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### More information

For more information, contact the Office of Environment and Heritage's Information Centre on 1300 361 967 or email [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au) and put 'living with kangaroos' in the subject line.

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Kangaroos are appealing, wild and powerful native animals that generally live in the Australian bush. As urban areas encroach on kangaroo habitat, people regularly come into contact with them. Kangaroos are mostly docile, but can be unpredictable when they feel threatened.

This brochure explains ways in which people can avoid conflict with kangaroos and injury, through learning more about their habitat needs and understanding their behaviour.

### About the eastern grey kangaroo

The eastern grey kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*) lives in the bushland of eastern Australia. Because of its preference for open habitat such as woodlands and its willingness to live near people, it is often seen where human settlements adjoin bushland. People may not understand ways in which kangaroos behave and can unintentionally provoke them into aggression.

Eastern grey kangaroos can grow as large as 2.3 metres from head to tail, and weigh up to 95 kilograms. Like all species of kangaroo, they feed on grasses and herbs. They generally rest during the day in shaded areas, feed from early dusk until mid morning, and breed all year round with birth rates peaking in the summer months.

Rural and semi-urban developed areas with their lawns, water sources and shady areas provide ideal living conditions for the eastern grey kangaroo.

### Be aware

Kangaroos are often portrayed in the media as friendly and cuddly Australian cultural icons. However, they can hurt people.

The risk of being attacked by a kangaroo is very low. Several thousand people seek medical attention each year for injuries from domestic pets, while fewer than five people in NSW are treated for kangaroo-related injuries. The greatest risk is in areas where people have altered kangaroos' natural habitat and feeding patterns.

Kangaroo attacks may occur where:

- their numbers, movements and group structure have changed because kangaroos' natural predators are no longer present, or new habitat has been provided with the creation of dams, shelter and pastures



## Living with kangaroos



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- kangaroos have lost their instinctive fear of humans because people have fed or handled them
- a kangaroo sees a person as a sparring partner or threat to themselves, their offspring or their dominance of the group
- a kangaroo is cornered or startled
- female kangaroos are weaning their young
- a habituated kangaroo (a kangaroo who is used to people) has aggressive traits.

A kangaroo will attack a person as if they were another kangaroo. It may push or grapple with its forepaws or sit back and kick out with its hind legs. As resulting injuries can be serious, avoiding conflict with kangaroos is vital.

## What you can do

### Learn about kangaroos

- Get to know where local kangaroos move, graze and rest.
- Observe their behaviour from a safe distance and try to understand them.
- Be able to recognise characteristic warning signs of aggressive behaviour.
- Find out which features and areas of your property kangaroos use and why.

### Manage where you live and what you do

- Discourage kangaroos from moving through, grazing and resting on your property through humane, safe and creative techniques such as using sprinklers, trimming trees, using furniture as a barrier, ensuring access to your property is too high or too

narrow for kangaroos to navigate, and creating noise though, for example, suspending a number of tin cans from string that bang together in the breeze.

- Modify or remove resources around your home that attract kangaroos such as water points, shaded and sheltered areas, and food.
- Keep kangaroos out of the area near your home by fencing it. If this is too expensive, fence off small secure areas kangaroos cannot access where children can play.
- Maintain good visibility around your property so you do not mistakenly run into kangaroos during the day or night.
- Supervise your children closely in areas where kangaroos occur.
- Teach children about kangaroos, how to behave near them and what to do if a kangaroo displays aggressive behaviour towards them.
- Outside your property, modify your routine to avoid close contact with kangaroos. For example, when walking, consider a route where kangaroos are not present or choose a time for walking when kangaroos are not active in the area.
- Do not feed kangaroos. Unnatural food sources often create unbalanced kangaroo numbers, and cause aggressive behaviour and sickness.
- Work with the local community to understand and manage kangaroo issues.



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## Avoiding risks

- Do not walk directly towards a kangaroo.
- Do not stand up tall, stare or hold your arms out towards a kangaroo.
- Do not go near kangaroos engaged in courtship or mating behaviour – for example, males sniffing, touching or moving round with females.
- Do not go near male kangaroos that are sparring, fighting or showing off their size and strength to each other.
- Do not go near a kangaroo that is growling or clucking.
- Do not move between a female and her joey.
- Do not allow your dog to approach a kangaroo. Kangaroos will vigorously defend themselves against dogs, and this may draw you into a dangerous situation.

## Threats and attacks

If you feel threatened by a kangaroo, move well clear. Try not to attract the kangaroo's attention and keep your head and arms low.

Wait until the kangaroo has moved away before continuing on your way. If you need to, carefully retreat in a crouched or crawling position to a safe location or distance away. If you can, position an object such as a tree or fence between you and the kangaroo and call for help. Alert your helper to the potential danger.

If you are attacked, drop to the ground and curl into a ball with your hands protecting your face and throat. Try to remain calm and still until the animal moves away, or if you can, keep low to the ground and move behind some form of cover. Report incidents to your local authorities.

For injured animals, contact the local licensed fauna rehabilitation group.

**Remember, kangaroos are protected animals and it is an offence to injure or kill them.**



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