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Defending the hide | Australia's leather industry backs ethical production



By [Chris McLennan](#)
April 26 2025 - 7:00am



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World leather day is celebrated today with an invitation for critics to look deeper into leather's sustainable credentials.

This is the hope of Australia's leather industry, which counts the commercial kangaroo industry among its members.

The benefits of sustainably managing overabundant kangaroo populations has often been drowned out by the noise made by global

detractors [not concerned with facts](#).

The Australian Hide Skin and Leather Exporters Association represents the major exporters of Australian cattle hides, calf skins, sheep and lamb skins, [kangaroo skins](#) and goat skins.

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The export industry is worth almost \$600 million to the nation.

The association said the theme of this year's World Leather Day (Saturday), Beyond the Surface, invites a deeper exploration of the transparency, sustainability, and longevity of leather production.

The skin exporters want the day to help showcase Australia's leadership in responsible sourcing and sustainable practices.

Leather production is one of Australia's oldest industries renowned for its quality.

The industry saves about eight million cattle hides and over 26 million sheep, goat and kangaroo skins from landfill every year.



📷 The commercial kangaroo industry is engaged in a tussle with animal activists who want culling to stop. File picture.

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Through its Sustainability Framework, launched late last year, the association has reinforced its commitment to meeting rising global expectations for ethical and traceable leather.

AHSLEA executive director Dennis King said Australia was setting a global benchmark in leather transparency and environmental compliance.

"With growing expectations around transparency, both local and global markets now look closely at environmental performance,

supply chains, and workplace standards – many of which are now subject to stricter regulations," Mr King said.

"Our industry is committed to long-term sustainability and is actively responding to evolving market expectations and consumer concerns.

"We're ahead of the curve in preparing for regulations like the EU Deforestation Regulation, thanks to our strong focus on innovation, integrity, and environmental stewardship."

The association is working to communicate the industry's sustainability credentials to both brands and consumers alike.

"Our sustainability framework not only provides verifiable data to support our messaging – it also aligns with the beef and sheep industry sustainability frameworks, encouraging a coordinated, whole-of-supply-chain approach for greater impact," Mr King said.

Micaela Topper, the executive manager of Sydney leather wholesaler AI Topper, was recently appointed president of the International Council of Hides, Skins, and Leather Traders Association.

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That association's key role is advancing the global dialogue on sustainability, traceability and transparency.