

Your Ref:
Our Ref:

28 March 2014

Ms Lauren Mesiti
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

By Post

Dear Ms Mesiti

INQUIRY INTO THE RECREATIONAL HUNTING SYSTEMS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) are the native title representative body for Noongar native title claims in the South West of Western Australia.

Introduction

SWALSC welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into Recreational Hunting Systems in Western Australia (Inquiry).

The Inquiry's terms of reference are:

That the Council -

- (a) Acknowledges the use in other States of regulated, licensed recreational 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; and
- (b) 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.

Submission

The introduction of regulated, licensed recreational hunting systems into other States has not been without controversy. SWALSC views the Inquiry as an opportunity for an analytical, evidence based assessment of the benefits or otherwise of such hunting systems with regard to environmental outcomes and also economic, cultural and recreational benefits. It is hoped that the Inquiry will also examine and consider any potential negative outcomes in regard to introducing a recreational hunting system in Western Australia.

A major focus of the terms of reference is on the potential environmental contribution made in controlling pest animals on public lands. This is a wide brief as there is a vast amount of public land in Western Australia with a wide variety of management requirements and circumstances. SWALSC's submission will concentrate on the implications of the introduction of recreational hunting systems in the south west on the Conservation Estate (land identified under Section 5 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act)) and also on Water Reserves and catchment areas (created under the *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewage and Drainage Act 1909* (Metro Water Act) and the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (Country Water Act)).

Without scientific evidence it is difficult to argue for the environmental merits or otherwise of the introduction of recreational hunting systems in the south west. SWALSC calls for caution with regard to any change of current pest control practices on crown land and that any proposed change to pest control management practices be based on scientific evidence.

SWALSC would not support any recreational hunting system that included the hunting of native Australian fauna.

It is noted that DPAW already have a number of pest control programs including Western Shield baiting programs and Declared Species Groups and also use professional hunters where appropriate. It is also noted that the Department of Water and Watercorp also undertake feral animal control programs on Public Drinking Water Source Areas and Water Reserves.

Any proposed recreational hunting system must take into account potential native title implications. SWALSC would not support any proposal that would have a detrimental effect on Noongar native title rights. Further, SWALSC and the relevant Noongar native title claim groups should be formally consulted in regards to the design, location and implementation of any proposal to introduce a recreational hunting system in the south west.

Any proposed program would also need to comply with CALM Act requirements to "protect and conserve the value of the land to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal peoples". Once again formal consultation would be required to ensure Noongar values are not negatively impacted by any proposed recreational hunting system.

In relation to the possible economic, cultural and recreational benefits to the community, further investigation needs to be undertaken. It is hoped that the modelling undertaken by the Committee is robust and based on sound scientific methodology. It is possible that although certain groups within the wider south west community will benefit from the introduction of a recreational hunting system, others groups may be negatively impacted by any such initiative.

SWALSC would like the opportunity to comment further once all of the available research data is available.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Justin McAllister on (08) 9358 7400

Yours sincerely

Glen Kelly
Chief Executive Officer
South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council