

Public Administration Committee

From: Jeff Timbuk
Sent: Wednesday, 26 March 2014 9:45 PM
To: Public Administration Committee
Subject: Yes to recreational hunters controlling feral pests.

Dear Ms Mesiti,

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

As a Western Australian resident, I support the recreational hunting of introduced feral animals.

As it stands, a number of government agencies use poisoning as a method of control this feral animals. It is more often than not indiscriminate, where native animals might become victim to baiting. Targeting a specific pest or species isn't as effective as you might think and native animals can be victims of the baiting also. The hunting of a particular pest is a specific and precise form of action to remove them from the ecosystem.

Other State agencies have used or requested the assistance of sporting shooters and hunters in the past, particularly with regards to feral goat and pig control in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. It begs the question then, if the hunters and shooters in those states are allowed to assist and indeed purchase hunting licences of their own accord, why can't the hunters and shooters of Western Australia do the very same?

Professional aerial hunting work is expensive. If diligent hunting by recreational hunters was allowed, that would have to be a cheaper and far more cost effective method of keeping some control over the feral animal population. Year after year money would be saved and could be more effectively used in other land management endeavours.

A few years ago, the State government ended the ability for hunters to acquire permits to hunt feral pigs in the water catchment areas around Perth. The trapping and poisoning of those same feral animal now takes place and is surely and expensive and time consuming venture. Again, why not ask for the assistance of the abundance of recreational hunters and shooters to do the job with more efficiency and with very precise control over which feral animals are hunted.

Hunting on Public Lands is commonplace in many other countries around the world. Commonly referred to as Freedom to roam, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, The Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, Belarus and The United States all allow citizens to use publicly designated land to hunt on. There are stipulations, such as having a hunting licence and a firearms licence, but they all have the facility for those who want to, to hunt on lands designated for just such an activity.

While Western Australia is not Finland or Switzerland, or even the United States, surely we can appreciate that such systems already operate in countries we might consider as inferior to our own. We owe it to ourselves and those who might follow us to manage the natural resources we have in the simplest and most thoughtful of ways.

Native animals are consistently forced onto endangered species lists not due to hunters or recreational shooters, but to the over-propagation of introduced feral species. We must afford the time and resources now to stop this trend and reverse it at once.

I believe that Western Australian public lands should be opened up for responsible recreational shooting and that sporting shooters can work with agencies to the benefit of our natural species and reduce or remove a lot of the financial burden that might hang over the heads.

Thank you for considering my submission and I hope that this has at least changed your perception of recreational hunting and shooting in a meaningful way.

Sincerely,

Jeff Timbuk