

# 4. KANGAROOS AND HUMANS TODAY

## NATIONAL ATTITUDES TO KANGAROOS

Australians consider kangaroos as iconic and part of their heritage. As a nation we have acknowledged their special place in our hearts by placing the red kangaroo supporting the left side of the Federation Shield on the Coat of Arms of Australia. The emu, another icon, supports the right side of the shield. Kangaroos also feature on the Coat of Arms of Western Australia, New South Wales and the Northern Territory, and a demi-kangaroo is located at the top of the Victorian Coat of Arms. Australia does not have a specific faunal emblem. However, by popular acceptance the kangaroo fulfils this role. Australians enjoy seeing kangaroos roaming free in the countryside and in many instances we have them near our homes. This is remarkable when one considers that the majority of people living in Australia live in cities and large towns. There is an intrinsic value in our being able to readily observe free-ranging kangaroos. Somehow we need to acknowledge and treasure this if we wish to have this privilege remain 'in perpetuity'. As Australia's human population continues to rise there are a number of pertinent questions that need to be considered by the Australian public:

- Do we want kangaroos roaming freely through the Australian landscape?
- How do we value kangaroos in our modern landscape?
- If we want them in our landscape, how much are we willing to pay for this?

Currently there are tens of millions of large grazing kangaroos across the Australian continent as well as many millions of the smaller species.

## TOURISM

Tourism is a major industry in Australia, directly providing 500 000 jobs and indirectly another 500 000 jobs across the continent. Official estimates in 2010 of the income generated by tourism range from 86 to 92 billion Australian dollars, domestic tourism accounting for approximately 73 per cent of the total tourist expenditure. The domestic revenue was generated by roughly 67 million overnight trips with expenditures totalling about \$43 billion, and about 152 million day trips with expenditures totalling in excess of \$15 billion. The great variety of scenic and wildlife tourist destinations encourages local residents to travel within Australia to sample the wealth of experiences available to all. Fortunately a large number of important iconic landscapes and habitats are on public lands of one form or another, and as such are protected to some extent.

To international visitors the kangaroo is the foremost image of Australia, followed by the koala. Australia is perceived internationally as being a clean, green and safe destination with a stable government and a well-developed infrastructure for visitors. Its green credentials are responsible for a significant number of the overseas visitors coming to Australia. More than 5.4 million international visitors entered Australia in 2010 and spent in excess of \$23 billion in goods and services. This expenditure puts Australia at number 8 in the top 10 of international tourism receipts in the world.