

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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PADDOCK TO PLATE OPTION ON THE TABLE FOR KANGAROO HARVEST

The Andrews Labor Government is improving access to sustainable food and supporting sustainable jobs, with changes to the Kangaroo Harvesting Program that will see more meat available for Victorians to enjoy.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the 2021 quota allocation for the Kangaroo Harvesting Program – which has risen due to a notable increase in the estimated statewide kangaroo population in the last three years.

The 2020 survey estimates the current kangaroo population at almost 2 million across Victoria – up almost 40 per cent compared to 2018.

While natural in the Victorian environment, over-abundant populations compete with livestock for stock and feed, and damage crops and fences. To reduce these impacts, the Kangaroo Harvesting Program quota in 2021 is 95,680 kangaroos – an increase of 37,780 from last year.

To reduce waste and boost economic opportunities, the Labor Government will allow the extra meat to be made available for human consumption – not just for pet food as is currently the case – and look for opportunities to export the skins.

Kangaroo meat is an environmentally friendly protein – the animals have less impact on land and they are a low-emissions meat source. Boosting supply of locally-sourced kangaroo meat will also reduce the environmental impacts of importing kangaroo meat from other states.

Only trained professional shooters authorised through the Program meeting strict health and safety measures will be able to provide animals to abattoirs to be processed for the table. To be part of the program, harvesters must be authorised, hold a firearms licence and be accredited in firearm proficiency and game harvesting.

Harvesters must abide by the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes. Their vehicles and cool rooms must also be accredited through PrimeSafe.

Since October 2019, 86 harvesters and five meat processors have taken part in the pet-food-only program, with many calling for changes that allow processing for human consumption to support jobs in country communities.

Domestic demand for the high protein, low fat meat, plus interest from overseas for the skins, could help as many as 100 regional businesses grow.

The sustainability of kangaroo populations is protected through annual quotas, in accordance with Victoria's Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2021-2023. The quota is based on population surveys and modelling from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and is set alongside the estimated numbers of kangaroos controlled under their Authority to Control Wildlife permit system.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"It's important that kangaroo numbers are sustainably managed in Victoria to reduce impacts on landholders and the community. This program provides a service to farmers and an income to trained professional shooters."

"The changes to how products generated from the Kangaroo Harvesting Program can be used gives more options to harvesters and processors to make use of these animals and reduce waste – and create more jobs in country towns."

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