

Farmer Attitudes to Kangaroos within the Yarra Ranges.

By Peter Preuss, November 2025

Background.

On April 8 2025, after months of deliberation, the Yarra Ranges Council unanimously voted to ask the state government to stop the recently introduced commercial killing of kangaroos within the Shire.

Although 10 other neighbouring local government areas have been exempted, the Yarra Ranges request was quickly rejected by the state government (*and I quote*) “**at this time**”.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges had been lobbied to take a firm stand against the commercial killing of kangaroos for some time. Importantly, a survey conducted by the Victorian Kangaroo Alliance clearly demonstrated overwhelming support for the Council's ultimate position. The people who live, work and visit the area do not want commercial killing.

However, Agribusiness Yarra Valley informed Council that “*local farmers were experiencing kangaroo problems*”. To my knowledge, there was no elaboration of what type of farmers, how many farmers, or how big a problem kangaroos are perceived to be.

An initial survey of vineyards

Aware that some vineyard operators have recently allowed commercial kangaroo shooters onto their properties, and being a vigneron myself, **I contacted 84 other Yarra Valley vineyards** asking them to complete a short survey.

I only received **10 responses**. However, these represented a good cross section of the Yarra Valley's wine industry. The smallest vineyard was a family concern on just 2 hectares, the largest was an international operation on 200 hectares, and then there was everything between.

Every vineyard had been visited by kangaroos, yet only **2 vineyard managers did not support the Council's position**. These 2 respondents wrote that kangaroos cause substantial damage to infrastructure, eat grapes, and even impact revegetation works. Both had recently allowed commercial shooters onto their properties and would do so again.

However, kangaroos are graziers. They do not generally eat grapes, vine foliage, nor trees and shrubs. Rather, I believe this minority of respondents are largely blaming kangaroos for deer damage and could be educated to tolerate, if not enjoy kangaroos.

I believe this survey clearly demonstrates the vast majority of vineyards do not consider kangaroos to be a problem and do not support the commercial killing of kangaroos. **This, should have been cause enough for Council to re-submit its request of the state government to be exempt from the current Kangaroo Management Plan.**

Another Survey.

During September 2025, the “Vineyard Survey” was adapted to include all forms of agribusiness. To ensure a good cross section of respondents, I asked the Yarra Ranges Council, Agribusiness Yarra Valley and a range of other networks to distribute the survey on my behalf.

There was an initial flurry of responses. However, responses virtually stopped coming in well before the closing date of October 1.

I made very little effort to seek more responses after the initial flurry. To do so would understandably encourage criticism of bias. Furthermore, when I did make some personal contact with farmers, they were generally graziers, the most likely cohort to have a counter point of view to my own.

The sample size has again been questioned as *“being too small to inform council decisions”*.

However, while there were only 19 respondents to this survey, these again represent a wide range of Agribusinesses with extremely different views. Their responses have revealed some very interesting results for Council to consider as follows:

- Again, there is **overwhelming support** for Council’s call for an end to commercial kangaroo killing.
 - Only **2 graziers** do not support Council, use commercial shooters and would do so again. Both have used non-commercial Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) permits in the past but are now happy to allow commercial shooters to do the killing for them.
 - **A third grazier** who has never felt the need to kill kangaroos before has recently allowed commercial shooters to operate on their property. After this experience, they now **“somewhat”** support Council’s call to stop commercial killing.
 - **A late respondent** describing themselves as a 48 acres subsistence agriculturalist. They also only **“somewhat”** support Council’s call to stop commercial killing.
 - **Another late respondent** describing themselves as a 17 acres **hobby farmer** with paddocks, wetland and garden **does not agree** with Council.
- **All other respondents to the second survey support Council’s call for an end to commercial killing.**

So, of the 29 agribusinesses that responded to the surveys, **all but 5** at least somewhat **support Council’s call to stop commercial killing of kangaroos**. That is **over 80% of farmers** in the Yarra Valley **support Council’s position**.

Furthermore, both surveys confirm the following:

- Perceived kangaroo problems such as road incidents and fence damage, have increased since the recent introduction of commercial killing (no doubt due to the movement of survivors after commercial kills).

- Some respondents have experienced a recent influx of kangaroos onto their properties (also no doubt due to survivors settling on “friendly” properties).
- Most respondents are visited by kangaroos and are at least tolerant of kangaroos.
- Many respondents, particularly those that include hospitality or accommodation in their business, actually benefit from kangaroos (the commercial killing is counterproductive in terms of tourism in the Yarra Ranges).
- Again, at least some problems attributed to kangaroos are really deer related (thus reinforcing a need for education).
- Given the Yarra Ranges Council is currently conducting a feasibility study into establishing a local abattoir, a surprising revelation has been the concern over biosecurity and diseases carried by kangaroos. (This supports the case that kangaroos should never be processed in a facility that processes meat for human consumption. To do so would put the livelihood of local meat producers at risk).