

Public Administration Committee

From: Niel Maartens
Sent: Monday, 24 March 2014 9:01 PM
To: Public Administration Committee; Mesiti, Lauren
Subject: Submission for hunting on Public Land

24 March 2014

Public Administration Committee
Legislative Council Parliament House
GPO Box A11
Perth WA 6837

To whom it may concern,

My name is Mathys Daniel Maartens and I wish to make a submission regarding the current inquiry into the potential environmental contribution of recreational hunting systems for Western Australia. I will address the terms of reference as numbered points below.

That the Council –

1. acknowledge the use in other States of regulated, licensed recreation hunting systems and the potential environmental contribution made in controlling pest animals on public lands, together with the possible economic, cultural and recreational benefits to the community.

Recreational hunting is permitted in many states of Australia including Victoria and New South Wales. These states have excellent safety records in allowing regulated, licensed hunters to control pest animals on public lands. The most immediate tangible benefit of hunting on public land is the reduction in pest numbers however it also has many economic, cultural and recreational benefits for all Australians irrespective of whether they participate in the sport.

State Governments across Australia pay large amounts of taxpayer's money on professional hunters when, in reality, they have thousands of recreational hunters who would do the same job for free. All the recreational hunters require is permission to access that land and a license to do so. I believe that if recreational hunting were to become a reality in WA, all hunters should be mandated to purchase a renewable 'game license' so authorities could monitor the number of hunters and enjoy new income streams from license renewals, marksmanship testing, fauna identification testing and any other competency the governing body deem necessary. The existence of a game license would promote more individuals to take up the sport and the subsequent financial earnings could be quite substantial for the WA State Government.

Hunting not only provides the opportunity for more diverse income streams for government, it also promotes a sense of camaraderie among hunters as they enjoy a legitimate sport. I have made many friends who, like me, relish the attributes of a sport that demands patience, skill and above all accuracy. Hunting also has benefits for those people, such as myself, who enjoy the presence of native wildlife. A reduction in feral animals (such as foxes and cats) has an immediate effect on the predation levels of native lizards and mammals.

2. directs that -

(i) the Public Administration Committee inquire into the benefits or otherwise of a similar system being adopted in Western Australia and report back to the House by 4 December 2014.

It would be farcical for hunters to demand access to all public land for recreational hunting, however, there are many tracts of public land suitable for this purpose that are:

- a large size;
- a significant distance away from any residential areas;
- not frequented by a significant number of humans.

The relevant authorities in other Australian States, in particular NSW, have deemed certain areas suitable for hunting and allow “up to X number of hunters” access to that plot of land via an online booking system. All hunters are required to have a GPS with shapefiles showing the permitted hunting area which prevents them from straying into areas that are not suitable.

A similar system could easily be adopted in Western Australia whereby competent hunters can enjoy their sport and know that public safety has been considered at every step.

(ii) Hon Rick Mazza be co-opted as a member to the Public Administration Committee for the purposes of the foregoing inquiry.

I agree with the placement of Hon Rick Mazza as a member to the Public Administration Committee for this inquiry.

On a parting note I wish to add that recreational hunters, for the most part, do not behave negatively as the media portray them. We are responsible people who want to enjoy our sport in peace. I urge you to consider all forms of hunting during this inquiry, in particular, bow hunting. I regularly partake in hunting with both rifle and bow and can attest to the accuracy and inherent safety of bow hunting as most shots on game are taken at less than 40m.

I speak on behalf of all WA hunters in saying that I am very pleased that recreational hunting on public land may soon be a reality in Western Australia.

Please conduct this inquiry in a fair and unprejudiced manner and let the final decision be based on facts, not emotion.

Yours Sincerely,
MD Maartens