

Public Administration Committee

From: Eric Hooper
Sent: Tuesday, 25 March 2014 2:07 PM
To: Public Administration Committee
Subject: Attn Ms Lauren Mesiti - Recreational Shooting Submission

Dear Ms Mesiti,

I would like to make my views known to the Committee holding an inquiry into allowing recreational shooting in Western Australia.

As a WA resident, I am strongly IN FAVOUR of recreational hunting of feral animals on public lands. I feel that this is a logical progression from the excellent control work being undertaken by experienced, licensed shooters such as myself on private lands.

Opening up WA to recreational shooting is significantly overdue. As the owner of a farm in the locality of Woottating in Western Australia, which backs onto the Wandoo Conservation Reserve, I am aware of just how destructive introduced pests such as rabbits, foxes and feral pigs can be. Allowing responsible, licensed, law abiding recreational shooters such as myself access to remove destructive feral species from public lands will have a positive effect not only on the environment in those areas, but also on private, neighbouring farms such as mine. Logically, every feral animal that is removed is one less pest that is left destroying our native environment and impacting upon the livelihoods of neighbouring farmers and landowners.

I also believe that WA public lands should be kept safe for all members of the community. Recreational shooting should of course, only be carried out by licensed, law abiding hunters. It concerns me greatly when recreational shooters such as myself are portrayed as 'inexperienced', 'unprofessional' or somehow incapable or unwilling to behave in a humane manner or are a risk to public safety. This is simply incorrect. From my own experience, recreational shooters such as myself are true environmentalists at heart. We resent the destruction caused to our native flora and fauna by feral species and are exceptionally careful as to choice of when to shoot and shot placement. All of my colleagues and I abhor unnecessary suffering, and take stringent measures to ensure that we are adequately skilled, educated and correctly equipped to achieve quick, clean kills of target species. Claims otherwise by uninformed interest groups are simply fear mongering to the uneducated.

Finally, I strongly support recreational shooting as a key component of the solution for management of unwanted feral pests. Properly carried out by skilled, licensed hunters, I believe that shooting is a far more EFFECTIVE, TARGETTED AND HUMANE method of removal than other methods. For example, poisoning of feral species by mass aerial baiting is a cruel and inaccurate method of killing any animal. In the past, I have seen one of our sheepdogs die from accidental ingestion of a 1080 poison bait and it is something that would make even the most hardened person cringe. Such methods of control are completely inhumane. Death is relatively slow and excruciatingly painful. I watched this poor animal die, unable to get to a vet in time. A well placed bullet, of the correct calibre, delivered by a skilled, licensed shooter, is a FAR MORE HUMANE AND TARGETTED method of control of target pest species. As I stated above, I have seen the death of an animal from 1080 poisoning and it was horrific. Its screams of pain will live with me for the rest of my life.

Many Western Australians enjoy the outdoors and nature and would support this plan, especially if they had the correct information at hand and were able to make an informed decision. Unfortunately, that is not the case and I have no doubt that you will receive a number of emotional (although I am sure well intended) submissions by individuals or groups with no concept of reality outside of our city borders. I urge you to give more weight to submissions from individuals with some understanding and personal experience of these issues.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours Sincerely,