

OPEN LETTER TO MARY-ANNE THOMAS MP

Victorian Labor Minister for Agriculture, Member for Macedon
Responsible for the Victorian commercial kangaroo industry



Glenn Cottier with emaciated face shot kangaroo.
Gisborne, Vic. January 2020.
Credit: Sue Anderson.

It's tough enough to be a volunteer wildlife rescuer without the additional burden of attending to kangaroos that have been maimed and mutilated by bullet wounds. Finding them with some of the most horrific wounds imaginable.

We are the first responders, we are the ones consistently exposed to the horrors inflicted on these animals. We find them in backyards, gardens, cowering under trees, verandas and at people's front doors.

We see the limbs hanging ragged, the swollen infected, bloated faces and bodies from embedded bullets.

We see ones with jaws and noses shot away from what's left of their faces, rendering any attempt to eat or drink impossible.

We see them helplessly looking at us, clawing dirt into their wounds, shaking their heads trying to ward off an army of flies, or just trying to scratch at the maggots writhing inside them.

We witness the mother unable to tend her pouch joey which eventually dies as a result of her no longer able to bend from the traumatic gunshot wounds sustained to her neck.

These are the ones that are found, there are many more unaccounted for, suffering and dying alone.

It falls to members of our community to call them in. It's a twist of irony that kangaroos turn to us for help. These animals know their bodies are ruined, sadly they also know that we are the only ones that are capable of ending their suffering too. We volunteers have that task. After this, we hurt, we always take away some of that pain.

Wildlife volunteers have always been aware of this kind of cruelty towards our kangaroos, but it has got so much worse since the commercialisation of the kangaroo industry. We feel betrayed that it was our own representative Mary-Anne Thomas that brought this carnage literally to our doorstep.

The truth is, there is nowhere a kangaroo is safe.

by Glenn Cottier, volunteer wildlife rescuer active in Macedon Ranges Shire and Mitchell Shire, Victoria