

RECREATIONAL HUNTING SYSTEMS

Motion

Resumed from 20 November on the following motion moved by Hon Rick Mazza —

That the Council —

- (a) acknowledges 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; and
- (b) directs that —
 - (i) the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs inquire into the benefits or otherwise of a similar system being adopted in Western Australia and report back to the house by 26 June 2014; and
 - (ii) Hon Rick Mazza be co-opted as a member to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs for the purposes of the foregoing inquiry.

to which the following amendment was moved by Hon Helen Morton (Minister for Mental Health) —

- (1) In paragraph (b)(i) to delete “Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs” and insert —

Standing Committee on Public Administration
- (2) In paragraph (b)(i) to delete “26 June 2014” and insert —

4 December 2014
- (3) In paragraph (b)(ii) to delete “Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs” and insert —

Standing Committee on Public Administration

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural) [2.08 pm]: I will recap on the brief remarks that I made to the house last week when this amendment was being debated. It was with some level of surprise that I learnt of the amendment. As the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Administration, which is the committee recommended to investigate this issue, I would have thought there might be some level of conversation held so that this amendment would not have come as a complete surprise to me. Nonetheless, it has, and I will talk about that some more.

This is a poor amendment, and that should not surprise anyone because poor governments make poor amendments. It seems to me that it has not been very well thought out. There must be a reason, but like many things this government does, the reason is not apparent to those affected by its decisions. Hon Sue Ellery and Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson have quite eloquently put that this motion sits outside the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Public Administration. I will just briefly run over those again for those who may not remember them from last week. The terms of reference read —

- 3.1 A Public Administration Committee is established.
- 3.2 The Committee consists of 5 Members.
- 3.3 The functions of the Committee are to —
 - (a) inquire into and report on —
 - (i) the structure, efficiency and effectiveness of the system of public administration;

I do not quite see how Hon Rick Mazza’s motion fits into that point. Subparagraph (ii) reads —

- (ii) the extent to which the principles of procedural fairness are embodied in any practice or procedure applied in decision making;

Once again, I fail to see how Hon Rick Mazza’s motion fits into that subparagraph. Subparagraph (iii) reads —

- (iii) the existence, adequacy, or availability, of merit and judicial review of administrative acts or decisions; and

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

I do not see how it fits under that term of reference either, given that we are talking about recreational hunting in national parks. Subparagraph (iv) reads —

- (iv) any Bill or other matter relating to the foregoing functions referred by the Council;

Paragraph (b) of the terms of reference reads —

- (b) consult regularly with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations, the Public Sector Standards Commissioner, the Information Commissioner, the Inspector of Custodial Services, and any similar officer.

I will go a little further —

- 3.4 The Committee is not to make inquiry with respect to —
 - (a) the constitution, function or operations of the Executive Council;
 - (b) the Governor's Establishment;
 - (c) the constitution and administration of Parliament;
 - (d) the judiciary;
 - (e) a decision made by a person acting judicially;
 - (f) a decision made by a person to exercise, or not exercise, a power of arrest or detention; or
 - (g) the merits of a particular case or grievance that is not received as a petition.

As a person who can read, I would have thought this motion would not fall under the terms of reference of that committee. I think it would come under the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, as suggested by Hon Rick Mazza. I can understand that there has perhaps been some discussion as to why this should have been done, and when I approached the chair of the public administration committee voicing my displeasure last week that we were even debating this amendment, and asking —

Point of Order

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Mr President, I am not sure that it is prudent for the member on his feet to bring into the house matters that are private discussions held outside this chamber, and I would seek your guidance in that regard. The conversation was with me, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: Yes. It is a standard practice that conversations involving any committee deliberations are not public knowledge, as, therefore, is the information of the people participating in those conversations. Just in terms of the overall motion, there should be no assumption or expectation that any member of any committee is consulted with prior to any motion being moved in this house. It is up to this house to decide in its own wisdom whether a motion is referred to this committee or that committee. It is a debatable point, as the member is debating, whether it is the best committee or not, but the decision ultimately lies with the house. Members do always need to be careful about crossing the boundaries of what is a conversation within a committee context, whether it is actually formally within that committee structure or about committee business between members.

Debate Resumed

Hon DARREN WEST: I will take that advice on board, and I will not discuss the specifics of the conversation that was had. I will, however, make the point that I had to go and seek a conversation to get any information about this. It turned out that we had had a committee meeting on the very day this motion and this amendment came forward. I would have thought that at some point during that committee meeting this matter might have been raised, given it had been discussed the day before.

Point of Order

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Point of order.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the same point of order?

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Yes, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, it is the same point of order, and I think the member now has the advice that perhaps he needs to stick to the actual motion before the house, not conversations that were had in some other context.

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

Hon DARREN WEST: I will move on now, but I make the point that there had been no discussion among committee members about this beforehand. I would have thought —

Several members interjected.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Point of order!

The PRESIDENT: Order! Look, there is no need to take a point of order, but I point out to the member, and for every other member's advice, that it is not unusual for no discussion to have taken place between members of a committee; and in fact there should be no expectation among members of a committee of pre-conversations having taken place about anything the house might refer to that committee.

Debate Resumed

Hon DARREN WEST: As I have said before, a poor government makes poor decisions and drafts poor amendments. I think this amendment is quite disrespectful to Hon Rick Mazza, who has clearly put in a lot of time and effort drafting a motion, putting it to the house, and having his day to put forward a motion that is in the interests of his electorate and those who have supported him to get into this place. He has put in a considerable amount of work. I think Hon Rick Mazza's motion should be debated as put by him. I challenge those opposite to make a decision. I know when they make decisions over there, they are often not very good, but I think this motion should be debated as put, which is why I am speaking against the amendment.

I will not go back over my grievances about the amendment and my personal experience, but I think elected members should give their fellow honourable members some level of respect. The government should take Hon Rick Mazza's motion that he carefully drafted and put to the house and make a decision collectively; or, as the government keeps pointing out to us, it is a democratic party and its members can make individual decisions. Although we very, very rarely see that, it is possible for government members. Government members should make their own minds up as to whether they support Hon Rick Mazza's motion or not.

Hon Helen Morton: Or amend it.

Hon DARREN WEST: For what it is worth, I do not support the motion.

Hon Helen Morton: Or amend it. Is amendment an option?

Hon DARREN WEST: I think the government should be respectful enough to Hon Rick Mazza to vote yes or no on his motion. I can see this puts members opposite in a very difficult position. They have to either vote for what they believe or they have to vote in a way that might please Hon Rick Mazza. It is a matter for government members to consider. Hon Rick Mazza has been most loyal. He has supported the government's motions and divisions and has been respectful of the government's wishes in this house, but the government is now not showing him a level of respect.

I suspect this amendment is designed to get the government out of a spot, rather than to seek a good public outcome or come up with a good decision that can be adopted going forward. I think the government is taking the easy way out by moving this on to a committee, while leaving Hon Rick Mazza high and dry for a year, which is not what he seeks. He seeks an answer and a decision. It is the job of those in government and Parliament to make decisions. I think we should make them, not just hop behind an amendment that will fob the issue off for 12 months: "It won't upset Hon Rick Mazza, but we don't have to actually do anything. We don't have to make yet another decision that we could be criticised on and we don't have to break any promises. We can just hide this one away for a little while and bury it in a committee." Committees are busy with things they need to do, and I do not have to lecture members on the role of an important committee like the public administration committee. There is much to look into and inquire into when there is a poor government, which we have now. I touched on this before, but I think a very, very shallow level of loyalty has been shown to Hon Rick Mazza, who has been, as I said before, loyal to the government.

This committee is not a plaything; it is a serious committee that has a serious body of work to do. I do not think that burying an issue such as recreational hunting systems, which fits outside the terms of the reference of the public administration committee and sits more in line with the terms of reference of the environment and public affairs committee, is helpful to Hon Rick Mazza. I do not think it is helpful to the committee, the house or the electors—the people of Western Australia—who look to us to make these decisions. I think Hon Helen Morton should consider withdrawing her amendment. I will vote against it. I hope other members do too, because they have a democratic right to do so under the rules of their party. I hope this gets voted down and that we can make a hard decision on Hon Rick Mazza's motion.

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 27 November 2013]

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Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [2.19 pm]: We are considering the question of whether the words proposed to be deleted be deleted. For members in this place who have heard me speak before and do not like to hear me speak —

Hon Ken Travers: Who is that? Name them.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Those merry few ought to be awfully cross with Hon Darren West because he has encouraged me to make a contribution to this debate that I otherwise might not have made. I will address a couple of issues floating around about this motion before we get to the substance of it. I think in previous sittings of the house and in earlier parts of this debate, we have heard Hon Rick Mazza put forward the case for potentially having a system of regulated, licensed recreational hunting here in Western Australia. We have had some further comment about that. I think the Minister for Mental Health alluded to it. If I have read it right, the Liberal Party at least has said that it is not necessarily prepared to adopt this quite radical idea—I think that is the effect—but it might have merit. We are prepared to entertain the idea of a parliamentary committee taking a good look at it to see whether there might be several benefits. Hon Rick Mazza mentioned not only the environmental contribution but also economic, cultural and recreational benefits. That expands the benefits well beyond environmental impacts. That part of the debate seems to have been lost by some of the past few speakers. They seem to have been subsumed by this thought that it is going to a committee. So which committee should it go to? It strikes me that we have lost the whole point of the exercise. The trouble is that it gives members in this house who are new enough to think they know everything the opportunity to go a little too far in their remarks.

I want to let members know a couple of things that I may or may not have learnt the hard way over many years. It does not hurt for this to come up because, for the benefit of those who may be unsure, the proceedings of a committee are privileged and secret to that committee. We have had very serious debates and reports about what happens in committees and, indeed, what “deliberations” means. It is not a good idea to discuss what is discussed in a committee meeting. If members do that, they can get themselves in a bit of strife. I offer that friendly bit of advice.

The other thing that I will mention about when matters might be referred to a committee, and dare I say a committee upon which any member might be serving, is that it is the will of the house what a committee will look into. Quite apart from any capacity for own-motion inquiry, this house has the capacity to tell one of its standing committees what it is going to do. The members who make up that committee do not have any choice about that, full stop. That is what happens. It is not about whether members on that committee think they are a bit busy or they are not really interested in a reference or they do not really want to do it. That has nothing to do with it. People who come into this place have to be prepared to serve on committees. They are the rules that apply.

Hon Sue Ellery: Why don't you want to do it, then?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Who says I do not want to do it?

Hon Darren West: You're fobbing it off to us.

Hon Ken Travers: Have you not discussed this going to the public admin committee with anyone before and indicated you don't want it before your committee?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Dear, oh dear, oh dear. Are the Leader of the Opposition and Hon Ken Travers trying by interjection to tell us that they are somehow privy to something that has gone on in one of our standing committees?

Hon Sue Ellery: I wouldn't have a clue but you put your hand on your heart and say you haven't discussed it outside the committee.

Hon Ken Travers: I was talking about internally in your Liberal Party, if you'd heard me correctly.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I heard the member correctly; he should not try to back-pedal.

Hon Ken Travers: That is what I said—“within the Liberal Party”.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Members opposite are getting a little oversensitive about this now. It is a good thing that I am in a position to set some members straight about a few things. The first thing that I have already mentioned is that what is said in a committee that forms part of members' deliberations remains with that committee. Members need to be aware of that so they do not get themselves in strife in the future. Mr Ken Travers —

Hon Sue Ellery: The honourable.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Honourable —

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

Hon Ken Travers: You can call me Ken.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I have called the member a number of things, my friend.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! If it is not out of order, I make an observation. I have put the amendment as one question—that the amendment be agreed to. I could put it as separate questions, like “words to be inserted be inserted” and so on, but I have done that to try to make it clear and get the motion dealt with. Members will know that if they stand to make a contribution on the amendment and they have not contributed to the substantive motion, they are allowed to address the substantive motion. That is just a hint. I would venture to say to the member on his feet that he is allowed to talk about the motion.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: If the unruly interjections of those opposite would not stop me from doing so, I would love to address the substance of the motion even more closely than I have been doing since I first stood up.

My good friend Hon Ken Travers was making the point, in effect, that if the minister was going to stand up and move an amendment to some motion on the notice paper, perhaps that should be raised in a party forum in advance so we know about it. Of course it should. Why should it not?

Hon Ken Travers: That's my point.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Why should it not?

Hon Ken Travers: Yes.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I am glad that Hon Ken Travers now accepts that, because just a few minutes ago he seemed to be thundering that there was somehow something wrong with that.

Hon Ken Travers: No; I was making the point that you were pretending that you hadn't talked about it, when clearly you would have been involved in discussions about it before it got to this house.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That retort is right out of line. There has never been any pretence that matters that are going to be raised in the house are not spoken about between colleagues. What became very obvious —

Hon Ken Travers: Have you ever expressed a view that you don't want this matter to come to your committee in those discussions internally in the Liberal Party?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Oh, dear! Mr President, are we going to have some sort of interrogational cross-examination by interjection?

Hon Ken Travers: If you want to.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am just trying to put myself in the shoes of the mover of this motion, Hon Rick Mazza, who is a relatively new member of the chamber. He must be getting quite frustrated with this discussion at the moment about what is really a minor part of his main motion. I would appreciate it if members who wanted to speak on this amendment really got to the point.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The fact of the matter is that if I am on the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, the Standing Committee on Public Administration, the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, which I have served on for five years, the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, which I have served on for more than five years, the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review, which I served on for I do not know how many years, but it was a lot longer than five, or another committee, I will do whatever the house wants me to do. That is the bottom line. But the question now is: can the Standing Committee on Public Administration look into this matter? What is the actual motion proposing? It looks to me as though it is talking very much about whether or not a different—some might say a radically different—approach should be taken for not only economic reasons, but also cultural and recreational reasons, to introduce a whole new practice in government activity or government controls compared with what has existed previously.

In relation to a new structure, would it be efficient or effective to achieve the environmental and other outcomes that are needed if we were to change a manner of regulation and licensing? That would squarely fit under the first term of reference about the functions of the Standing Committee on Public Administration, so it is quite possible for the Standing Committee on Public Administration to look at this inquiry if the house wants it to go ahead; or the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs could look at it. I really do not care. As a

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

member of this house who may become involved in this inquiry if the house decides it wants such an inquiry, I do not know. I submit my fortunes in that respect to the will of the house, as should other members in this place.

In relation to the question that Hon Rick Mazza initially put on the notice paper, if all we were considering was whether we have a system of allowing people to be licensed to go shooting on public lands in the way that I think he is proposing, at face value I would be very, very reticent to embrace that. Indeed, I certainly could not really contemplate acquiescing to it without a more thorough study into what that really involves. That is why it is an appropriate response for the house to consider this matter, and, if it should proceed, it should proceed by way of an inquiry by one of its committees being the next step. To the extent that the party that I am a part of has facilitated that way of going forward, rather than killing it stone dead, I do not think that is mucking around the mover of the motion and I do not think it is being disrespectful, although if we were required to make a decision, we would have to do that, because in this place we have two options when a question is put: we can vote aye or no. It is the same for every question that comes before the house—aye or no. But the appropriate way of advancing this particular matter is not by saying, “Oh, no; blow it; we’re not looking at it”, or, “Yes, what the hell; let’s go for it.” Sorry; that is why we have the current wording of the question before us, because if this substantive motion fails, that will dispose of the matter, so Hon Darren West will have his wish. However, I caution the member to be a bit careful in his enthusiasm that he does not try to lecture the house about things of which he has not quite yet had the rich experience that I am sure he will accrue if he lasts in this place long enough, which I sincerely hope he does because he is a terrific chap. I support the question before the house.

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [2.37 pm]: Everyone seems to be giving advice to the house this afternoon and I thought I would share some with the house. The brotherhood of former customs officers will give their collective wisdom to the house this afternoon. The point that you made earlier in the debate, Mr President, was that the substantive issue here is the motion moved by Hon Rick Mazza. Hon Rick Mazza has moved a number of motions in this place, some of which I and the Labor Party have agreed with. There were others that, as we indicated, we did not agree with. I think there are some fundamental issues. I listened to some of the members on the other side. They clearly share a view similar to my view about whether the substantive motion is even worth having an inquiry about. That is fair enough. If we are of the view that we have enough detail and enough information to make a decision about whether we support the substantive elements of Hon Rick Mazza’s motion, we should stand in this place and put those views. I think the previous speakers on behalf of the Labor Party have done a very good job in outlining why we would not support the substantive elements of what Hon Rick Mazza has put before the house this afternoon.

I assume that Hon Rick Mazza, in his heart of hearts, would probably love to have been able to move a motion that just said, “Come on, government. Get on and do what I’m asking you to do.” From the conversations I have had outside the chamber and outside the committee with Hon Rick Mazza, I understand where he is coming from. It is one of those areas in which members will agree to disagree on the substantive issues, as we often do in this place. Hon Rick Mazza, I suspect in his hearts of hearts, would have loved to have moved a motion saying that the government should allow recreational hunting systems into public lands to control feral pests. He would, I think, believe that he has enough detail and information to reach that point. I suspect the reason he asked for it to be referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs is in the hope that he can build up momentum around this issue. I thought that the date that he had chosen for the reporting of the matter to the house—even though I do not agree with where he is trying to take the debate—is a very good date to have chosen. It would have seen a report brought back to this place in the dying days of the next session of Parliament, just before we go on a break.

I do not know if it was Hon Rick Mazza’s intention, but I would have suspected that he would have then used that time throughout that break not only to maintain momentum on that issue, but to try to build momentum for his case. That is what every member in this place has a right to do. However, of course, we have seen some amendments moved. Also, he clearly chose the committee that he thought was the most appropriate committee for this matter to be referred off to; namely, the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. I actually think that if it is to go off to a committee, that is the appropriate place for it to go. If we will not send matters off—like this one—to that committee, then I wonder why we still keep the name “environment” at the front of that committee. The substantial issues contained in this motion are around the environment. If that is not what this house will seek to do when we have matters like this come before it—that is by saying, “Let’s send it off to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs”, then I wonder why we even keep the name “environment”. I would suggest to the house —

Hon Liz Behjat interjected.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am not going to be tempted to give Hon Liz Behjat a history of how the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs came into being. In fact, I remember having a conversation with

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

Hon George Cash when he did a review of committees in this place. Consideration was given to splitting the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs and having, effectively, a committee that did nothing else but deal with petitions. However, it was decided back then and agreed to that the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs would continue to be the committee that dealt with environmental matters. We have a committee that does that role. It is the clear, ongoing decision of this house that when we have got substantial matters that deal with environmental issues, that is the committee it should go to. That has been the long-standing tradition of this house.

Hon Helen Morton: The assumption that you're making, however, is that this is an environmental matter.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The point I am making is that it is substantially an environmental matter and —

Hon Helen Morton: That is where we disagree —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If the minister were to also read the motion moved by the member, he refers to —

Hon Helen Morton: He uses the word "environment" once.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: What?

Hon Helen Morton: He uses the word "environment" once. It is about regulation, licences —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Pretty substantial ones, though. Pretty important ones, minister.

Hon Helen Morton interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The potential environmental contribution made —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hansard has got no chance in the world of getting all those interjections down when they come in that manner altogether. Let one member speak at a time.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It is clear, in my view, that if a matter like this will not be referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, then we should have the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges look at that matter to decide whether or not we should even continue to have the environment committee. I might be completely wrong, but I think Hon Rick Mazza clearly set about what struck me as a pretty good strategy. He does not think he will win the debate today on the substantive issue; however, his strategy of trying to build up momentum by getting the appropriate committee that fits within the terms of reference—as a new member, he looked through the committees and saw that it was appropriate—is a strategy I would agree with. He has made sure we get a report back to this house just before we break in 2014, to get that momentum going. We have heard from members on the other side—clearly, it is a strong body—who hold a similar view to that of the Labor Party on the substantial issues of this matter. It strikes me that we are seeing the government engaging in a process to try to bury this issue. That is my view of it. The first thing its members have done is seek to move the date back to 4 December 2014. It means we will get a report just before the Christmas rush. Members should watch what will happen, because over the next couple of weeks, they will see less and less political news reported as we get closer to Christmas. What we do in this house will become less and less reported by the mainstream media as they start to look at issues such as, where Santa Clause is this week, where are the good Christmas lights on the streets of Perth, and the other issues that are of interest to the public of Western Australia.

It is my view that the substantial reason that the government has sought to move the date out is to try to make sure that the report comes back at a time when it will, hopefully, disappear into the ether. The government will say to Rick Mazza, "Look, we supported you, but sorry the issue's now been buried." The other more interesting question is the removal of the committee that would have dealt with the inquiry. I am not sure what drove that decision, but I would be fairly confident—I think Hon Simon O'Brien in our interchange confirmed it—that there would have been discussions within the Liberal Party, not within the committee structure, about which committee this should be referred off to. I asked him by way of interjection whether or not in those discussions he had ever expressed a view that he did not want this matter to come to his committee. Not even asking him why, I just asked whether he had ever expressed that view. Of course, Hon Simon O'Brien, a very effective and seasoned campaigner, deflected that question without giving a substantive answer to that point. The point I want to make to this house is that the advice you gave earlier, Mr President, is absolutely correct—as it always is. The will of this house is the will of this house. We have the opportunity to —

The PRESIDENT: What have I done wrong?

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Sorry?

The PRESIDENT: I was going to say, what have I done wrong?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Why is that?

The PRESIDENT: You were praising the decision.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Mr President, as you know, even if you are wrong, you are right! And you are always right! When you make your decisions, Mr President, what it proves is that we were wrong, even if we thought we were right at the time. There is the capacity of this house always to choose to refer a matter off to the committee. I would still take the view though—unless we suspend standing orders—that the decisions of this house should actually conform with the standing orders of the house. I have not taken the point of order on that particular point because, like all things, I suspect this this matter can be twisted and squeezed in to be just captured by the standing orders. However, the clear intent and purpose of the standing orders is that this matter should be referred off to the other house.

The other thing that highlighted to me that I think is the piece of advice I really want to focus on at this point is that often there are discussions behind the Chair. The house always has the right to make the decisions that it chooses to make and, whatever those decisions are, they are then binding on the committees and everyone else in this house, unless we move to a rescission motion. Before we get to that, we all know there are often discussions that go on behind the Chair. There are discussions within political parties and between members that are not a part of the formal deliberations of the committees, but very much impact upon the way in which committees operate and deliver goodwill in the committees. The one thing I have always learnt about the way in which this place operates is that those committees that have goodwill amongst the members are the committees that will achieve the most. I paid tribute when Hon Giz Watson resigned. I served on a number of committees with her. She was an exemplary leader of parliamentary committees. As best as I can I will try to do the same on the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, but I suspect I will never be able to reach the way in which Hon Giz Watson consulted and took the committee with her on —

Hon Liz Behjat: That's because you're not into hugging!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hon Liz Behjat knows that I cannot go into the deliberations of committees and, therefore, there are some matters that cannot be mentioned, and unless the previous committee is reconstituted by this house and it reports, members will never know whether we used to hug on that committee.

Hon Liz Behjat: Just saying!

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hon Liz Behjat is just saying. Unless the records of the committee are brought back to this house, that will have to be forever and eternally left for people to wonder whether they did or did not.

That committee dealt with some fairly contentious and difficult-to-manage political issues, but the committee was able to deal with those issues by having informal conversations around and behind the Chair. For what it is worth, what strikes me when listening to the debate today is that one of the outcomes of today's decision is that that clearly has not happened. Members on the government side who are chairs of committees have been brought into discussions; decisions have been taken that impact upon those committees and the other members of that committee who will be impacted upon as a result of those decisions have not been brought into the discussions. I saw the byplay across the chamber between a chair and a member of a committee. I know those two members and I am sure we will be able to move on from this, but I make the point and remind all members that we need to constantly work to try to maintain that goodwill not only within our parties but also across the chamber.

A number of members feel, rightfully, aggrieved that a decision has been made that will influence the work they want to do on the Standing Committee on Public Administration. The chair and members of the committee have been involved in those discussions, yet they were not brought into those discussions at an early stage to put their view. One of the key characteristics of this house, with which I am sure Mr President will agree, was often stated by Hon Clive Griffiths—"You do not have to like what a member says but you have to listen to them". Members may not agree with what another member says, but if a member is not given an opportunity to put their view so that they may make a difference to the outcome of a decision—not when it is all locked away and agreements have been made—then the goodwill in this house will start to break down.

I make those comments today to try to find a constructive way to move forward. I was disappointed to witness that byplay between those members, but I am confident because I have served on a committee with Hon Liz Behjat. She is constructive and works well other members. For what it is worth, I believe members should have been brought into that discussion. In my view we have never had a good decision on this matter, but I suspect—

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

although Hon Simon O'Brien will neither confirm nor deny this—the reason that the matter was chosen to go to the public administration committee may rest with Hon Simon O'Brien not wanting it to come to his committee.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Just for the record, the first time I heard any suggestion from anybody that this matter, or a potential inquiry, should come to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs was when Hon Rick Mazza raised the matter in the house that is currently the item of business. I had never heard it before then.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hon Rick Mazza put that motion on notice on 11 June for people to consider. I made a point about the discussions that must have occurred, I suspect, in more recent weeks on whether the government would amend it. They are the discussions I am asking Hon Simon O'Brien about. I understand that he has a right to refuse to provide that information to the house.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Will you answer what discussions occur in your caucus room? I don't think so.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Hon Simon O'Brien, if it were me, as long as I was not divulging deliberations of the committee and I felt that it was an issue that affected members of the committee of which I am chair, I would put a view to Hon Sue Ellery, as our leader, as part of those deliberations. I would also discuss it with the other members of that committee. If the matter was about the deliberations of a committee, I would do that only if I had the committee's permission. I suspect that although this matter will impact on the committee, the majority of the discussion would have occurred outside the committee process. I would probably have talked about the matter with my fellow committee members before I expressed to Hon Sue Ellery the view that I did not want something to come to my committee. I think I have explained that clearly.

The decision the house has to make today is clear. I feel sorry for Hon Rick Mazza because I suspect he has simply had to take what the government was prepared to give him, which is to refer this matter to the public administration committee with a late reporting date. A member must take what he can get when he has only one vote in this place, but I suspect the real motivation of the government is to try to push this issue away and try to bury it. Only time will tell whether that is the case.

For what it is worth, that is my view on how these matters should be dealt with. I hope this debate introduces a little bit more corporate knowledge in this place and that it helps members to understand that this place will only work when we work together and cooperate outside, behind the chair and within committees. Committees will only become dysfunctional if the process of "we have got the numbers" is used. I accept that is the case when we deal with legislation, but it should not be the case with committees. In the last Parliament, that happened on one committee in which a lot of new members were not mentored or enlightened by the older members on that committee. Hopefully, members have learnt a few lessons so that this house operates better in the next three years of this Parliament.

HON PETER KATSAMBANIS (North Metropolitan) [2.56 pm]: I rise to speak to both the motion and the proposed amendment. At the outset I commend Hon Rick Mazza for this motion on a topic he feels passionately about. I hazard to guess that it is a topic that the people who voted to get Hon Rick Mazza to this place also feel very passionately and strongly about. The heart of this motion is the control of pest animals on public lands and how to administer public lands to best remove pest animals so that that land is available for better uses. We have heard the various views from members about whether it is a good idea that regulated and licensed recreational hunters should go onto these lands to assist in the control of pest animals. It is a vexed topic that has ignited passions on both sides of the argument. One side suggests that pest animals are a major problem and that public officials who are charged with the administration of public lands are the best people to control pest animals. The damage that pest animals cause to both public and private land is well known. Those pests destroy not only land and the environment but also other animals; they create problems in water supplies, attack human beings and generally make the land they are on very unpleasant for all users. That is generally accepted by most people. On the other side of the argument from those who would like to see recreational hunters assist in the control of pest animals on lands are those who do not think that hunting animals is the right way to go or do not believe in any form of a reduction in pest animals. In the middle sits most of the public. I fall into the middle category, because I am prepared to listen to the arguments and to read and hear informed comment about whether or not it is a good idea. I am also prepared to find out more about how we can regulate this sort of system if it ever comes into being. For the great of majority of people in the middle, me included, who would like to find out more before this issue is either dismissed or progressed, what better way of finding out that information than through an inquiry by a parliamentary committee? A parliamentary committee would help inform this chamber and the public of Western Australia about what goes on in other places, including other states of Australia, what could potentially happen in Western Australia, the associated risks and, potentially, the sort of regulatory framework that would be most appropriate should we introduce a recreational hunting system to assist in the control of pest

animals. It is a good idea to have a parliamentary committee look into this further and provide information so that all of us can make a more informed judgement.

It was open to Hon Rick Mazza to move a motion calling on the government to introduce such a system or to move a motion directing the government to introduce this sort of system in Western Australia. In the time honoured tradition of Parliament and executive government, we would have talked about it for a little while, members would have voted one way or the other and, whether it was passed or defeated, it would have gone into the great ether of executive government and possibly disappeared forever. Instead, Hon Rick Mazza decided to utilise this place in its best possible form. He decided that a properly constituted committee of this Parliament should investigate this matter further and look into the aspects I spoke of earlier and provide information to enable more informed decision-making, which would include members of this place and, hopefully—because a report would become public—the public of Western Australia. That decision-making would eventually inform executive government as it seeks to control pest animals on lands, including public lands, across Western Australia. We already know that some methods of controlling pest animals on private land are done through recreational hunters to the benefit of both hunters and the owners of the private land. Contemplating the use of recreational hunters on public lands is a worthy consideration. In his contribution to this debate, Hon Rick Mazza highlighted quite clearly—he can correct me if I am wrong—that what he is contemplating is not recreational hunting in national parks or the like. I note that Hon Rick Mazza is indicating that I am correct in my paraphrasing of his comments. I want to ensure that issues about national parks do not arise in the consideration of this motion as we move forward. Once we have established that it is an appropriate and well-calibrated motion that raises questions that need further inquiry, hopefully, we will come up with a good and full report that looks into all the issues.

The next question is: what is the most appropriate committee? The motion as originally put suggested the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs as the most appropriate committee. Having sat and listened to the debate after Hon Helen Morton moved an amendment that the appropriate committee is the Standing Committee on Public Administration, I decided to inform myself a bit further about the functions of each of the proposed committees to determine what I think is the most appropriate committee. Paragraph 2.3 of schedule 1 of the Legislative Council's standing orders reveals that the functions of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs are to inquire into and report on —

- (a) any public or private policy, practice, scheme, arrangement, or project whose implementation, or intended implementation, within the limits of the State is affecting, or may affect, the environment;
- (b) any Bill referred by the Council; and
- (c) petitions.

There is nothing about public affairs, only the environment.

Subparagraphs (b) and (c) do not really apply in this case, so we will look at subparagraph (a). Is it the most appropriate committee? It is all about inquiring into the effect on the environment, which appears, based on the intent of paragraph (a) of Hon Rick Mazza's motion, to be extremely restrictive. It points to the fact that the committee would consider only environmental issues. I understand that "environment" can be interpreted extremely widely. Paragraph (a) of the motion—I am paraphrasing it as I go along—refers to looking at the possible economic, cultural and recreational benefits to the community as well as the environment. At the heart of the motion is how we administer public lands and how we deal with pest animals on public lands. It is not really an environmental issue, although the impact on the environment will be one of the many impacts to be considered by an appropriate committee.

Having determined that the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs is, by its own terms of reference, relatively restricted as to what it can look at with regards to this motion and the principle, concept and system contemplated in the motion, we need to consider the Standing Committee on Public Administration's terms of reference which, as Hon Simon O'Brien pointed out in his contribution, has among its powers the ability to inquire into and report on the structure, efficiency and effectiveness of the system of public administration. Quite clearly, the system of public administration includes the system of public administration on public lands. It leaves all those other matters to which I referred earlier and to which are referred in the motion open for inquiry. It has a much broader capacity to look into the economic, cultural and recreational benefits for the community. Importantly the Standing Committee on Public Administration also has other functions relating to principles of procedural fairness in any decision-making and the existence, adequacy and availability of merit and judicial review of administrative acts or decisions. That is pretty critical too, because if the committee inquiring into this matter goes down the path of looking at the proposal and thinks that it is probably not a bad idea, what sorts of controls will be put around it? Once we consider what sorts of systems and regulatory

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

environment we put around the possible controlling of pest animals on public lands through recreational hunting, we will need to consider things such as administrative decision-making; that is, how will we issue licences, who will issue licences and what rights of appeal will be open to people if licences are refused or removed? What sort of penalty regime will be introduced to deal with any infractions by those who are licensed to go on to public lands and, again, in that sort of penalty regime, will procedural fairness be applied in the original decision-making and will judicial review of the acts exist and so forth? In any plain reading of the functions of the two committees, because they are the two committees presented to us as alternatives and because I do not propose in any way to throw in a third alternative —

Hon Ken Travers: Do you want estimates to do it?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I will not pick up on that interjection apart from saying that I am the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations and Hon Ken Travers is the Chair. I do not consider that that would be the appropriate committee to look into this matter. I firmly believe that this is a matter worth looking into, as I said from the outset. I do not have a fixed opinion on it. I remain to be convinced that this is a good idea, and I believe that a full and thorough, open, public inquiry by a committee of this place is one of the best ways to find out more about these things. Based on all that, the functions and operations of the two alternative committees point me very clearly down the path of the Standing Committee on Public Administration. I have no doubt that either of the two committees contemplated in this motion would do a great job in looking at this matter, and I have no doubt that if Hon Rick Mazza is co-opted as a member of either of these committees—as is contemplated by the body of the motion—he would make a significant contribution to the deliberations of that committee. He clearly has a lot of knowledge and a passion for the area, and he represents a body of people who also have that deeper knowledge and passion for this sort of recreational hunting to act as pest control on public lands. His contribution would be invaluable to the committee's deliberations. For my purposes, having looked at the functions of both committees, it is evident to me that the terms of reference or the functions of the Standing Committee on Public Administration give us broader scope to look at all aspects of this issue and not focus on just the environmental aspects, as important as they may be, because I daresay they are probably not the most important aspect.

Hon Ken Travers: That will kill it. If they cannot overcome that test, that will be the decider that it does not go ahead —

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I do not want to tie the hands of any committee in this place generally as to what might be the decider for going ahead with a proposal such as this. It may well be that the environmental benefits are terrific. We know that introduced species that are not native to our environment cause environmental damage. Wild pigs, wild camels and wild goats not native to our sensitive environment could and do cause massive environmental damage; and recently we heard of the damage that wild horses can do. Irrespective of the damage to the environment, there may be other drivers, and some members have described those drivers in the debate that may lead people to make the decision that we should go ahead with recreational hunting as a form of pest animal control on these public lands. That is not my position. As I said, my position is that I want to have more information about this before I make a decision, but I acknowledge that some people may have a different view.

Hon Kate Doust: Then maybe the member should go on the committee as well.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I do not need to be on the committee. I am very happy to receive the report of the appropriate parliamentary committee and to consider that report when it is provided to this place. I have faith in my colleagues from all sides of the house that they can do a good job without me. I do not necessarily need to be on the committee in order to properly inform myself once the committee's report is tabled. I know my colleagues will do a good job in looking at all aspects of this matter. I want the broadest possible inquiry. I want to know about the sensitivities that people have around the concept of, effectively, shooting wild animals. Those sensitivities may be held by people who have the protection of our fragile environment as a really strong personal concern, and I appreciate that, so I do not want to see a narrow inquiry focusing on only environmental issues. I want all those broad issues explored, and all the information provided to this place and to the public so that we can make an informed decision, which is why, again, all this points to the Public Administration Committee being the most appropriate body to look into this matter.

In closing, I reiterate my comments and I thank Hon Rick Mazza for bringing this matter to the house. Being a new member like he is, I appreciate that some of the debate here today and previously on the motion has taken us into cul-de-sacs we really do not need to go into. My position on this matter is that it is a good idea for a parliamentary committee to look into this proposal further. I believe the Public Administration Committee is the best committee to do that for the reasons I have outlined. It is also a good idea for Hon Rick Mazza to be co-opted onto that committee for the purposes of this inquiry. The reporting time frame is sensible and gives the committee the right amount of time to look at what is happening in other states, to take public submissions, and

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 27 November 2013]

p6642e-6655a

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

to make inquiries. To pick up on what Hon Ken Travers said about some of the contacts, I do not think this is burying the idea at all. This motion is elevating the status of this idea—this concept, this principle—to one that is being properly inquired into by a parliamentary committee to see, firstly, whether it is a good idea and, secondly, if it is a good idea, what sort of controls we should have around it. I look forward to the committee, hopefully, on the vote of this place, being given the opportunity to conduct this inquiry. In due course, by 26 June 2014, I look forward to reading the report of the committee with great interest.

Amendment put and passed.

Motion, as Amended

HON DONNA FARAGHER (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.19 pm]: I rise to make a couple of comments with respect to the now amended motion moved by Hon Rick Mazza. I have listened with interest outside the debate on which committee this matter should be referred to—if that is what the house decides—but more particularly with regard to the more substantive issue of recreational hunting.

My comments will come from the perspective of two key areas: issues surrounding the environment and issues surrounding safety and risk. I want to add a couple of comments so that, should this issue be referred to a committee, my comments might be considered by the committee. First and foremost, if this issue is referred to the committee, we need to be clear about what reserves we are talking about. I know Hon Rick Mazza has said that state forest and unallocated crown lands are the type of lands on which he considers recreational hunting could take place and national parks are not part of that. I accept that, but the fact is other lands form part of the conservation estate. I raise this because it is all very well to refer in a general sense to conservation reserves—I have heard members talk about conservation reserves in general—but that can cause confusion. Is the member saying—I do not believe he is—that recreational hunting could occur in other lands such as conservation parks or existing nature reserves? I presume not, but I think that needs to be clarified first in any deliberation of this matter.

As part of the conservation estate there are state forests, timber reserves, national parks, conservation parks, existing and proposed nature reserves, and freehold land that is vested with the executive director of the Department of Parks and Wildlife and other miscellaneous reserves. I appreciate that Hon Rick Mazza is not referring to national parks but I have to ask: what necessarily makes a state forest any different? I make that point from a recreational point of view. I recall a member when making their contribution saying that if recreational shooting was in national parks, there would be some concern about safety for families who perhaps take their children there. The issue is, though, that much like national parks a number of state forests are heavily recreated. It is my view—I took this view when I was the Minister for Environment—that national parks should not be seen as reserves that are locked up from the general public. I copped a bit of criticism for that, generally from green groups. I took the view that first and foremost national parks are absolutely there for the protection of our native flora and fauna. They are also there for people to enjoy.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: If we did not allow people to visit national parks and reserves to enjoy what these very special places have to offer, I would be concerned that some people might not value their importance. My view is that many more visitors, in a controlled way of course, should be able to visit these parks and recreation areas and that includes state forests. But, of course, by encouraging people to visit national parks, state forests and other reserves, the number of people who access them is increased, so in light of this motion, that needs to be considered from a safety point of view. The fact is, across our conservation estate—I am going from memory here—there are 11 million visits a year. In some of the state forests people go bushwalking, camping and bike riding. There is the Munda Bididi Trail and there is the Bibbulmun Track. I know Hon Rick Mazza would not suggest that recreational hunting take place in heavily populated areas but, again, should the committee be asked to consider this matter, it needs to be clear that state forest is certainly part of the recreation landscape. They are not two separate entities from a recreation point of view. As I say, the Bibbulmun Track and the Munda Bididi Trail go through some densely populated areas and some very thick forest. Therefore, obviously, there is potential for tension and a risk to safety should Hon Rick Mazza's proposal succeed. Obviously, that is the issue concerning safety. I also appreciate that Hon Rick Mazza would suggest a strict regulatory and licensing regime be in place. But I say again that there are some 11 million visits to reserves and parks across Western Australia's estate each year. I believe safety is incredibly important, irrespective of how well intentioned and responsible a recreational hunter may be. I appreciate that Hon Rick Mazza would also agree with that.

There is of course a very particular concern from a purely environmental perspective. As Minister Morton noted in her contribution to the debate last week—people are talking in part as though this does not happen already—

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 27 November 2013]

p6642e-6655a

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

the Department of Parks and Wildlife already has protocols in place to engage and approve organised and trained recreational hunting and sporting shooter groups to assist with feral animal control programs on department-managed lands. I recall that that is a longstanding arrangement. The department uses accredited groups to assist with the control of feral animals. As in the midwest examples there has been support to deal with feral goats and feral pigs in the south west. These are a couple of examples that come to mind. Some people might argue that those I call cooperative programs are not effective or are too small in scope. Perhaps that needs to be looked at if it is an issue being raised by sporting shooters groups. I cannot answer that question, but it is a useful question to ask. Although some might say it is too small in scope, the other side of the argument is that through a controlled program there is departmental oversight and supervision. Some people might say that oversight should not be required. The last thing I would like to see is—I think the minister referred to this also—a negative consequence in light of other controlled programs that might be operating. That could result in an escalation of other problems we are dealing with, and dieback—Hon Jim Chown mentioned this in his contribution—is an example of that. Dieback is certainly present in some state forests, exactly the place where recreational hunting is proposed in this motion. The simple fact is that no matter how careful we are, dieback is being spread and can and does have significant consequences. I am not suggesting that recreational shooters would cause the greatest distribution of dieback. We know that a range of activities can lead to the spread of dieback, such as earthmoving activities, dirty vehicles and road projects, and it is very important that management plans are in place. It is important that specific dieback plans are in place and undertaken. People who access dieback-prone areas need to take appropriate measures and steps to manage the spread, however inadvertent it may be. We would need to know whether people accessing those areas know those plans, how it would be monitored and how it would be adhered to. They are the sorts of issues that I think need to be looked at.

I think it is important that these issues are comprehensively considered, should the house decide that this motion be referred to a committee. I am sure they would be. They are, I think, the two main issues that would be addressed by the committee, outside of other issues that Hon Jim Chown and Hon Robin Chapple talked about such as costs, licensing and all those sorts of things. I do not intend to go through all that today. In short, I take a similar view to the minister, which is that increased access by recreational shooters beyond those specific control programs I have already referred to should not be supported. I believe there is a potential for environmental harm and a potential safety risk and they are my overriding reasons for speaking against the motion, but I thought it was important to make a couple of comments before we vote on it.

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [3.31 pm]: — in reply: Firstly, I would like to thank members for their contributions to this debate. There has been quite a bit of discussion regarding some of the issues that concern members. I would like to particularly thank Hon Paul Brown and Hon Peter Katsambanis for supporting the motion and taking the time to do some research on this matter; they have obviously spent some time looking into it. Predictably, there have been some hand-wringing arguments and alarmist emotional rhetoric about safety and other things, and I accept that. Safety is one of those things that is of concern to members and the community.

I want to discuss the regulated systems in place in other states of Australia that are functioning successfully with minimal issues around safety. After the unfortunate shark attack on the weekend, I was reading in the paper that there is a one in two million chance that someone will be taken by a shark; however, in the past five years far more people have been taken by sharks than there have been firearm accidents, although every weekend on private land in Western Australia and all around Australia people are hunting in state forests using firearms.

There was quite a lot of reference to the New South Wales Game Council; Hon Jim Chown's contribution mentioned a lot of the issues around the Game Council in New South Wales, and I want to clear up a few things about that. The New South Wales Game Council had been operating in state forests since 2006 with, may I say, a 100 per cent safety record in that it had been incident-free. The Game Council was suspended on 4 July this year following a report by Steve Dunn, but the reasons for the suspension of the Game Council were more to do with its governance. It was not a government department; it was a private organisation funded by the government that had been delegated certain powers—a little like the RSPCA. Following the report, the New South Wales government thought there were some governance issues with the Game Council, so it is doing a review of hunting in state forests in New South Wales. As I understand it, the Game Council will be then be put under the jurisdiction of the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries and rebirthed next month or early next year in very much the same form as it was. So, hunting in New South Wales state forests will continue. Part of Steve Dunn's report states —

This review has found the Game Council has achieved significant results towards achieving its objects and functions, and this should be recognised.

The report also states —

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 27 November 2013]

p6642e-6655a

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

The idea of responsible and orderly hunting of game and pest animals is a worthy goal and the program has made some good steps towards achieving it.

The other thing I want to touch on is the notion that reducing feral animals in an area is a wasted effort because of their ability to breed back. Anybody who has studied relative densities of animals and how that operates would know, through simple mathematics, that if we reduce the number of a pest animal like foxes to 100 in an area and they breed three times a year—bear in mind that we will never eradicate pest animals from an area; we can only ever manage them and reduce populations—then obviously we will have 300 foxes to deal with in 12 months. But if nothing is done and 1 000 foxes remain in that area, they would be out of control within that 12-month period. Reducing fox numbers through recreational hunting, baiting programs and the use of professional shooters is part of the armoury, if you like, in maintaining control over the population of those animals. North America, Europe and Canada use hunting as a major form of animal control and have built enormous industries from it. As I said before, in North America hunting is worth \$87 billion—an enormous amount of money.

The discussion also covered the use of amateur hunters and professional shooters, as if amateur hunters were in some way far inferior. The only real difference between an amateur and a professional is that one gets paid. I can assure members that many amateurs who are motivated for reasons such as recreation and interest activity take their hunting and the way they conduct themselves very seriously. The Department of Parks and Wildlife conducts a program for accrediting professional shooters, and the level of training involved is no more than the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (WA) Hunting and Conservation club does in accrediting its members who must achieve a certain level of proficiency before they are allowed to engage in field activities. Hon Peter Katsambanis touched on a few of those things.

Members of the house are a little reticent about this motion because they do not fully understand the issues, which is why it is a good idea that the motion be referred to a committee. If that happens, it will be fully investigated and we can have a good look at the benefits or otherwise of recreational hunting and how it may fit into Western Australia. In Western Australia we have volunteer firefighters, ambulance crews and State Emergency Service people and they all do a great job of serving the community. I do not see how volunteer conservation hunters could be viewed any differently.

As to which forest blocks or conservation areas may or may not be used, the New South Wales Game Council system involves assessed and declared forests. So, it will not be happening on the Bibbulmun Track or on the edge of a town site; it will not be happening anywhere where there may be interaction with many people. In New South Wales the forest blocks—there are 215 or thereabouts—are assessed and declared, and permission is then given by the department for hunters to shoot in those forests.

I turn to the costs involved in reducing the number of feral animals in certain areas. In a question without notice I referred to a report that indicated the cost per animal. One of the highest costs was the eradication of feral pigs, which was as high as \$605 per animal. Just to give members some idea, a person I know who lives in the Pinjarra region was asked by a landholder to assist him because he had a lot of feral pigs coming onto his land and, after contacting the Department of Parks and Wildlife and others, no-one really wanted to help him. Mike—we will call him Mike—is retired and has been a lifelong hunter. He took up the task and over the past 12 months has eradicated 98 pigs off that land. The work is extremely labour intensive. He put his own time, money and resources into dealing with those pigs.

Hon Helen Morton: Did he put them in the freezer?

Hon RICK MAZZA: Some he did. He took the ones in good condition for meat, but others were not suitable. That number of pigs, 98, multiplied by \$605 is \$59 290, which is the amount it would have cost the state using other methods to eradicate those pigs. But in this case it was done for free and at no cost to the state. Another person I know, Mark of Ferguson Valley, does not have as much time as Mike, as he has a business to run, so his time is limited, but he has taken 53 pigs in the past 12 months, which equates to \$32 000 of eradication done at no charge to the state. The interesting thing is that actual live animals were taken in the count. When the Department of Parks and Wildlife and other departments do counts, they also include foetuses within sows. They shoot one sow, but they might count eight. These were actual pigs taken.

How many foxes are shot by recreational hunters in a year? Who would know? It is thousands and thousands. If they were not taken by recreational hunters, we do not know what the cost would be to the state to eradicate them. Each year the Red Card for Red Fox program takes around 5 000 foxes. Unfortunately, the question on notice answer I was given did not provide figures on how much eradication of each fox costs, but I am sure it is considerable.

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 27 November 2013]

p6642e-6655a

Hon Darren West; Hon Liz Behjat; President; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Peter Katsambanis;
Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Rick Mazza

There are some major savings. We are talking about a structured system and referring this motion to a committee so that the house can get back an informed, reasoned and researched report so that members can read it and make an informed decision. As I said when I started this debate, I ask members to keep an open mind. I also ask that the motion be referred to a committee. I commend this motion to the house and ask members to give it due consideration so that a researched and factual report can be produced in due course.

Question put and passed.