

27-Mar-14



To Whom it may concern,

Recently it was brought to the attention of the members of Hedland Sporting Shooters Club, that there was a petition circulating the net encouraging against opening public land to amateur shooters for the sake of reducing the environmental impact of introduced species.

The petition is found via this link;

http://www.animalsaustralia.org/take_action/protect-animals-wa-shooting

This mail is intended as a statement against this petition, and it amends their own prewritten letter, as I found it to be misleading and containing frivolous assumptions.

As you may assume by my residential location, our familiarity with introduced species in the north would be exceptional, especially as far as mammals are concerned, they are more common than native. In my four years of working within a 300km range of Port Hedland (I do not work as a shooter), I can attest to encountering only enough native mammals to count on my two hands. Introduced species however I couldn't care to count, and this does not include the considerable amount of livestock roaming free in this area. I was lucky enough to see a Northern Spotted Tail Quoll some years ago. It was hiding from a feral cat in a toxic waste recycling plant. A couple of kangaroos, a few wallabies and one dingo are I can muster up as having seen in the wild. Apart from the very common, horses, donkeys and camels, what is of greatest concern to me are the amount of feral dogs and cats that are increasingly common.

I am enthusiastic about the preservation of the Australian native environment. I am a firearm owner and enthusiastic target shooter. I am not a practicing hunter, but know many who are. I have completed the Australian National Training Authority's unit [(AHCVP203A) - Use of firearms to humanely destroy animals] as a part of my employment in the mining industry.

I am not politically motivated for, or an advocate of firearm ownership, however, I am aware of an ill-conceived stigma and public

misconception of firearm owners that builds an unhealthy and unnecessary brinkmanship in our society. This perception by society has evolved via a system that has failed to ensure society's safety by allowing firearms to become available to those that do not possess the faculties to handle them without endangering citizens. It is also misconception and discrimination motivated by fear, and the result of a lack of education and knowledge via a system that allows the sport to be publically vilified. This transactional approach has been ineffective and the public has still an ever-increasing feeling of distrust.

Therefore, I implore with you that greater scrutiny and diligence is employed with actual applicants for licenses, and also with ensuring adherence to new and progressive safety regulations for shooters, rather than the implementation of politically motivated, petty and cosmetic laws that do little to protect society and much to denigrate the sport, which is now the current state of affairs.

Below I have adjusted the supplied letter from Animals Australia to reflect what I believe to be more a realistic version of the claims that the original makes.

I would like to make my views known to the Committee holding an inquiry into allowing recreational shooting in Western Australia.

As a WA resident, I strongly support recreational hunting of introduced species.

I am not opposed to it because "killing animals for fun" does not reflect the values of "recreational shooters" in general.

Opening up WA State Forests to recreational shooting will lead to sustainable, native animal survival and proliferation. It is not feasible to effectively police every amateur shooter, and therefore there is a need to enforce mandatory training via professional agencies, and mandatory licensing for responsible hunters via a regulated system, which has already been proposed. This will guarantee that animals will not suffer prolonged deaths, or be left behind injured. The Public, wildlife and other animals will also be put at lower risk of injury and death by this plan.

I also believe that WA public lands should be kept safe for all members of the community. Shooting can only endanger public safety when conducted by untrained, irresponsible and unauthorized practitioners, and because of the difficulty in policing shooting practices and enforcing laws in remote areas, appropriate scrutiny and diligence to this authority should apply when screening applicants.

Finally, I fully support recreational shooting as a 'solution' for 'management' of introduced species. if it's not backed up as an effective approach by scientific evidence, has baiting, trapping and poisoning provided the desired results? Most importantly, what are the other, more humane and effective solutions available to

address this issue? Baiting, trapping and poisoning require great expense and unnecessary suffering. If population management of introduced species is necessary, it should be done respectfully and humanely, by qualified shooters.

Most Western Australians enjoy the outdoors and nature, without ever wanting to shoot animals. Please don't put people and animals unnecessarily at risk for this plan. Drive for responsible hunting by qualified hunters, and also for the sustainability of native fauna, by the reduction of the destructive introduced species, now at a critical state.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Grant Macleod