



Lauren Mesiti
Committee Clerk,
Standing Committee on Public Administration,
Legislative Council,
Parliament House,
Perth WA 6000

Dear Lauren

Submission on Recreational Hunting in WA

I understand that the Standing Committee on Public Administration is inquiring into the introduction of recreational hunting in Western Australia. I wish to register my **very strong opposition** to any such proposal.

It is my view that recreational hunting:

- Would do little if anything to control feral animals on public lands;
- Would foster an undesirable gun culture in Australia;
- Is incompatible with other recreational activities in bush reserves;
- Would be impossible to regulate; and
- Is not an activity that should be encouraged.

I have no objection to the culling of feral animals such as foxes and feral cats. However it should be done professionally and humanely by trained officers from the Department of Parks and Wildlife. Any culling program should be scientifically based and properly planned and executed. Reliance on recreational hunters to control feral animals is a haphazard approach that is likely to be ineffective.

Hunters are generally not conservationists and have been known to release feral animals such as pigs into bush reserves so they can indulge their passion for hunting. These animals can cause significant damage to the bush and displace native wildlife.

Although our wildlife is protected by legislation, the illegal hunting of kangaroos already occurs and the introduction of recreational hunting would only exacerbate this problem.

Recreational hunting would foster the type of gun culture that currently exists in America. This is a culture that Western Australia doesn't need. There are over 32,000 gun related deaths in America every year and school shootings are becoming common. The gun lobby in America is so powerful that even the President is powerless to do anything about it.

After the Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania, the response from the Federal Government was to buy back over 640,000 guns from the community and tighten gun laws. Legalising recreational hunting would be a retrograde step that would increase the number of guns in Western Australia and increase the risk of gun related deaths.

Bush reserves are used for many recreational activities including camping, hiking, cycling, horse riding, orienteering and bird watching. Recreational hunting is incompatible with all of these activities.

Even if there were strict regulations governing recreational hunting, the State is so big and wildlife officers so thin on the ground, the regulations would be impossible to enforce. Shires already have problems with the illegal use of trail bikes and 4WD's, they don't need the added problem of illegal hunting.

In a society that is becoming more compassionate and more concerned with the environment and animal welfare, I find it difficult to understand why the government would even consider the introduction of recreational hunting. In my view, and I believe the view of the vast majority of Western Australians, the stalking and killing of animals for pleasure is not an activity that should be encouraged.

I therefore implore the Standing Committee to reject this proposal absolutely.

Yours faithfully

Mark Appelt