

Nepean Hunters Club Inc. Submission in response to the Natural Resources Commission Draft Report on Pest Animal Management Review.

Foreword;

I write this Submission on behalf of the 800 odd members of Nepean Hunters Club Inc., where I am President, and in my capacity of this Office, I attended the NRC discussion at Mantra Parramatta on May 13th, 2016.

Nepean Hunters Club Inc. has been in existence since 1970, and are Western Sydney's leading Hunt Club that provides Hunter Education and Hunting opportunities to its members, as well as providing Game Animal Management and Pest Control to Land Holders, specializing in the Nepean Basin area.

We are Founding Members of Federation of Hunting Clubs (FOHC), have Approved Hunting Organisation status with NSW DPI Game Licensing Unit, as well as NSW Firearms Registry Approval for Firearms Training and License Testing.

We attend many shows and expos to encourage the wider public to get involved with Hunting, and to educate them about the sustainable harvest and use of the resources we hunt.

1. Reclassifying Deer as a Pest Species;

Nepean Hunters cannot accept this reclassification on several grounds.

- a) During the discussion at Parramatta, it was mentioned by one of Commissioner Keniry's panel that Property Owners could get easy approval to legally cull Deer on their properties, and that Property Owners could NOT get Hunters to participate in culling activities. We refute these two statements as Nepean Hunters have made several successful applications to NSW Game Council to suspend regulations regarding Shooting over Baits, Shooting under Lights and Shooting out of Season to cull Deer on properties in the Nepean Basin. We have also advertised in Rural Press, conducted letterbox drops in area where Deer are prevalent to gain access to properties to help Land Owners with some success.
- b) Pest Classification of Deer could lead to Animal Welfare issues. In particular, if Deer were targeted as Pests, and the proposed removing of the GLicense were to happen, then many Fawns would be left to starve to death if their Mothers were shot. Under current DPI GLU regulations, any LACTATING Does and Hinds shot must then see the Hunter(s) initiate a search for fawns to be humanely dispatched. Dropping the current standards will see untrained hunters leaving fawns on the ground to perish.
- c) Pest Classification will see Deer targeted with poisons such as 1080 and Cyanide. We view this course of action as inhumane, and a risk to other invertebrates through the consumption of carcasses of poisoned animals. Wedge Tailed Eagles and Quolls were severely affected in the 60's and 70's through the eating of baits and baited animals. Also, recent studies of Trout in the Tasman and Murchison regions of New Zealand have shown concentrations of **1080 in Trout to be in excess of New Zealand Food Safety Authority safe limits**, as a result of testing trout commissioned by NZ Department of Conservation and undertaken by the Cawthron Institute. The trout became affected by eating mice that had eaten 1080 laced carrots and pellets dropped by air to target Deer.

2. Recreational Hunting is not an effective control Method

Nepean Hunters Club Inc. has conducted Game Management plans for Landholders in the Nepean Basin for several years. During this time, our records show that the Deer population of Fallow Deer has dropped. This current year, our members have taken 81 Fallow, whilst last year, on the same properties, a total of 153 Fallow were taken. This management plan takes the Hinds and Fawns out as primary targets, then Stags as secondary targets. It is proving effective on these properties, and there has been no subsequent transient population growth on neighboring properties that we have access to.

It is also extremely important to note that this has occurred at **no cost to the landholder**.

3. Engagement of Property Owners and costs.

It was spoken at the Parramatta meeting that Property Owners would be expected to help in reducing Pest Animal numbers, and that the land holding lot size would be reduced so that more landowners would be bound to control pests on their land.

There are two issues we see with this proposal.

- a) More costs put on land owners due to them having to source methods of control, and poisoning and its inherent non targeted victims will increase due to the risk of not complying to LLS directives
- b) It was discussed that it would be a recommendation by the NRC to see all stakeholders take a role in the solution, but it would appear that only one stakeholder, the Landowner will be footing the bill. There is no cost sharing scenario with this directive.

4. Public Land Hunting Model and the Cost Effectiveness it provides

Why are we not undertaking to utilize an already established network of trained Volunteers under the DPI GLU model?

With over 20,000 R-License hunters available, and ready to go, why are we championing the SPC Model with only 90 odd participants? Surely the cost effectiveness of the R-License Scheme shows the inadequacies of the SPC model, and that given that the SPC was a political football, how can the tenure of SPC be relied on when it was firstly rejected in absolute unanimous favor as unworkable by all Major Hunting organisations in NSW, including the Organisation now conducting the SPC, that being the SSAA. One could hardly agree that the SPC is cost effective, and after being told by Cmr. Keniry that we should overlook the initial startup costs and look at current running costs, we find that statement totally misleading. Any business case based on a 3 year tenure would look at the full breakdown of costs incurred to give a real cost of the scheme, the same as any business would do their budgeting and business planning to see whether it was financially viable. Try and get a loan application approved by a bank without providing a cost recovery plan that that showed return on investment. You can't get approval without including startup costs. Perhaps the fact that it's taxpayers' money from the Government's purse may cause this oversight.

Summation

Nepean Hunters Club Inc. reject in whole the Drafts plans to reclassify Deer as a pest animal.

We also reject statements that claim Recreational Hunting is not effective, and we ask that the NSW DPI GLU be included in any PUBLIC or PRIVATE LAND pest control programs. It is quite evident that R-License hunting is cost effective, safe to all stakeholders and can be easily managed, given its Best Practice methodology.

One area that we have questions regarding is invasive species and pest species classification and how it is determined. This aligns to the fact that there are some stakeholders that see Deer in the same light as a Carp in our waterways, nothing but a pest, damaging to our Native species habitat and wellbeing. But, just for the purpose of clarity and fair discussion, there would be a huge uprising if NRC were to declare Trout a pest species, given that they too predate on our Native Galaxids and other species indigenous to our waterways. Vast millions of dollars are spent on the farming and stocking of Trout fingerlings, Commercial Trout Aquaculture for Human Consumption, fishing tackle and various other reasons. Trout are even awarded Trophy Lakes and Streams status by NSW DPI Fisheries, when they too predate on our Native Aquatic life. Could it be that the Government would have to compensate these businesses if they were reclassified? We would really like an answer to that particular question, as it would really help us to acknowledge the process that determines what makes a Pest Species.

Thank you for allowing us to take part in the Public process of consultation, even if it was poorly planned. Having these meetings at 10:30 am on a business day makes it extremely difficult to get people that work along to these forums, and thus I feel that there may well have been less input that these processes deserve. It does exclude a lot of people from attending, and it should be noted that this was viewed as being deliberate in limiting the number of people attending.

With Regards,

Peter Johnson

President,

Nepean Hunters Club Incorporated.