

Nature Conservation (Macropod) Conservation Plan 2017 sunset review

Consultation paper

Background

Macropod species, including kangaroos and wallabies are protected wildlife under Queensland's *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act). Under the Act, it is an offence to take, keep or use a macropod unless a person is authorised or holds an appropriate licence or permit.

The Nature Conservation (Macropod) Conservation Plan 2017 (the Plan) is subordinate legislation under the Act and establishes the rules and requirements for the sustainable take and use of macropods in Queensland to ensure their populations remain viable, manage impacts to landholders and support animal welfare outcomes. The Plan also provides the framework for meeting Commonwealth obligations under the Queensland Wildlife Trade Management Plan for Export – Commercially Harvested Macropods 2023–2027.

The three macropod species that can be harvested are the red kangaroo, eastern grey kangaroo and common wallaroo. They are protected and listed as 'least concern' under the Act. Commercial harvesting removes less than 4% of the estimated total population each year. In 2025, that was 610,000 macropods.

Under the *Statutory Instruments Act 1992*, subordinate legislation expires on 1 September first occurring after the 10th anniversary of the day of its making. This ensures subordinate legislation is regularly reviewed to assess the ongoing need for, and effectiveness of regulations to ensure legislation remains relevant to the economic, social and general wellbeing of Queenslanders.

The Plan is scheduled to expire (sunset) on 1 September 2027. Ahead of its expiry, the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (the department) is conducting a sunset review, including consultation with stakeholders to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose over the next 10 years.

Scope of review

The department is responsible for regulating the harvesting of macropods for commercial purposes. This includes monitoring the population, setting harvest quotas, issuing harvesting and dealer licences, issuing tags and ensuring compliance with legislative and licensing conditions.

A macropod harvester is a person or business authorised to shoot and harvest commercial macropod species. Harvesters must undertake accredited training, pass a shooting test, use specific harvest tags, only sell to licensed dealers and comply with the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes (the Code).

A macropod dealer is a person or business authorised to buy, sell or process commercially harvested macropods. Dealers must hold a licence which comes in three types: Dealer, Meat Processing and Tannery.

Harvesters and dealers are subject to record keeping requirements to monitor commercial use and support compliance activities.

As at May 2026, there were more than 900 licensed macropod harvesters and approximately 90 active macropod dealers including trading depots, processors and tanneries in Queensland.

To ensure the Plan continues to support Queensland's harvesting industry by remaining effective and relevant, the review will focus on:

- streamlining reporting and administrative processes using modern technologies to improve efficiency, reduce operational burdens, and enhance compliance

- ensuring regulatory systems are appropriate and proportionate
- continuing to safeguard conservation and welfare standards to meet sustainability and export obligations under State and Commonwealth law.

Although significant changes to the Plan are not anticipated, the department welcomes feedback on any matters related to the continued management of macropod harvesting. The department is particularly interested in receiving feedback on the following review topics:

Review topic	Description and questions for consideration
Administration (reporting)	Licence holder reporting requirements ensure the harvest of macropods is traceable and accountable. This allows commercial use to be monitored, helps deter illegal harvesting and trade, and supports compliance activities. Current reporting consists of three key components: movement advice, record books and returns of operation. These arrangements are burdensome to licence holders, overlap in purpose, are outdated, and do not effectively support compliance monitoring. Questions for consideration: • Do you support streamlining reporting requirements? • How can reporting requirements be improved to reduce administrative burden on industry while maintaining effective monitoring and compliance?
Offences	Penalties will be reviewed to ensure they remain enforceable and proportionate to the seriousness of the offence. For example, there is currently an offence for knowingly taking undersized or underweight animals. It is proposed that the offence apply to the intentional keeping and use of these animals, rather than the unintentional take. This change would encourage licence holders to report these incidents without concern about enforcement action. Reporting this information is important for maintaining sustainable harvest practices, particularly when quotas have been reduced in response to environmental pressures. Questions for consideration: • What benefits or risks do you see in changing the offence from the taking of an animal to the keeping or use of an animal? • Are the current offences and penalties appropriate and proportionate to the activities they regulate?
Regulating tanneries	Commercial tanneries currently source macropod skins from licensed meat processors, where the skins are considered a waste product if they are not used for tanning. Due to declining demand for kangaroo leather, the department is reviewing whether it is necessary to continue regulating authorised carcasses after they have been processed at a licensed facility. Question for consideration: • What are your views on allowing commercial tanneries to receive authorised (tagged) skins from licensed processors without holding a licence?

Authorised persons	Individuals can be nominated as a relevant person for a macropod harvesting licence holder. However, they are not authorised to take, keep, or use macropods under that licence. This ensures that only the licence holder can take macropods under the licence. Some tasks associated with harvesting may be suitable for a relevant person to assist with, such as moving and dressing carcasses. Question for consideration: What are your views on allowing harvesters to engage assistants for harvesting activities that do not involve the actual taking of an animal?
Authorised activities	Harvesters can take commercial macropods from public places if they meet all requirements, including notifying the chief executive, landholder and local police. It is proposed that the chief executive no longer be required to engage these activities. Instead, oversight would rely on landholders and local police, who have greater awareness of the area, to supervise harvesting operations. Questions for consideration: What are your views on removing the requirement to notify the chief executive before harvesting on public land? What benefits or risks do you see?

Out of scope

The review is limited to provisions contained within the Plan. Feedback is not being sought on matters related to the Act or other subordinate legislation under the Act, including the Nature Conservation (Animals) Regulation 2020.

Additionally, the Code administered by the Australian Government applies to harvesting macropods in Queensland.

Submissions

The Queensland Government is committed to sustainable macropod management and continues to support a strong macropod industry that maintains the highest possible animal welfare outcomes.

The department encourages stakeholders and Queenslanders to have their say on the review of the plan.

Please send your written submissions via email to NC.Act@detsi.qld.gov.au. Submissions will not be published.

Consultation closes at 5pm, on 20 November 2026.

