

05/09/2025

Committee Secretariat
Parliamentary Inquiry into Wildlife Road Strike in Victoria

Subject: Responses to Questions on Notice – Hearing 20 August 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Inquiry on 20 August 2025 and for the constructive questions posed during the hearing. As requested, please find below Field & Game Australia's responses to the matters taken on notice.

1. Thermal Imaging on Cars (p.4 – Question from Ms Gaelle Broad)

Retrofitting thermal camera systems to cars is **not viable**. Aftermarket vehicle-mounted thermal cameras cost in the order of **AUD \$2,000–\$5,000 per unit**, while integrated systems in high-end vehicles can add **AUD \$10,000–\$15,000** to the cost of a car. These remain niche, luxury options with high maintenance costs, unsuited to widespread use across Victoria's fleet.

By contrast, **thermal camera trials on roadside signage at identified strike hotspots** have shown some promise. These systems can detect wildlife presence and trigger illuminated warnings. The indicative cost is **AUD \$50,000–\$75,000 per site**, plus ongoing maintenance. While potentially useful in targeted locations, they remain a reactive tool.

In line with our submission, Field & Game Australia stresses that technology can only ever supplement—not replace—**active, science-based wildlife population management**.

2. Data Collection Models (p.10 – Question from Ms Gaelle Broad)

The best international model is the **California Roadkill Observation System (CROS)**. This integrates agency, insurer, council, and citizen-reported data into a centralised database, enabling real-time hotspot mapping and guiding targeted mitigation investment.

The lesson for Victoria is clear: a **statewide, centralised database** is required, with mandatory inputs from police, insurers, local councils, and authorised responders. This would support evidence-based decisions and ensure that **population management is paired with infrastructure planning**.

3. Geographic Hotspots (p.10 – Question from Ms Katherine Copsey)

Our members consistently report the following **extended road corridors** as high-risk strike zones:

- Calder Freeway and Sunbury–Gisborne corridor
- Hume Freeway (Wallan–Seymour)
- Western Freeway (Bacchus Marsh–Ballan)
- Princes Freeway (Lara–Little River)
- Gippsland corridors (Traralgon–Sale)

These are not isolated “pinch points,” but long stretches of road where overabundant kangaroo populations overlap with rapid peri-urban growth.

Short roadside fences of 100–200 metres are ineffective in such contexts. The type of continuous fencing used with success in the United States can cost upwards of **AUD \$1 million per kilometre**, making this approach financially and logistically unviable on Victoria’s extended peri-urban corridors.

The only scalable solution is **broadacre, science-based population management** to bring numbers down to sustainable levels.

Re-emphasis of Core Positions

Field & Game Australia reiterates the key principles outlined in our submission:

- **Holistic, Science-Based Management:** Road strike is best reduced through population control and carrying capacity management, not piecemeal fixes.
 - **Peri-Urban Risk:** Overabundant kangaroo and deer populations near growth corridors present the greatest danger to motorists and must be actively managed.
 - **Government-Led Response:** Roadside response should be delivered by properly resourced local councils and government officers, not unregulated volunteers.
 - **Humane Outcomes:** Particularly for macropods, euthanasia at the scene is the most compassionate response. “Rescue all” approaches prolong suffering and increase risk.
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NATIONAL OFFICE ✉ 605 Lake Rd, Connewarre, 3227

☎ (03) 57990960

@ info@fieldandgame.com.au

Closing

Wildlife road strike is both a safety and welfare challenge. The solution lies not in retrofitting cars with expensive cameras or attempting short-run fencing, but in **professional, accountable, broadacre wildlife management** supported by clear law, centralised data, and targeted infrastructure only where it is cost-effective.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute. We trust these responses assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "LCooke".

Lucas Cooke

Chief Executive Officer

Field & Game Australia