

TROPHY VETCARE

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Report on the “Bunnings Torquay” Eastern Grey Kangaroos

BACKGROUND

This report was commissioned by the Surf Coast Animal Rescue Service with the aim of providing an independent situational report on Eastern Grey Kangaroos located in a paddock between Messmate Rd and the Surf Coast Highway, Torquay.

I am a veterinarian registered in the state of Victoria, I graduated from Murdoch University School of Veterinary Studies in 1987. I have been involved in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation since 2007. Over that time I have had extensive experience in dealing with eastern grey kangaroos including the darting and transportation of displaced kangaroos.

ASSESSMENT

On June 30th 2018, on request from the Surf Coast Animal Rescue Service, I inspected Eastern Grey Kangaroos located in paddocks between Messmate Rd and the Surf Coast Highway, Torquay.



Location Description

The paddock (Western Paddock) where the kangaroos normally reside is bordered to the west and northern sides by a large flower growing property. Also to the north, there is an adjacent nature reserve, Grasstree Park Nature Reserve. A fence separates the paddock from the reserve. To the south of the paddock is a housing development, several dogs could be heard barking from the houses. To the east is an industrial area. Further to the east is the Surf Coast Highway. To the south east, there is a further paddock (Eastern Paddock) that is undergoing development.

- i. Grasstree Park Nature Reserve – Access to this reserve from the Western Paddock is blocked by a fence, although adult kangaroos could jump the fence, it is too high for juvenile kangaroos. Also this reserve is used as an off-leash area for dog walkers. Furthermore, the reserve is small in size, has limited feed available and no water source.



Figure 1: Looking to the south



Figure 2: Looking to the east



Figure 3: Paddock undergoing development

Paddock Description

The paddock was open and flat with one large pine tree. Weeds covered much of the paddock surface area which was interspersed with some native grasses. There was a small water source in the south east corner of the paddock. At the time of the visit, there was also a flock of sheep and one alpaca present in the paddock.



The Kangaroos

At the time of the visit, there were ~16 kangaroos present and they were grazing in the paddock undergoing development. The mob were of mixed ages. My visual assessment of the condition of these kangaroos was that they were in good condition.



FINDINGS

The Western Paddock is not suitable as a long term habitat for the kangaroos for the following reasons

- i) Insufficient feed
- ii) Limited water source
- iii) Insufficient protection from the elements
- iv) Insufficient habitat to seek refuge from dogs
- v) Insufficient land area
- vi) Grasstree Park Nature Reserve does not provide a suitable habitat for these kangaroos

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, these kangaroos are land locked, and their location and the surrounding developments don't give them the opportunity to safely navigate their way to a safer

environment. The kangaroos range will become further restricted as work on the Eastern Paddock continues.

I anticipate there are 2 likely scenarios -:

1. The kangaroos will remain in the Western Paddock. As stated previously, this paddock has limited feed which will only get worse during the warmer months, particularly as the kangaroos will have to compete with the sheep; there is limited water; there is limited tree cover to provide protection from the elements and there are no refuges where the kangaroos could escape from dogs. The kangaroos will be under constant stress

and/or

2. The kangaroos will disperse into the neighbouring areas where there would be a strong livelihood of causing motor vehicle accidents or become subject to dog attack.

Neither of these scenarios offers a positive outcome for these kangaroos. The only option that would provide a positive outcome for these kangaroos would be active translocation.

Active translocation involves remotely sedating the kangaroos via a dart gun, then transporting them in motor vehicles to a safe location. The darting would take place at night time when the kangaroos are more relaxed. The sedated kangaroos would be monitored continually throughout the sedation period until they have regained a sufficient level of awareness and coordination. In my experience, darting is a safe procedure and I have never experienced any deaths in the animals that I have darted.

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1st July 2018