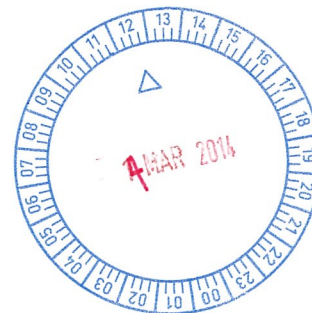


26th February, 2014

Attention Ms Lauren Misiti
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Legislative Council of Western Australia
Harvest Terrace
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Ms Misiti,

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRIBUTION OF RECREATIONAL HUNTING SYSTEMS

I understand recreational shooting has been introduced into National Parks and Reserves in some States and as a consequence the Western Australian Government is reviewing its policy on recreational shooting, to be informed by the above named inquiry.

The reports I have received about this practice in other States are disturbing. People who have enjoyed the tranquillity of the bushland for decades, no longer feel safe in being in the National Parks and Reserves. There is confusion and debate as to why Governments' would exclude the majority of the community from using National Parks, to accommodate only a small section of the community. Competitive and recreational shooting can be pursued at shooting clubs and on private land, while National Parks and Reserves offer the only opportunity for the wider community to enjoy nature and passive recreational pursuits. There is no place for recreational shooting in public National Parks and Reserves.

I am therefore opposed to recreational shooting being introduced into Western Australia's National Parks and Reserves and make the following points:-

- 1. National Parks and Reserves are established by advanced societies to conserve nature. Other uses of National Parks and Reserves are permitted where they are compatible with conserving nature. Shooting is not compatible with the purpose of conserving nature in a public conservation reserve system.**
2. Many uses are compatible with conserving nature, such as the observation of nature (both professional and amateur), bush walking, photography, rock climbing, picnicking, orienteering, camping (in designated areas). Western Australia's National Parks and Reserves are responsibly used for these purposes by a large number of people, including many Western Australian families.
3. It would be impossible for the State Government to guarantee the safety of the general public should recreational shooting be allowed. It would be inevitable that injuries or even deaths would occur. The Western Australian taxpayer would then be liable for compensation because of the Government's negligence and lack of due diligence in considering the risk to public safety.
4. If recreational shooting was permitted, the safe use of National Parks and Reserves for legitimate and compatible purposes would no longer be possible. The risk to public safety would be a constant concern.
5. The conservation values would be adversely affected if recreational shooting was allowed. This would occur by trampling of vegetation, introduction of weeds and rubbish. The damage would be extremely serious if disease, such as dieback, was introduced. Containing the effect of dieback on vegetation is both costly and ongoing, as there is no effective response currently available.
6. Unfortunately alcohol and recreational shooting go together. Unless the Government put in place full supervision by Government employees' of all recreational shooting ventures, there would be absolutely no possibility of preventing the consumption of alcohol. Without this supervision, the risk to the

general public and shooters, as well as native fauna would be high. Alcohol is not permitted on shooting ranges because of the escalation of risk where alcohol is involved. How would Government deal with the issue of risk to public safety, should recreational shooting be given Government sanction?

7. **The environmental benefits of an unstructured, unsupervised and unscientific feral animal control operation are minimal, while the risks to the public and potential impacts on nature would be substantial.**
8. There is evidence however that well managed scientifically-based feral animal control programs are successful and vital in preventing the decline of native fauna from predation, particularly vulnerable mammals. These programs are also effective in preventing habitat damage. The Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW) has run successful pig eradication programs. Pigs cause incalculable damage to vegetation and result in habitat decline and the spread of disease. The 1080 baiting program which has been place for decades is another excellent and effective feral animal control mechanism, one which has continued to use the scientific information gained over the years, to improve its effectiveness.
9. Unfortunately there are examples of where recreational shooters are illegally shooting feral pigs and then re-introducing feral pigs to reserves so they can continue to enjoy the shooting experience. These recreational shooters have no interest in reducing pig numbers or providing environmental benefits. Any Government who gave this type of illegal, damaging and irresponsible activity legitimacy would be held to account by the public.

In conclusion, National Parks and Reserves are a priceless public asset. It would be negligent of the Government to introduce this risky and harmful activity. Doing so would seriously limit the use and enjoyment which the general public currently has in its National Parks and Reserves, and carry no benefits for the environment, while leading to environmental damage.

I urge you to give serious consideration to the issues raised above.

I would appreciate confirmation of receipt of this submission.

Yours faithfully, _

(Mrs Joan Payne AM ✓