

# John Jury

Lauren Mesiti  
Committee Clerk  
Public Administration Committee  
Legislative Council  
GPO Box A11  
Perth WA 6837



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Dear Lauren

## **Submission to: Inquiry into Recreational Hunting on Public Lands**

In requesting the committee accept this submission, I would offer the following reasons for utilising the recreational shooting fraternity and the benefits that will be gained in adopting a system where recreational shooters have access to public lands.

My experience in pest management in the rangelands and agricultural districts is extensive have been an active member of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA) for the last 30 years and a foundation member of the WA Hunting for Conservation Branch which started in the early 1990's and still continues today. I hold degree level studies in agriculture and rangeland management, along with Honours which researched the ownership level held by people residing closely or adjunct to public lands.

More importantly, is my strong conservation beliefs stemming from a near lifetime of involvement with various natural history and land conservation groups. Within this experience I have travelled extensively throughout Australia and the regions interfacing with the Agricultural, Mining, Civil Construction and Land Conservation industries.

The fundamental principal of this submission relates to the stewardship land managers must accept, particularly where changes in land use or delineation through fencing (or other means) is implemented. This responsibility includes the population management of animals where they are restricted by boundaries or control of animals where they are introduced.

### **Rationale for third party management of pest animals:**

The Hunting for Conservation group has undertaken numerous project on behalf of land managers, both public and private. In all cases when I was a team leader for the project, at the opening meeting I would ask the reasons the land manager did not undertake the cull themselves. Reasons included:

Unwillingness	Many saw the process as an unsavoury task, particularly where family, friends and children would know the activity was undertaken.
Waste	Most land managers saw the waste as undesirable and unattractive, whereas most recreational hunters take the product away for use.
Lack of time	In all cases land managers did not have the long periods of time available to track down target species.

Resourcing	Most land managers, particularly those managing public lands did not have the resources to undertake effective and humane culling. This included appropriate calibre firearms and manpower where a team approach was required.
Skill level	In most cases, the land managers did not have the skill level to accurately and humanely despatch target species.
Expense	Unless pest animals can be removed in numbers and sold as part of the operation's production cycle, there is no ability to absorb the expense to cull in small groups or as individuals.

#### **The benefits of using third party management of pest animals:**

Given that many land managers face resource restriction, without assistance from third parties, their response to conservation/preservation is limited.

Recreational Hunting comes in many forms. Similar to fishing, the application, resources and motivation applied vary. Examples include beachcombing, photography, research, trapping, bow hunting, dogging on horseback, and rifle shooting. Not all hunting results in culling animals.

People hunt for mixed reasons, examples include;

- Recreation and increasing fitness,
- Being in nature's solitude.
- Skills development/environmental learning for self and family,
- Assisting conservation through targeted culling.
- Supplementing food resources for themselves or their animals,
- Trophies (photos or physical items)

In respect to the benefits of recreational hunting I would offer the following:

Community Health	We are a fat country, hunting is not an armchair or vehicle seat sport, any opportunity to encourage people to engage in exercise should be pursued. Exercise improves well being both mentally and physically, reducing the national medical bill in the future.
Responsible use of resources	Today we have many competing issues which require decisions on how the public purse should be spent. Recreational hunters donate their time, significant resources and skills assisting in environmental management for the benefit of others. Cross resourcing to assist others should always be encouraged.
Regional community benefits	Recreational hunters spend money on food, accommodation, fuel etc in their travels. These funds are injected directly into small and sometimes remote family businesses.
Assistance to Land Managers	There numerous arrangements in place in WA between land managers (public and private) where recreational shooters are used to cull pest or introduced species. Releasing public lands to recreational shooting will allow Land Managers to access a resource they previously could not.

Reduction of non target species kills	Trapping and poisoning programs can also affect non target species, whereas recreational shooting is highly specific being an immediate humane process.
Synergy with eradication programs	Wholesale slaughter programs are undesirable, wasteful and attract media attention, particularly when the program becomes necessary after community concern. Recreational hunting has two roles to play, firstly if hunting was allowed, the mass culling issue may never arise and secondly, where eradications programs are deployed, follow-up with recreational hunters assists in removing the remaining numbers. The remaining animals will take time and high cost to remove, recreation hunters donate both.
Long term population control	Recreational hunting is a pre-emptive control to reduce overpopulation of areas by pest species. It can also be used in a structured controlled program to maintain populations of endemic species in restricted land areas.
Reduction in illegal hunting	De-restricting access to public lands will reduce unauthorised hunting elsewhere or in those public lands to be released to recreational hunting.
Increased Intelligence gathering	It is highly likely that illegal activities will be reported by recreational hunters. It is also likely that infestations of declared plants will be reported by those hunters who can recognize those plants (which many do)

In summary, WA has public lands from thick dense forest to the wide open remote regions, the recreational hunting system will need to be well thought out.

A self regulating model for hunters would be desirable over the creation of a government agency. The basis for the model already exists with the various groups who undertake the current hunting for conservation projects across WA. It is notable that no incidents relating the safe use of weapons has occurred in any one of these well organised projects.

We have the opportunity to develop a world class model which provides significant benefits to the community and environment. I urge you to not let this opportunity slide into history.

If I can be of any assistance to the committee, I am quite happy to make time.

John Jury