



Submission on

**Inquiry into the potential environmental contribution of
recreational hunting systems**

Due: 28 March 2014

Submitted to:

Ms Lauren Mesiti
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Legislative Council, Parliament House, Perth WA 6000
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Prepared by:

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INTRODUCTION

The Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc.) (WAFarmers) is the State's largest and most influential rural lobby and service organisation. WAFarmers represents approximately 4,000 Western Australian farmers from primary industries including grain growers, meat and wool producers, horticulturalists, dairy farmers, commercial egg producers and beekeepers. Collectively our members are major contributors to the \$5.5 billion gross value of production that agriculture in its various forms contributes annually to Western Australia's economy. Additionally, through differing forms of land tenure, our members own, control and capably manage many millions of hectares of the State's land mass and as such are responsible for maintaining the productive capacity and environmental wellbeing of that land.

WAFarmers welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *"Inquiry into the potential environmental contribution of recreational hunting systems"*

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PUBLIC INQUIRY

The Standing Committee on Public Administration has started an inquiry into recreational hunting in WA.

The terms of reference are that the Legislative Council –

(a) acknowledges 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; 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; and

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

WAFARMERS COMMENTS

1. WAFarmers welcomes this inquiry as it may address, in part, the control of pest and feral animals in Western Australia.
2. The State Government has responsibility for a significant area of land but limited funding has resulted in the inability to effectively control feral and pest animals on the land it controls. This has a significant environmental impact on our native bird and animal populations as well as an economic burden for agricultural land holders.
3. WAFarmers supports recreational hunting of feral and pest animals such as pigs, goats, camels, foxes, dogs, cats, horses, donkeys, kangaroos and rabbits. Recreational hunters would play a major role in reducing the number of these animals. Any effort to control or eradicate pest or feral animals from an area is looked at favourably by the farming community.
4. Wild dog populations in WA are at an all-time high affecting animal welfare (lamb survival rate) and in turn farm profitability (lower stocking density due to less fodder available for farm animals). Recently, a National Wild Dog Action Plan has been developed by the wool industry. Support for a co-ordinated approach to wild dog control and the Action plan has been supported by Ministers for Agriculture in all States including The Hon Ken Baston, Minister for Agriculture in Western Australia. A link to the Action plan can be accessed here <http://www.woolproducers.com.au/national-wild-dogs-action-plan/> Increased lamb survival and more fodder available (less competition from feral and pest animals on the land) for farm animals will increase farm profitability.
5. Should a system be developed in WA similar to those in the Eastern States:
 - a. It needs to be developed with industry to ensure that pest and feral animal control measures by hunting are parallel or part of a State and national program whose objective is to eradicate/control respective animal populations.
 - b. The system needs to acknowledge other land users such as beekeepers who have apiary sites on public land. These sites are accessed by beekeepers to tend to their bees and extract honey/pollen. There needs to be consideration given on how hunting activities will be communicated to the affected beekeepers in a particular region for occupational health and safety reasons.
6. Having recreational hunting in WA with a focus on reducing feral and pest animals will alleviate the financial burden on State and Federal Governments as well as some Research and development bodies currently funding programs to control pest and feral animals.
7. WAFarmers welcomes the opportunity to see a draft proposal for recreational hunting in WA for further comment in due course.

End.