demographics. Understanding the audience and their interests allows the creation of relevant and engaging content that resonates. More information on tailoring messages for different platforms is provided in Table 1.
7. **Building Relationships and Collaborations:** Building relationships, both online and in-person, is crucial for success. Collaboration with specific stakeholders, such as community groups or organizations, can provide opportunities for policy reform and social change. Engaging with networks and leveraging their channels for content distribution can also enhance reach and credibility.
8. **Evidence-Based Positive Messaging:** Backing our messaging with strong scientific research builds credibility and reduces the need to engage in arguments online. Focusing on positive messaging that highlights the benefits and solutions can be more effective in influencing public opinion.
9. **Targeted Content Strategy:** Tailoring content to specific target audiences can yield better results. Identifying perceptions we want to influence and understanding the proportion of general public best poised to drive change helps in creating more targeted content.
10. **Embrace Opportunities for Policy Reform and Social Change:** Identifying specific opportunities where kangaroo issues intersect with other causes or interests can lead to more nuanced communication and collaboration. Working with specific stakeholders and leveraging their platforms can amplify the impact of our messaging.

Social Media Guide for Complex Communications

Social media provides a novel and unique opportunity to convey messages to a wide audience. However, effectively communicating complex issues in a simple and understandable manner can be challenging. It is not always easy, but it is possible, and can be very impactful in improving the social license for a particular cause.

The Nature Conservation Society of South Australia engaged in communicating the complexities of kangaroo management through social media through the iteration of the social awareness campaign: *A Kangaroo Conversation* ('AKC'). This campaign aimed to educate the public about the intricate dynamics of macropod populations in South Australia, including their interactions with social, economic, and environmental factors, while also encouraging the public to consider the role of various management techniques in achieving positive outcomes. The learnings from this campaign have been used to create this guide on how to communicate complex issues in simple ways.

Establishing digital credibility

Before a message can be communicated, it must have a platform to be communicated from. It is important to build a digital space that is *coherent, consistent and current*. These three factors are key to attracting and retaining the attention of social media users. *Coherency* refers to the notion of being logical in the presentation of information. In the case of AKC, coherency had to be built up over time as different posts contributed to conveying the core elements of the science at hand. First, introducing the concept that macropod population cycles had been disrupted, then communicating the effect this has on biodiversity, then conveying the need for management. *Consistency* refers to following some continuous standards in terms of the content which is created, the voice which is

used, and the frequency with which it is shared. In AKC, posting occurred 2-3 times per week with consistent use of imagery, branding, linguistics, and content style. *Currency* refers to creating content that is relevant to the times. In AKC, currency was maintained through regular posting at times when our audience was active, and identifying opportunities to post, re-share and engage with content at particular times. For example, re-sharing relevant content when it was first published, like prominent Indigenous influencer Guyala Bayles Instagram post about 'Roo Tail Stew.'³ Through re-sharing this post soon after initial publication, and soon after contacting Bayles, we identified an opportunity for cross-promotion through our shared interests. Bayles engaged with some of AKC's content and vice versa.

For some organisations, coherency, consistency and currency might come easily, as they already have a functioning social media platform with a wide audience already engaging with its content. For other groups, it may take some time to build up a following and learn what works best for your audience and cause. With AKC, it has taken time for the platform to emerge from no prior foundations, but it has now become more established and credible.

Content Creation

'Edutainment' is taking the online world by storm and rising in popularity across social media platforms. It is the practice of combining educational content with entertainment, with the aim of making the learning process more enjoyable, engaging and thus effective.⁴ AKC aimed to create content in the edutainment genre by using multimedia visual materials, music, text, and storytelling to engage viewers with the content.

There are countless examples of positive edutainment content which may be useful to refer to. Traditional news platforms like The Guardian have been utilising edutainment on their Instagram and TikTok (@guardianaustralia) through creating reels made interesting with multimedia and a young presenter, Matilda Boseley who explains serious issues in simple and colloquial language. Fast-paced editing keeps viewers engaged, and Boseley's explanations aid comprehension. Similarly fast-paced, science education platform @nerdyaboutnature has risen to popularity on Instagram through his dynamic explanations of ecological concepts. His videos feature beautiful natural scenes combined with quick and witty descriptions of scientific concepts or ecological philosophies, engaging viewers empathetic to nature and intrigued by his knowledge.

Both of these examples employ fast-paced editing techniques to cater to the short attention span prevalent on social media, effectively blending education and entertainment (edutainment). Similarly, the AKC campaign sought to create edutainment content by incorporating music, impactful imagery, and humour to captivate the audience's interest. It is recommended that organizations looking to communicate complex issues through social media draw inspiration from the dynamic nature of social media platforms and adopt engaging edutainment approaches that are suitable for their specific platform, even though this might depart from what is known in traditional media.

³ See @guyala_lala on Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CsaVkPzsL0I/?hl=en>

⁴ https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4419-1428-6_1938

Different messaging for different platforms

Tailoring content to different social media channels is crucial, as each platform has its own demographic, with its own strengths and limitations (see Figure 4). It is very important to 'know your audience' before sharing content. The table below outlines the common characteristics of each platform, and how they might inform the type of content created. Note that these observations are based largely on the experiences of the AKC platform, and that each audience is variable and some of these observed behaviours will not always be relevant.

Top-performing organic posts

Here are posts that have performed well over the last 90 days. Understanding what's working can help you decide what to create and share next, so you can keep up the great work.

Highest reach on a post ⓘ



This post reached **420%** more Accounts Center accounts (1,207 Accounts Center accounts) than your median post (232 Accounts Center accounts) on Facebook.

Highest reactions on a post ⓘ



This post received **192%** more reactions (38 reactions) than your median post (13 reactions) on Facebook.

Highest comments on a post ⓘ

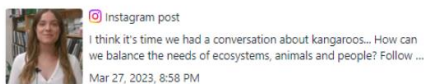


This post received **1,300%** more comments (56 comments) than your median post (4 comments) on Facebook.

Top-performing organic posts

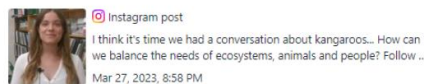
Here are posts that have performed well over the last 90 days. Understanding what's working can help you decide what to create and share next, so you can keep up the great work.

Highest reach on a post ⓘ



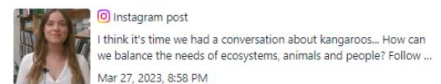
This post reached **463%** more Accounts Center accounts (1,031 Accounts Center accounts) than your median post (183 Accounts Center accounts) on Instagram.

Highest likes on a post ⓘ



This post received 42 likes.

Highest comments on a post ⓘ



This post received **1,400%** more comments (15 comments) than your median post (1 comment) on Instagram.

Figure 4) This figure explores the highest performing pieces of content across Meta, with images considered to be memes contrasting Kangaroo Exclusion Zones performing highly on Facebook, whereas Instagram saw spoken videos performing best.

Hashtags

Hashtags offer a remarkably simple way to reach wider audiences on social media platforms. In AKC, hashtags were a very effective means of increasing content exposure through tapping into some of the most commonly used hashtags that were likely to pop up in more people's feeds. Online resources can be used to scan the most popular hashtags.⁵

Hashtags serve as digital signposts, connecting people with similar interests and allowing them to explore a diverse range of content related to a particular topic. AKC altered the hashtags used depending on what the desired audience was, and which hashtags were the most popular.

For example, for a post assessed to have the most impact on an audience interested in the environment, AKC used many hashtags relating to general environmental topics, such as:

#conservation #wildlife #nature #nationalparks #environmentaleducation

For posts assessed to have the most impact on audiences who may be interested in kangaroos from a meat perspective, AKC used hashtags such as:

⁵ [Best Hashtag Generator for Instagram \(AI-based pickup\) \(infect.com\)](https://www.infact.com/best-hashtag-generator-for-instagram)

#gamemeat #sustainablemeat #landmanagement #agriculture

For posts intended to be approachable to a broad range of audiences, popular hashtags of a very general nature were used, such as:

#southaustralia #australia #adelaide #inspirationdaily #learning

For organizations, hashtags present a valuable opportunity to increase brand awareness, foster engagement, and participate in trending conversations. By strategically selecting and utilizing hashtags that align with their message, organizations can effectively amplify their reach, join relevant conversations, and connect with their target audience in a meaningful and impactful way.

Table 1) This table expresses the AKC key learnings for each platform as well as our recommendations as to how best to use each platform to promote kangaroo management.

Facebook	
Demographic	Widely used platform, especially by older users (35-60). Group structure promotes community engagement, particularly in specific communities through Facebook Groups. Users primarily engage with friends and family on a personal level, expecting emotive content.
Positives	High content engagement and shareability, especially when targeted with ads. Important for brand credibility due to its widespread usage. Can attract new audiences and expand reach.
Negatives	Reels and hashtags have limited utility on Facebook, with lower organic engagement from the general public. The platform has faced criticism for its failure to address hate speech and mitigate offensive behavior. Structured community engagement can sometimes facilitate harassment, disinformation, and organized hate.
Recommendations	Facebook is an effective platform for targeted ads and customized content that resonates with specific audiences. It is important to prioritize organic engagement with pre-existing groups, pages, and established accounts to foster meaningful connections and interactions. By leveraging existing communities, the campaign can effectively reach its intended audience on Facebook.
Instagram	
Demographic	Instagram has a diverse and predominantly younger audience, which makes it an ideal platform for reaching a more progressive and open-minded demographic. Users on Instagram are often receptive to new ideas and trends, making it a valuable space to communicate and engage with the target audience.
Positives	Instagram offers a great opportunity to connect with new audiences and increase brand exposure. The platform's user-friendly interface and stricter moderation policies create a more civil and respectful environment for interactions. Instagram's focus on visual content makes it an effective platform for re-sharing and collaborating with other accounts. Additionally, strategic use of hashtags can significantly enhance engagement and reach on the platform.
Negatives	While Instagram provides options for targeted advertisements, the effectiveness of converting exposure into follows or conversions may be comparatively lower. However, engagement with ads on the platform tends to be acceptable. This means that while targeted advertisements may not directly result in a high number of follows, they can still generate engagement and create awareness among the audience. It is important to consider a comprehensive approach that includes both organic content and strategic ad placements to maximize the impact on Instagram.
Recommendations	Instagram is a powerful platform for establishing a strong presence, gaining exposure, and engaging with a message or purpose. With its visually-oriented nature and predominantly younger audience, Instagram offers a prime opportunity to captivate users with 'edutainment' style content, combining

	education and entertainment. By leveraging the platform's features, such as visual storytelling, collaboration, and the effective use of hashtags, organizations can effectively communicate their message and provide valuable educational resources to a wide range of users.
TikTok	
Demographic	TikTok appeals to a diverse audience, especially active and creative youth.
Positives	TikTok offers excellent opportunities to engage with new audiences and gain exposure through viral content creation. It provides user-friendly captioning options and powerful editing tools for video production.
Negatives	When sharing content from TikTok to other platforms, it's important to note that it may not perform as well due to differences in algorithms. The behavior and trends on TikTok can be less predictable compared to other platforms. Additionally, content that works well on other platforms may not resonate with the TikTok audience. It's worth mentioning that images typically do not perform as strongly on TikTok compared to video content.
Recommendations	TikTok provides an excellent platform for experimenting with novel and creative content, particularly content that is humorous and takes advantage of current trends. The potential for virality is high on this platform, making it a great opportunity to reach a large audience and gain significant traction.
Twitter	
Demographic	Twitter is a popular platform among academics and scientists, serving as a hub for sharing and discovering the latest updates and information. It is particularly valued by those seeking to stay informed about current events and trends in various fields.
Positives	Twitter serves as a valuable knowledge resource, allowing for the sharing of educational and informative content. It excels in the distribution of text-based posts, particularly in list format, making it an ideal platform for sharing educational material. Tweets with links also have a high potential for engagement and retweets. Additionally, Twitter-formatted posts can be effectively cross-promoted and re-shared on other social media platforms.
Negatives	Building a platform from scratch or launching promotional material on Twitter can be challenging. Users on Twitter tend to engage more with individuals they already know, and engagement often relies on pre-existing networks. Re-sharing old content may not generate significant traction or engagement. Therefore, establishing a presence and gaining visibility on Twitter requires thoughtful networking, engaging with relevant communities, and creating fresh and compelling content to capture users' attention.
Recommendations	Twitter is highly useful for sharing educational and informative content. It provides a platform for collaborating and amplifying the work of others while ensuring proper credit is given. It serves as a valuable tool for supporting work on other platforms, particularly for established accounts and organizations. By leveraging the power of Twitter, users can extend the reach of important messages and contribute to ongoing conversations in their respective fields.

Recommendations

Long-Term Communication Strategy:

Based on the insights gained from the AKC campaign, it is recommended that specific and targeted communication strategies for each social media platform are developed. Understanding the unique characteristics and demographics of each platform will allow tailored content to maximize engagement and reach. By utilizing the strengths of each platform and adapting messaging accordingly, the campaign can effectively convey complex issues that resonate with the target

audience. This long-term strategy will ensure that communication efforts remain relevant, impactful, and consistent across different social media channels.

Enhancing Engagement with First Nations:

The AKC campaign has highlighted the importance of building relationships and supporting community initiatives, particularly with First Nations groups. To further enhance engagement, it is recommended that the campaign continues to seek opportunities to collaborate and work closely with First Nations communities. This may involve actively seeking their input and incorporating their perspectives into messaging and content. By fostering a collaborative approach and recognizing the traditional knowledge and expertise of First Nations, we can ensure that communication efforts are inclusive, respectful, and representative of diverse voices.

Developing a More Targeted Approach:

To drive meaningful change and influence decision-making, it is recommended that the campaign shifts the focus toward landowners and managers. Building on the stories and evidence gathered during the pilot campaign, to develop targeted messaging and content that directly addresses their concerns, challenges, and interests. This approach will allow the campaign to effectively communicate the benefits and importance of kangaroo management, while also addressing any misconceptions or barriers that may exist. Additionally, given the current political appetite to support the issue, it is crucial to leverage the existing momentum and engage with key stakeholders, decision-makers, and policymakers to advocate for effective kangaroo management strategies.

By implementing these recommendations and refining the communication strategies, we can strengthen the long-term impact and foster a better understanding of the complexities surrounding kangaroo management. The AKC campaign has provided valuable insights and a foundation for future advocacy efforts, and by building on these findings, we can continue to drive positive change, engage with diverse stakeholders, and shape public opinion effectively.

Moving Forward

1. **Secure Continued Funding:** With ongoing financial support, AKC can expand and enhance its current campaign, leveraging the established digital credibility to increase its reach and impact.
2. **Foster Collaborations:** Collaboration with members of the local and digital community offers a range of opportunities to expand the impact of AKC. This can involve partnering with environmental organizations, research institutions, government agencies, and Indigenous groups to co-create content, share resources, and pool expertise. Collaborative projects can take the form of joint campaigns, webinars, panel discussions, or workshops, allowing for a broader reach and greater engagement.
3. **Engage the Community:** Beyond digital platforms, AKC can explore community engagement activities to foster meaningful connections with the target audience. This can include organizing local events, such as public forums, town hall meetings, or educational workshops, where participants can learn about kangaroo management, share their perspectives, and engage in constructive discussions. Additionally, partnering with schools, community centres, or local businesses can provide opportunities to reach diverse segments of the population and create a network of stakeholders invested in the cause.
4. **Explore Diverse Media Channels:** To expand the reach and impact of AKC, it is important to consider leveraging diverse media channels. This can involve collaborating with local

journalists to publish articles or op-eds that highlight the importance of responsible kangaroo management. Exploring radio interviews or podcast appearances can provide an avenue to share insights, address misconceptions, and reach new audiences. Additionally, incorporating artwork, illustrations, or infographics into AKC's content strategy can visually enhance the message and make it more accessible to a broader audience.

5. **Develop Educational Resources:** AKC can develop comprehensive educational resources, such as fact sheets, brochures, or online guides, that provide in-depth information about kangaroo management. These resources can be made available on AKC's website or shared with partner organizations, schools, and community groups to facilitate informed discussions and promote evidence-based understanding.
6. **Advocate for Policy Reform:** AKC can actively engage in advocacy efforts by collaborating with policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders to support evidence-based policy reform related to kangaroo management. This can involve providing expert insights, contributing to consultations, and participating in public hearings or forums to advocate for sustainable and responsible practices.
7. **Embrace Innovative Communication Tools:** In an ever-evolving digital landscape, AKC should embrace innovative communication tools and platforms to stay relevant and effectively reach its target audience. This can include exploring emerging social media platforms, live streaming sessions, and interactive webinars to create immersive educational experiences.

By implementing these ideas, AKC can enhance its campaign, broaden its impact, and foster a greater understanding and support for responsible kangaroo management practices.

Appendix

Appendix A: Positive Testimonials in Response to AKC Social Media Content.

- ✓ *"G'day, It's great to see someone promoting kangaroo control. I am a farmer in the Southern Flinders area of SA, and also a kangaroo field processor. Any attempts I have made to improve the industry have hit brick walls. So I hope you can achieve something - good luck!" Tom Keurschner.*
- ✓ *"Really great to see this on social media. I recently moved from Kangaroo Island, and as a permitted kangaroo shooter I have a lot to say on this issue. Roo management was hampered by the green extremists and made it all difficult and sometimes dangerous. From protestors endangering their own lives disrupting shoots, to having drones flown at my head to stop me, being harassed publicly as a 'murderer' with activists trespassing on my property... I have basically been hounded away and ended up leaving KI. The activists were friends with and quietly supported by the NRM rangers." - Lisa Crago.*
- ✓ *"I really think the government need to have a good look into this and start supporting farmers and the reality of the kangaroo population, the population of kangaroos have inclined massively and needs something done about it! most farmers don't wanna eradicate them but just thin them out so the farmers have more feed for stock and kangaroos are still around the property and not eating the pastures down that they are trying to manage and let grow and establish on the property." Mitchell Allen.*
- ✓ *"Came across your page on TikTok! Love what you are putting out! My names Zach and I run a south Australian based hunting and conservation podcast just wondering if you'd like to come on sometime and chat about all the things you are promoting?" Zach Williams.*
- ✓ *"Love your project, is such a great one to have our there." Tom Hunt.*
- ✓ *"Hi, this is new topic for me altogether, and is very interesting. Thanks for sharing the survey. I'm keen to learn more about kangaroo populations. Good luck!" Saima Shaukatali.*
- ✓ *"It is so important to see this content getting out there. It's such a shame that folks can't connect the dots themselves and realise how important this conversation is for habitat restoration. Keep it up!" Helen Taylor.*
- ✓ *"I do eat kangaroo, but it's not super easy to come by! I am a fan of eating game though, sustainably sourced wild foods are epic. Tis great to see you using socials to promoting sustainable meat, hopefully it catches on." Lucy Wood.*
- ✓ *"This is definitely a conversation people need to be having more and more. Good on you for talking about the stuff that most people won't." Ned Schofield.*
- ✓ *"I never used to eat kangaroo, but it has been great to bring into my diet and I have been eating it a lot more kangaroo since learning about how it is good for the environment." – Xue Tong.*
- ✓ *"The more we see people talking about kangaroo meat as a mainstream option, the more it will be accepted as opposed to worse alternatives." Sophia Jackson.*
- ✓ *"One of the main things I liked with your account was the from the get-go you had very clear messaging. Each of your posts was not super similar, it was cohesive, which was cool because it was clear you'd really thought about what you were putting out there. Really enjoyed that you'd interviewed a range of people but particularly scientists, and had a range of content which made it easy to engage in*

little snippets. Really cool to see in a world which doesn't often address some of those hard topics like eating roo, which is really important to me for my health and my country." Hannah Nicholls.

Appendix B: Table of Negative Responses to AKC Facebook Content.

Refusal of Overabundance	 <p>The screenshot shows a Facebook post with four comments and a poster. The comments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam Wight: Too many herbivores???? They are part of the land. Tassie is rewilding emus that were shot to extinction. This group are dodgy. https://m.facebook.com/story.php... Rowena Dexter: Yep, that is definitely a plague. Joanna K Heathen: Your idea of a 'plague' of kangaroos?! James McCandlish: I recently got back from a 6000 km trip into "arid" parts of Australia and there are definitely few to none. I counted 4. In 2013 I traveled from Melbourne to Broken Hill into Birdsville. I counted few to none. Where are they all hiding I wonder? These lot are preparing areas for livestock and when they continue with the line that herbaceous animals are invading it's bullshit. <p>The poster below the comments is titled "SOUTH AUSTRALIA ADDS EASTERN GREY KANGAROOS TO COMMERCIAL SHOOTING". It features a photo of a kangaroo and text stating it is a "RARE" species under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972. It also includes a quote: "SA: Listed as Rare (National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 (South Australia): Rare species: June 2011 list) as <i>Macropus giganteus</i>." and cites the Australian Government Dept of the Environment & Energy Species Profile and Threats Database (SPRAT).</p>
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The Implications of Kangaroos



Helliott Dwane doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation](#)

16 h · 🌐

Spreading false, dangerous propaganda. Stop demonising native wildlife. Australians are so warped in their hatred of kangaroos. Are you hand in glove with the farmers or the shooters?!

👍 3



Katrina O'Neill doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation](#)

16 h · 🌐

What a load of rubbish! Kangaroos are slow breeding native animals that don't decimate the land.

👍 4



Kate Webster doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation](#)

1 d · 🌐

What a load of crap, the grazing pressure of kangaroos is ridiculously less than sheep/cows etc. they are a native species for gods sake. Humans however are the biggest plague going round, have you seen what we do to the 'natural ecosystems'?

👍 7



Gigi Brendel

Kangaroos have lived here a lot longer than non indigenous humans and those introduced species that came with the first and subsequent settlers.. Kangaroos lived in balance with their native habitat, and native humans, and not until that balance was brought out of kilter by over grazing (cows and sheep etc), land clearing to replace the degenerated land in hope of feeding hard hoofed animals, mono cultivation and land clearing for house and land packages, has their presence been erroneously seen as "invasive" An industry that is making a lot of money to kill and sell parts of kangaroos for profit, have a vested interest in blaming kangaroos for existing in their own habitat, what is left of it, so that profit can continue

Like Reply Hide [Send Message](#) 16 h



Alyssa Kimberley doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation](#)

1 d · 🌐

Whilst progressive environmentalists are looking at how we can coexist peacefully with the wildlife we have left, this outdated bunch has come up to try and fire up yet more hate against kangaroos. They are not being transparent about who they are or their agenda, despite the clear agenda being pushed. Remember there is big money behind the killing of kangaroos, and it is these sort of colonial falsehoods that the kangaroo industry relies on to legitimise the worlds largest land-based wildlife trade.

Question everything they say with a very critical eye, and ideally do your research via independent scientists such as:

<http://thinkkangaroos.uts.edu.au>

And

<https://www.kangaroosatrisk.org>

Or check out this detailed mythbusting presentation:

<https://friendsofmotherearth.org.au/.../Kangaroo-Myths.pdf>

👍 4

Seriously: This is just rubbish!! Perhaps you need to report on the grazing pressure that sheep, cattle, goats, rabbits, horses, camels have on the land. Kangaroos are perfectly suited to the Australian environment. It is humans and introduced animals that are detrimental.

Like Reply Hide Send Message 1 d 



Jane Robinson

This is similar to the lies and nonsense that is behind the mass slaughter of eastern grey kangaroos every year in the ACT. The ACT Govt pays for the slaughter with public funds. The ACT Environment Directorate has been promulgating this propaganda about grazing pressure caused by kangaroos for over 15 years. We now see cattle grazing on nature reserves and the Directorate calls it 'ecological grazing.'

Like Reply Hide Send Message 18 h 



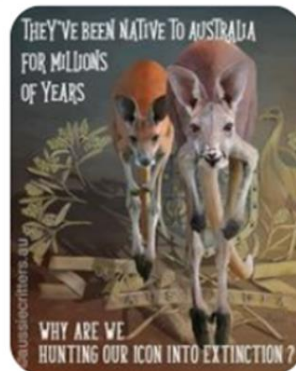
Kim Palmer

Uhm, cattle, sheep, deer, pigs, camels, rabbits, all introduced herbivores with a greater grazing pressure than our NATIVE herbivore and disastrous impact for other various reasons, hard hooves, burrows, disease etc leave the roos alone. And the biggest threat to biodiversity is agriculture and development so HUMANS!









Cath Margie



Refuting Independence





 **Sandra Boldiston**
How much were you paid to spew that bullshit
Like Reply Hide [Send Message](#) 1 d  6

 **Jill Gilbert**
Who is funding this so called independent platform?
Your credibility is very questionable. You do not report or present information in an accurate or independent manner. What you share is quite biased against kangaroos and not factual. Where are you getting this 'science' from? It is selective and not evidence based. Who is behind this propaganda filled page?
Like Reply Hide [Send Message](#) 1 d  9
 Peter Leo Harry replied · 1 reply

 **Sonia Blackwell**
Scientists are bought every day by big business who would ever trust them
Filling their pokes
STOP LYING
Like Reply Hide [Send Message](#) 1 d  9

*"Most relevant" is selected, so some comments may have been filtered out.

 **Helliott Dwane** doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation.](#)  16 h ·   3

 **Jo Lisa Walsh** doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation.](#)  23 h ·   1

 **Peter Leo Harry** doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation.](#)  1 d ·    8  9

 **Eleanor Byrne** doesn't recommend [Kangaroo Conversation.](#)  1 d ·   7

Meat Safety



Cath Margie

[Steven Whittle](#) Here's a bit of education.
Do you see any refrigeration in this photo? No.
Enjoy the parasites that will make you stick.

