



Greg Gibson

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

Inquiry into potential environmental contribution of recreational hunting systems

Dear Ms Mesiti,

I would like to make my views known to the Committee holding an inquiry into allowing recreational hunting on public lands in Western Australia. As a WA resident, I am strongly in favour of the recreational hunting of all introduced animals (non native species). I am in favour of recreational hunting as a cost effective control method as this will reduce the population numbers and the ongoing environmental damage caused by these introduced species. Taking game for the table is still highly valued as a productive use of a readily available resource, no different to fishing or other recreational pursuits aimed towards being more self sufficient. Hunting whether it is simply to control pests or provide food has been a part of ours and many other cultures since their establishment, it is not only accepted but still heavily relied upon in some areas. Opening up WA to recreational shooting/hunting may also generate funds to assist in the repopulation of native flora and fauna species in the affected areas when these areas become void of the targeted introduced species. I believe that WA public lands will be kept safe for all members of the community as responsible shooting has been proven to be an effective management tool in other Australian States and is done safely under strict guidelines ensuring public safety. Finally, I support recreational shooting as a solution for management of introduced species. It's backed up as an effective approach by scientific evidence when used in conjunction to other control methods. More importantly trained conservation volunteer shooters are a cost effective resource who provide their time, equipment, ammunition and resources without charge thus freeing up much needed funds that can be used elsewhere. Most Western Australians enjoy the outdoors and nature, there are hundreds of thousands who regularly fish and hunt. So please allow this cost effective and result driven proposal to succeed. There are many opportunities right across the state if you take the time to look for them, plenty of feral's in WA, pigs, goats (if on public land will be fair game), deer, camels, dogs, donkeys, foxes, rabbits, horses and others. I think with our range lands in particular that there are just as many opportunities here as our eastern states cousins have.

My request for your committee and some back ground are as set out below.

1. That the inquiry recommend to government that public land, particularly remote un-allocated crown land, areas in the Gascoyne-Murchison region and state forest in the South-west available for the hunting of pest species.
2. That the committee recommend that licences are issued to those wishing to hunt on any public land made available for hunting.
3. That the committee recommend that a licence to hunt pest species on unallocated crown land, state forest or other public land areas should be accepted as a "genuine reason" for the issuing of a firearms licence.
4. That the committee recommend that regulations are put in place to support the concept of "fair chase", humane hunting practices, hunter/community safety and the utilisation of game meat.
5. That the committee recommend that government, with the support of the hunting organisations, provide hunters with education opportunities which emphasise hunting and shooting skills, target identification, hunter safety, animal welfare and conservation.
6. That the committee recommend that any hunter management regime adopted be open to all, whether member of a hunting organisation or not, and is kept as simple and all-encompassing as possible so that the administrative costs and barriers to participation are minimised.

I would like a setup similar to what the Victoria State Government has developed for hunters. Victoria's State Government support for hunting and benefits to the economy. Victoria encourages game management including hunting native species such as duck and quail using scientific management techniques. Game Victoria oversees the regulation and management of game hunting in Victoria.

As per the link below.

<http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/game-hunting>

More than 41,500 hunters are currently licensed to hunt game (deer, duck and quail) in Victoria. While it is a popular recreational activity, traditional pastime and generator of jobs, the Department of Environment and Primary Industries has a responsibility to ensure game hunting in Victoria is not only responsible, but sustainable.

Hunting activity in Victoria is regulated under Victorian legislation and regulations and the government also plays a role in educating game hunters about the relevant rules and regulations which are in place to ensure all activity remains within the law.

The management of invasive species in Western Australia relies both on controls on the importation of introduced species into the State, and on eradication, containment and management of the species that now exist in the wild in Western Australia and are damaging biodiversity. The control of pests animals and invasive plants in Western Australia is mainly managed by DER and DAF. DER has management responsibility on DER land (e.g. nature reserves and national parks) and on unallocated crown land, while DAF regulates private land owners controlling pests on their own land. Ultimately, both departments have responsibilities for the management of invasive species, and their roles overlap in many areas. The requirement for pest animals and invasive plants to be controlled in Western Australia is given in the *Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976* (WA) ("the ARRPP Act"). The ARRPP Act provides that a Government Department shall control declared (pest) plants and animals on and in relation to public land under its control. DEC also has a responsibility under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) to control pest animals and invasive plants in order to meet its requirement to "conserve and protect flora and fauna throughout the State". It is important to be aware that the ARRPP Act will soon be superseded by the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (WA). Although this new act is already in force, at the time of writing this, its regulations have not yet been enacted and many sections of the Act are still not in operation. DAF is therefore still currently operating under the ARRPP Act. This must be, though no government figures are available, a **very very** costly process. Especially when you read of both these government departments shooting from helicopters at great costs. When all this could be done by recreational hunts at nil cost.

Some interesting facts on usage of Crown land in Western Australia

Conservation Reserves 7.6%

Other Reserves 10 %

Pastoral Leases 36 %

Other Leases 3 %

Unallocated Crown Land 38%

These facts highlight the land available to all West Australians for all the outdoor activities the community wish to pursue and share.

This is a great opportunity to allow more of the community to use and benefit from our great outdoors. Not to mention the financial advantages it will bring to many small businesses across the state.

Not to mention the assistance it will give and the money it will save the DER and other government entities in the control of these invasive pests

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards

Greg Gibson