



Mrs Margaret Cala,
Serpentine Jarrahdale Residents &
Ratepayers Assoc. Inc.

12th February 2014

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

Dear Ms Mesiti,

RE: INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL HUNTING SYSTEMS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

On behalf of Members of the Serpentine Jarrahdale Residents & Ratepayers Assoc. Inc., I wish to register our concern and opposition to the proposition for Recreational Hunting of feral animals on public lands.

Information available from the Victorian National Parks Association indicates that the opening up of National Parks to volunteer shooters there has done nothing to reduce or control the spread of pest animals such as deer, pigs, rabbits and goats. In fact they are increasing in numbers and spreading into new areas.

Victoria has two methods by which amateur and recreational hunters gain access to National Parks and conservation areas:

- Recreational hunting
- Targeted hunting for strategic pest control

Evidence of numbers show that Recreational Hunting of feral animals has not worked. For example, estimations of Sambar Deer numbers vary from 200,000 to 1M and are growing despite an annual seasonal harvest in excess of 8,500 animals and over 14,500 licensed deer hunters. Surveys show that recreational hunters are motivated to 'conserve' feral species, ensuring that a sustainable population remains to guarantee continued hunting.

This, random seasonal shooting in general produces wary animals which are then more difficult to control. As hunters tend to concentrate their efforts on areas of high return, areas with low populations or difficult to access become havens where numbers begin to increase.

Targeted Hunting for Strategic Pest Control is done in a more systematic way. Achievable programs are planned and implemented with appropriate follow up processes. Mostly professional hunters are used to shoot feral goats, pigs, dogs and other vermin. Since 2003 such programs have proven effective in the control of goats, but involve a very small number of accredited shooters; less than 1% of licensed Victorian game hunters. The programs involve considerable staff time in planning and supervision creating a considerable draw on budget allocations. They have achieved varying levels of success.

We are aware that in July 2013 New South Wales announced trials of similar activities within National Parks. This announcement drew considerable concerned public opposition. The New South Wales Government has responded significantly to the No Hunting campaign; so it is now fundamentally a professional hunting program run by the National Parks & Wildlife Service professionals.

A trial hunting period commenced in October 2013 in 12 National Parks. Public opposition & concern resulted in changes being made by the NSW Government:

- No minors will be allowed to hunt in any National Park.
- Programs aiming to manage pest animals will be run by the National Parks & Wildlife Service, not the Game Council or Shooting groups.
- Volunteers brought in by the National Parks & Wildlife Service will undergo the same training as professionals to demonstrate their ability. They will also undertake navigation training and species identification training.
- Parks will be closed to the public when hunting programs are in place.
- No shooting will occur during School Holidays.
- Bows & arrows, black powder muskets and pistols are prohibited.
- The Shooters & Fishers party of NSW no longer have a Government Statutory Authority working on their behalf.

Amateur hunting in NSW forests was temporarily suspended until the Game Council responsibilities were transferred to the Dept. of Primary Industries.

We, like the people of NSW have concerns about the proposal to allow hunting in Public Lands in Western Australia. The traditional use of our State & National forests is incompatible with roaming hunters with guns. The risk of accidental injury or death by shooting or projectiles is extremely high – to both Park users & other hunters.

There is little or no scientific evidence to show that recreational hunting in other parts of Australia has reduced the numbers of feral animals. The likelihood of the introduction (or seeding) of forests with feral animals to justify shooting is very real.

The use of meat from feral animals is questionable. Slaughter, accurate assessment of diseased animals & butchering would not be carried out under controlled situations leading to possible health problems. Disposal of carcasses and unwanted offal could also create further problems; creating a food source for pigs, foxes and wild dogs and potential spread of disease.

Due to the large forest area within our Shire, and the proximity to well used Parks we are deeply concerned that recreational shooting would pose a high risk to our community and visitors to our area. In various areas within our Shire there are walkers, cyclists and horse riders close to public lands. All these activities are relatively silent and often solitary, and the chance of accidental death or injury would be increased as hunters would have no warning of their presence.

Therefore, we the Residents & Ratepayers of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale humbly request that NO RECREATIONAL SHOOTING is allowed on public lands in Western Australia.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret I Cala