

Mr Blair Montague

19 March 2014

Committee Clerk
Public Administration Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House
GPO Box A11
Perth WA 6837



Dear Sir / Madame,

Re: Inquiry into the potential environmental contribution of recreational hunting systems.

I request that committee prohibit the publication of my name and address, however the remainder of my submission may be published.

Please accept my submission for the above inquiry.

Recreational Hunting Systems (RHS) could provide benefits to the State of Western Australia in a number of different ways. I will address this under the topics of Economical, Cultural and Recreational as outlined in the committee terms of reference.

Economical benefits are two fold.

Government cost : By allowing licensed recreational hunters into the system the cost to government can be reduced by keeping the numbers of feral animals in check. This can be achieved through organised hunting via hunting groups and bodies. Currently the Government spends money employing Agricultural Protection Officers, Rangers etc to control feral animals through various means, this is however limited by a budget. If recreational hunters were utilised in the system there would be an economic benefit through the hunters spending their own money helping to control the feral populations, it would be a way of increasing the "spend" on feral animal control without increasing the budget of the government. There have been several articles done in relationship to this in Victoria and New South Wales.

Community benefit : Local business in Rural and Regional Western Australia, derive some income from visitors. If more people are attracted to the area to visit through RHS, the benefit for the rural towns would include increased accommodation bookings, spending in local shops and roadhouses. Certain species of feral animals also would provide another source of protein to the hunters who harvest them.

The following quote is from the Co-Operative Research Centre (CRC)

By Johannes Bauer & Jack Giles

WILDLIFE TOURISM RESEARCH REPORT SERIES: NO. 13

Status Assessment of Wildlife Tourism in Australia Series

"The Draft National Policy also states that in simple economic terms, recreational hunters generate in excess of \$1 billion dollars annually, through the purchase of vehicles and equipment, hunting access fees and licences and downstream related employment activity. An estimated \$325 million of this flows to regional communities."

I believe the economic benefits of RHS are there for Western Australia to benefit from with a bigger share of the current status with the potential to increase the national figure. From a personal perspective I recently hunted both Red Deer and Chital Deer in South Australia. The total cost of the trip was approx \$9000-00, most of which was spent in South Australia. I did bring home as much of the game meat as was allowable on my flight, the rest was divided up amongst my guide and other colleagues.

Cultural benefits.

Cultural benefits to the community range from providing friendship through association and meeting with other like-minded people, through to closing the gap (which seems to be widening) between City based and Country based people. In some ways I am unusual in the rural community as I grew up in the city and farmed on the weekends with my late father, which is where my passion for farming came from.

The divide of "where does my food come from" has been highlighted to me over the years by people's understanding of the production system. An example of this is highlighted by the fact the majority of people I have spoken to have little understanding of how Kangaroo meat gets from the "paddock to the plate"

I say this as there is always the catch cry from non-hunters saying "how can you shoot an animal", then when you tell them that the Kangaroo meat they eat in restaurants is harvested by professional shooters (

myself being a licensed professional shooter) and explain to them that it is a legitimate way of providing protein they begin to understand.

I wonder how many of the people on this Government Committee were aware of this fact ?

I am not advocating placing Kangaroos into the RHS, I am using that as example of how hunting is used to provide protein and educate people outside of the field as to its value to the community, this could be replicated with Feral Animals.

The cultural benefits between Hunters and the wider community could be advanced with farm stays on properties adjoining the hunting areas. People from different "walks of life" meeting up and discussing life in general, looking at problems from a different perspective. The lack of trades qualified people in regional Western Australia is also a problem which could be addressed through networking . ie the fly in fly out electrician is also a recreational hunter. He arranges to meet up with a farmer / pastoralist who provides him with accommodation etc. Arriving a few days earlier he fixes the electrical problems on the remote property. This certainly happens at present when people stay on farms or stations. My family back ground was in water well drilling, quite often when visiting friends on remote properties I would do "mill runs" whilst out hunting as well as bring up pump parts to fix pumps on site and offer advice on suitable pumping systems..

Recreational benefits.

The recreational benefits would be through allowing hunters a larger area to hunt in and enjoy their recreational activities, instead of just private land which is the present state. Other recreational activities have areas set aside where they can be enjoyed . Water catchment dams allow recreational fishing and water skiing. There are parts of the ocean set aside as marine parks which don't allow fishing but allow recreational divers. There are race tracks which were built using some government funding to allow race car enthusiasts a place to enjoy their chosen recreational activity. Stadium complexes have been built using part government funding to provide places for football, basketball, baseball , hockey, athletics etc I believe that there should be parts of the state forest set aside for RHS to be pursued as we contribute to revenue of the state as well. Separating parts of the state forest set aside for RHS can be achieved through modern GPS systems mapping areas , having buffer zones and posting of land where hunting is permitted.

There are modern GPS which can show the location of other hunters in relationship to each other which currently cost less than \$800 for a personal device. Wearing "Blaze Orange" is also another way to contribute to hunter safety. Hunters could attend courses to attain a recreational hunting license before being allowed to hunt in state forests. These could include units from using a GPS through to marksmanship and hunter safety. These units could be conducted by local hunting organisations which would benefit through larger participation making them more viable.

Finally I would urge the committee to look at other countries and other states of Australia to see that RHS are viable, safe and do benefit the community in general.

Yours Sincerely

Blair J Montague.