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Attention: Ms Lauren Mesiti

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



**REFERENCE: RECREATIONAL HUNTING SYSTEM**

On behalf of the W.A Firearm Traders Association, we submit the following statement regarding the above subject.

Although, as Traders, we are at the retail, maintenance and supply end of the Recreational Hunting system and may be seen as having a "vested interest", but in fact our position acknowledges that we have a wide insight into the area under review.

The build-up or increase of feral animals and introduced species has become a major problem within our farming, agricultural, viniculture lands bordering to land under Government control. This situation is having a devastating effect on our native wildlife.

Large numbers of these feral animals, being pigs, cats, dogs, deer, camels, foxes, and donkeys obtain refuge in unoccupied government land which provides a haven in which they are able to breed and avoid control measures by private land owners but from which they are able to access cultivated or pastoral land.

The cost of feral animals in environmental degradation, risk of infectious disease transmission and directly on agricultural and pastoral activities is well established and very significant.

Poisoning and trapping and professional shooting has been used by the various Government agencies in an attempt to control the problem but the scale of the problem shows that has not been successful.

Recreational hunters can and do make a difference through a confirmed reduction across many of the different feral vermin species. If utilised, this is a resource that has the potential to effectively address the problem at minor public cost.

Anecdotal evidence from sheep farmers records significantly improved lambing percentages when a concerted effort is made to control fox numbers by shooting just prior to lambing. In the present situation shooting under private landowner control can only occur on private land with the result that depredation from public land is still a significant cause of loss.

The Committee may be aware that many pastoral stations have had to destock because of predation by feral dogs. Efforts are being made by Government to reduce these numbers but we believe that recreational hunters can contribute to this effort at no cost to land holders or Government. In fact, an economic benefit may well accrue to the local community directly by the sales of goods and services such as fuel, accommodation, food, to hunters travelling.

When and if a system is introduced to allow hunting on public land we would strongly suggest a formal regime that requires the following as a minimum:

1. The areas of land available for hunting should be clearly defined and may be varied from time to time.
2. To have successfully completed an induction type course to prove they can identify specie/s, shoot with a degree of accuracy equal to that required of professional kangaroo shooters and are aware of the fall out areas relevant to the calibre they are using. Other factors may also be considered.
3. Carrying a GPS should also be considered. This would be to enable the hunter to verify that they have not strayed outside their allocated hunting area either to themselves or the regulating body at a later date. The GPS would also alleviate the prospect of the hunter becoming lost and therefore tying up other resources in a search.
4. Insurance cover may also be a requirement to be considered. (The SSAA already has such a policy in place for their members).

The WA Firearm Traders Association believe that a externally interested Body be allocated with the current Land Management system to "approve applicants" in a fair and just way for those that wish to attain the permission to hunt on or in identified Government unoccupied lands, as is acknowledged in all other States and Territories of Australia.

Although, we are not privy to the submissions of Western Australian Field & Game Association or the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (WA), we are aware in general, of the tenor of their submissions. The WA Firearm Traders Association supports their submissions.

B BEATON

President

WA Firearm Traders Association