



To Ms Lauren Mesiti, Committee Clerk standing committee on public administration legislative council.

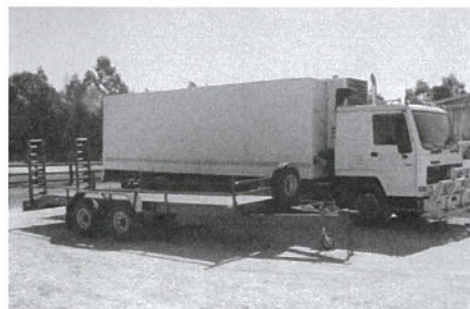
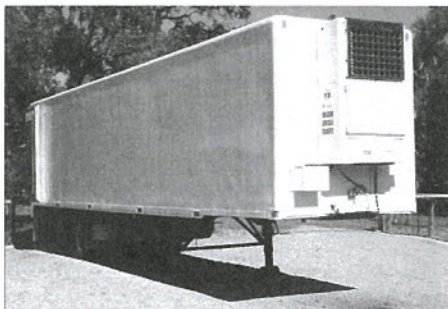
Inquiry into recreational hunting systems in Western Australia.

- A) Acknowledgements the use in other states of regulated, licensed recreational 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;

I Stephen Pass of Pro Shot Feral Control who is a licensed professional shooter through the Department of Parks and Wildlife make a submission rejecting the council's proposed licensed recreational hunting system by amateurs and propose the alternative recommendation as follows;

**To actively promote the use, services and engage the limited number and highly regulated Licensed Accredited Professional Shooters already registered with the Department of Parks and Wildlife under a preferred contract arrangement.**

As a Professional Shooter I can say I have never been paid for the work I have done by any government department to control feral animals, instead payment is through meat processors when we deliver carcasses and you need specialised equipment for that undertaking such as a mobile freezer. The control of other feral pests not suited for processing has always remained part of the service whilst out in the field.



***B (I) In answer to the public administration committee enquiry into the benefits or otherwise of a similar system being adopted in WA;***

Just because you have a firearms license, own a gun and fired a couple of shots from a bench rest to do a so called accreditation does not mean a whole lot to me, there is a lot more to it than just these things.

There are approximately 82500 licensed firearms owners in Western Australia compared to 424 licensed accredited professional shooters.(figures 2013)

We are talking about groups of shooters hunting for sport accessing these areas and that alarms me. Approximately 18 years ago I was involved with a shooting group just like the ones we are talking about today. We had access to 2 national parks for the removal of feral goats overseen by the Department under the banner of the SSAA.

I vividly recall on one occasion walking through the bush up on some goats when from behind a shot rings out. It was one of the shooters having a problem with his rifle and luckily it was in the air, so learning from that experience having groups of shooters increases the risk and my concerns lay there.

It is important to note that as professional shooters we are licensed singularly to the property, we do not have large groups of shooters traversing properties whilst carrying out shooting activities. That includes large properties such as stations or pastoral land, each station is listed on our license once obtaining written permission.

How can any government department oversee the control of recreational shooters on public lands when they themselves can't effectively control public lands as it is. This has been my experience through dealing with Parks and Wildlife, Department of Regional Development and Lands and the Department of Agriculture and Food.

As recent as 5<sup>th</sup> August 2013 I had a contract with the Department of Parks and Wildlife, regional manager Goldfields Ian Kealley, Nigel Wessels Regional leader and Wildlife officers Johannes Pieterse and Wayne Moroney to remove (include mustering, removal and selling, or euthanizing and processing of meat on site) of around 300 head of cattle and any feral animals such as camels, donkeys, goats and wild dogs found on the former pastoral lease Credo Station.

The contract was at no charge to the Department of Parks and Wildlife with the costs being recovered through the sales of cattle or carcasses for pet meat. When surveying the station prior to the engagement on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013 to inspect the property in preparation for the cattle mustering and removal we found all the south boundary gates deliberately left open, allowing the cattle to leave the station as well as mobs of cattle wandering down the road. This information was conveyed individually to the wildlife officers who ignored our concerns to the point of only checking the boundary gates southwest of Credo months after our complaint.

Once receiving the contract we again inspected Credo station this time with an aeroplane and a Land cruiser, only again to discover boundary gates still left open and from the air clearly seeing tyre tracks along the south eastern boundary in and out of boundary gates between Credo station and

neighbouring Mount Burgess/Carbine stations with even more of Credo's cattle that we had previously seen and photographed now found on the neighbouring stations.

Mount Burgess/ Carbine station are leased by Barrick Gold but the stations are managed by Brett and Tony Crook. Brett Crook is a board member for Department of regional development and lands, His brother Tony Crook a former retired WA National party member.

I suspect unbranded cattle were being removed off Credo station and at the very least both Brett and Tony Crook were fully aware that cattle now found on Barrick pastoral leases were not theirs. Yet discussions with Brett Crook were that he had been trying to trap cattle since December 2012.

As a consequence of cattle being moved off Credo it had greatly reduced the viability of the planned contract with Parks and Wildlife, we then had no choice but to withdraw our offer due to the lack of certainty of the number of cattle remaining and the increased safety risks associated with these circumstances as Parks and Wildlife could not ensure gates to remain closed.

We also found shot cattle that had been recently butchered on Credo station, with reports from Parks and Wildlife of Kangaroos being shot and the neighbouring property north having complained of his cattle shot. To encourage recreational hunting within these areas and alike clearly in my view cannot be controlled or policed.

On another occasion we removed for the shire of Irwin 70 feral goats on the reserve 43078 the coastal area west of Indian Ocean Drive. On this occasion we found that the goats were in a built up area and instead of shooting we mustered all the goats in less than a day, removing them live and on selling them to an abattoir. These goats were being inhumanely hunted with guns and bows and were causing damage to vegetation. Again on this occasion shooting was not an option in my opinion because of safety issues, mustering and removing was the best option.



On another contract initiated through the Department of Regional Development and Lands was for the removal of approximately 600 head of cattle off the former pastoral station Diemals and the removal of horses and donkeys. This land had been subject to a lease from 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1978 to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 when the Minister of Lands cancelled the lease due to improper management of the land, namely the poor condition of the cattle.

On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2012 the responsibility for the removal of these cattle including donkeys and horses within this area was placed on the mining company Cliffs Asian Pacific Iron Ore Pty Ltd by Regional Development and Lands. The mining company Cliff Asian Pacific were on the neighbouring station Mt Jackson. Again Parks and Wildlife managers of Mount Elvire Station north of Diemels and Mount

Manning Reserve were involved. The terms of engagement were to muster the cattle and on sell or destroy those animals not saleable.

The contract was granted under the condition that the contractor pay \$80 per head to the mining company, Cliffs Resources. In short the contractor who was not a licensed professional shooter required extra time and was unsuccessful in removing the majority of the cattle. These cattle further suffered within these areas (Diemels station, Mount Jackson, Mount Elvire, Mount Manning and surrounding crown land) because of the inaction of Regional Development and Lands that were responsible for these animals as from 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 when they took over Diemels station.

Again when we inspected these properties in preparation for this contract, this time we found cattle in an appalling state with no water or feed.

I contacted Mark Moore Parks and Wildlife in Merredin on the 6th December 2011 offering our services to either muster or shoot and remove a year prior to any such contract, my concerns went unnoticed, these animals were requiring urgent attention yet they were made to suffer.

As stated Diemals station was taken over by Department of Regional Development and Lands on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 I first contacted Parks and Wildlife 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011 with my concerns and offering my services. It wasn't until some 12 months later on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2012 the contract was tendered through the mining company Cliff Resources, and then further extended into mid 2013 with the contractor failing to remove the majority of cattle.

The department of Regional Development and Lands is now proposing the possible re-lease or amalgamation with Mt Jackson station, Mt Jackson is currently leased to Cliffs Asia Pacific Iron Ore.





How is it a mining company was made responsible for the removal of feral animals and cattle off public held lands? As previously stated who is going to control these recreational shooters when government departments cannot take responsibility for management of their own lands?

***B (II) In response to Hon Rick Mazza be co-opted as a member to the public administration committee for the purposes of the foregoing inquiry;***

I reject the Hon Rick Mazza be co-opted as a member on the grounds that there is a conflict of interest.

In no way does MLA Rick Mazza fully understand all the issues, but by having a committee it would be beneficial for the government to look at more effective ways of allocating funds and enquire into the handling and management associated with the states management of feral animals on all their lands rather than allowing sporting shooter groups on to its lands.

Stephen Pass