

PUSHED OUT

Australia is the land of the kangaroos.



There are a few million kangaroos all over Australia.

Some parts of Australia are very dry because they don't get much rain.

Also many parts of Western Australia are very dry due to lack of rain.

It can be so dry that the farmers sometimes don't know what to do.

Many farmers are very desperate. Particularly those farmers who do not know God. They are so desperate that they want to finish their

lives because they don't see a way out.

They sow their seed and nothing happens. Every day they go to the fields and check if they can see the little shoots popping up out of the ground.

But each day they go home disappointed. Each day it gets worse.

They live without God. And therefore they have no hope.

In this dry country the kangaroos live. They come down from the hills looking for something to eat. They live in the bush during the day. During most of the day they are sleeping because they are nocturnal animals.

Nocturnal means that they

are awake during the night and sleeping most of the day. And before the sun goes down they come and feed from the grass in the fields and share the food with the cows and the sheep.

This also makes the farmers very angry. There is hardly enough grass for their own animals and now all these kangaroos come into their fields and eat all their grass. It really frustrates them.





They do not only worry about the dry land but they also have the added worry of the kangaroos.

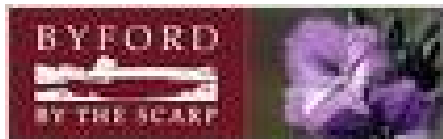
In some areas men go around through the fields with guns and kill thousands of kangaroos. As you will understand, they need a licence for that. These men are very experienced and are professional shooters.

Of course, this shooting is not allowed too close to residential areas.

The meat is then used for pet meat. And some of the meat is even exported to other countries.

The Darling Ranges are the hills South of Perth, Western Australia.

Along the South Western Highway, 37 kilometers from Perth, is the small town of Byford. The last few years the town has grown quite a lot.



More streets were added and, of course, many houses as well.

So the kangaroos found many fields disappearing fast. And with the disappearance of the fields their food

supply was cut off.

They spent more time now in the fields because they were cut off from the tracks to the bush. Fences had been erected and they were closed in from all sides.

At times some of the kangaroos panicked so much that they ran into the fence and killed themselves. Particularly the younger ones who were still so weak, frightened and vulnerable.

But after some months the kangaroos adapted to their changed circumstances and accepted the fact that they were closed in. There was still much land left and plenty of grass.

Certainly in winter time there was plenty of feed.

But greedy business people wanted more land to build houses on and so the situation of the kangaroos became quite desperate.

It was obvious that more and more the kangaroos as well as other precious animals were being pushed out by greedy business men. These greedy business men needed the land to become richer. And they needed more and more land because greed is never satisfied.



During the night some of the kangaroos often tried to cross the busy highway in search for another field where they could find some grass.

Early morning travelers would often see dead kangaroos on the side of the road. They were the ones who did not make it across the highway safely.

And truck drivers could not be expected to swerve out of the way for then they could be in danger themselves.

One morning young Craig was on his way to school. His mother was driving the car. This time he had to be at school early because of his music lessons.

So it was still quite dark when they traveled along the South Western Highway.

Then suddenly three kangaroos crossed the road. The car in front of them managed to swerve and two kangaroos arrived safely on the other side of the highway. But one of them, a mother kangaroo, unfortunately was hit by the car and after a few more leaps it collapsed on the side of the road.

"Look Mum", Craig exclaimed, "the driver in front of us did not even stop to see what had happened".

That driver just continued on his journey without checking if he could perhaps help the poor animal.

Craig's Mum slowed down and parked her car close to where the kangaroo was lying on the side of the road.

The poor creature was in a bad state. It was bleeding from its head and it also had two broken legs.

It appeared to be unconscious as well.

"How sad", Craig said. "The poor thing must be in agony".

"How is it possible that someone can injure an animal like this and then just drive on as if nothing has happened".

Craig's Mum did not know what to do first and she said to Craig: "What can we do for this poor animal?"



"We could put it in the car and take it to the animal hospital which is not so far from here", Craig responded.

So they both tried to lift the kangaroo into the back of the car.

"It is heavier than I thought", said Craig.



"Perhaps it is just as well that it is unconscious. At least it can't struggle then. It must be so frightened of us people especially after being hit by a car and then left on the road.

Left to die".

Then Craig's Mum took her mobile phone from her handbag and tried to phone the vet at the animal hospital but it took a long time for him to answer the phone.

"He must be still in bed", Craig suggested.

His Mum was just about to cut off the connection when she heard the voice of the vet.

He was not even angry for getting a phone call so early in the morning.

In fact he apologised for not answering the phone sooner.

"I was just feeding some sick horses when the phone rang", he said.

After a few minutes they arrived at the animal hospital.

The vet opened the door and carefully lifted the injured kangaroo from the back of the car.

He put it on a trolley and wheeled it into the brightly lit hospital.

"I am the only person here so far", the vet said.

"The rest of the staff starts work at 7.30 a.m."

The vet was glad to have someone to talk to.

"We often have people calling in with injured animals, especially kangaroos", said the vet. "And did you know", he continued, "that on the roads of New South Wales (a state on the East coast of Australia) 7000 native animals are killed every day? Those animals that are not killed are often left on the side of the road with broken limbs, bleeding and unable to move.

They are just left to die.

Most people don't care and just drive on after hitting such a lovely animal.

And if the kangaroo has a baby in her pouch then that usually dies after a while because the dead mother will have no more milk for its young one".

"Anyway, let us get on with it", said the vet.

"Let's put him on this table and I'll see what I can do for this poor creature", said the vet whose name was Claude.

It did not take long for the vet to realise that he could not do anything for the kangaroo.



"She is in a bad state", he said.

"Apart from the external injuries we can see, she also seems to have internal bleeding".

"I will have to give it an injection to relieve it from her suffering".

"It obviously is a female kangaroo. So let us examine her pouch", Claude said.

"It might even have a baby kangaroo in its pouch".

And much to everyone's surprise Claude gently pulled a little Joey out of the kangaroo's pouch.

Naturally it was extremely frightened after the trauma of the accident and it tried to get away from Claude.

But he held it firmly in his strong hands.

"Oh Mum, can I have it and take it home?", said Craig.

"I will look after it very well".

"No, you can't", said the vet. "You need to have a licence for keeping native animals".

"But I tell you what you can do", said Claude.

"There is an animal sanctuary a few kilometres from here".

"There they will look after this little Joey very well. They have a lot of experience and know what they are doing", said Claude.

"But I must first see if this little animal is not injured".

After a thorough inspection the vet came to the conclusion that there was absolutely nothing wrong with this frightened little baby kangaroo.

It had been well protected in its mother's pouch.

Naturally they were all very happy that the Joey was not hurt.

Especially Craig was very happy that they could now take it to the animal sanctuary.

The vet put the little animal in a bag.

"Do you know why I put it in a bag?", Craig said.

"The bag will make it believe that it is in its mother's pouch", he said. It will also keep it warm at the same time.

Now I will first go and phone the lady who runs the sanctuary. Then she will know that you are on your way."

After a little while they were on their way to the animal sanctuary.

Craig had the little Joey on his lap.

The lady at the sanctuary was expecting them and carefully took the little kangaroo from Craig's lap.

"You can come in if you like. Then you can see some of the other animals we care for here. We have quite a few kangaroos", she said.

"We have some baby possums that we rescued from a fallen tree that was knocked over in last month's storm.

We also have some ducks that were rescued from a lake which had nearly dried up due to the lack of rain. And then the remaining water becomes poisonous and many of the water birds die", the lady informed them.

Craig's Mum said to the lady that she really appreciated what they were doing there in the sanctuary.

"Yes, we really love our job", the lady said.

"We love all the animals. We have some little kangaroos. They are all in bags that hang from those rods you can see along the walls. We feed them with baby bottles. They need specially prepared formulas", she explained.



"The milk is not allowed to be too rich and fatty because they can't handle that yet.

We also warm the milk up for them just like you do for little babies. Outside we have many more kangaroos."

Craig looked through the window and saw quite a number of kangaroos under the trees. It was starting to warm up already and they were just lazing around in the shade of the trees.

"Some of those are ready to be released into the bush in a couple of weeks", said the lady.



"It will be sad to see them go because we are quite attached to them and we all love them so very much. But it is better for them that way.

That is after all our aim. Our purpose is to nurse them back to health and as soon as they are better we let them go into the wild again.

That is where they belong."

"They are God's creatures and we must do what is best for them".

"Can I come and visit the little Joey now and then", asked Craig.

"Of course you can, if that is OK with your Mum", she said.



"Then you can feed it now and then and, if you want to, you can help caring for some of the other animals. We always need many helpers here.

It is wonderful work. All our volunteers truly enjoy it.

You get much satisfaction from this type of work".

"I would really love to do that", said Craig.

And so it happened.

The following Saturday his mother dropped him off at the animal sanctuary and he helped caring for the sick and injured animals.

He really enjoyed this work and, just like the lady said, it gave him much satisfaction.

After several weeks he was even allowed to take one of the little baby kangaroos home to look after. Many volunteers took animals home on the weekend. Sometimes that was more convenient and saved traveling. In Craig's case it was very good. It gave him an opportunity to feed the Joey in between the church services.

He usually took the Joey home in a shopping bag. Its head would pop out just like it often does when it looks out from its mother's pouch.

After about a year his little Joey had grown so much that the lady of the animal sanctuary decided it was time to let the Joey go. As she had explained before, that was their aim.

So one day Craig had to say good bye to his little Joey.

It saddened him very much but at the same time it gave a great feeling of satisfaction.

He had been able to do something for God's creatures.

Yes, Craig had learned a lot.

He had learned much about various animals, about their needs and their behaviour.

He had also put into practice what he had been taught at home.

Love, care, patience and compassion.

Leo Schoof
June 2007

ltschoof@iinet.net.au

