

## **MEDIA RELEASE: VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL ELDER CALLS OUT “MASS KILLING” OF KANGAROOS AS COLONIALISM**

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Slaughtering kangaroos is an ongoing facet of colonialism that undermines Aboriginal stewardship with a culture of exploitation and profiteering. This is the strong message from Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnstone, an Aboriginal Elder, academic and researcher based in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Aunty Janet passionately decries the slaughter of kangaroos, describing how “the colonial invasion of Australia was basically a grab for land and resources with those breaching the frontiers having little sympathy for all its native inhabitants, from human to the smallest native mouse.”

“Of course, land was first along with forests to support habitation for the ever-growing immigrant populations,” she explains, “sheep, cattle, horses, camels etc., were imposed onto the landscape. These supported the migrating populations and the colonial economy that belonged to Europe. Almost as quickly, native creatures became the victims of these colonial extractive industries: whales, seals, birds, Koalas, Possums, Bats and of course, Kangaroos.”

“Kangaroos were labelled ‘pest’ by an invading human species”, she says, “but Kangaroos only became a ‘pest’ when the land grab invaded their once peaceful countryside. I wonder who the real invasive pest really is?”

Aunty Janet rejects the euphemism of ‘harvesting’, calling the shooting of kangaroos “a mass killing of creatures that do not belong to them”, and a continuation of “the base history of this country which sits in multiple narratives of slaughter.” She adds, “never forget the colonial invasion was an invasion that saw everything in this Country up for grabs as part of the greed that drove the invasion. It was cruel, it has harmed this Country, and it has put so much of our biodiversity at serious risk. Was colonisation good for Aboriginal people, their Country and her creatures? No, it has been, and continues to be devastating for all these.”

“The indiscriminate slaughter must stop,” Aunty Janet concludes.

Aunty Janet’s assessment is supported by other Aboriginal activists, such as Aunty Ro Mudyin Godwin, who have long fought against the colonial persecution and exploitation of kangaroos and demanded respect for them as sacred totem animals deeply connected to Aboriginal culture.

Victorian Kangaroo Alliance joins with Aunty Janet in calling for an immediate end to the exploitation of kangaroos and the establishment of an evidence base informing sustainable and humane coexistence with this remarkable keystone species moving forward.



Wild Eastern Grey Kangaroo

Credit: Kim Wormald [lirralirra.com](http://lirralirra.com)