

Natural Resources Commission.  
GPO. Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001.

Re: Pest Annual Management Review.

Introduction.

Dear Sir or Madame.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the above review.

I introduce myself as, Stewart Husband, a registered NSW Firearms owner with a long history of assisting to control/eradicate Pest/Feral animals on Private land.

The reference is not to be confused with Sport.

My history includes the foundation forming of the Hunter District Hunting Club Inc. with a membership of over 3000 persons and carrying a Public Liability Policy of \$10 million cover and a recently retired 7 year Secretary of said Club.

My Submission focuses on the " Guiding Principles" as indicated in table 1. And the "Summary of Responsibilities" where I am able to comment. My comments should be read as a response to each question raised in these sections.

Where I feel unable to comment, I have included "NC" ie: No Comment.

Roles and Responsibilities.

1. Pest management for Land Owners is a private matter, with many Land Owners willing to allow some known hunters onto their Land.

When it comes to State, Regional, Local, the "Control" should be totally under DPI.

Example, DPI took over from Game Council NSW and is doing a great job ( communicated to all stakeholders by Amy Ware) BUT their hands are tied when it comes to Nat. Parks ( which seems to have its own agenda) which falls well short of controlling Feral/Pest species.

2. DPI controls an established programme taken over and expanded from the GC NSW and it works well predominantly in NSW State Forests.

3. DPI takeover of Regional Game Managers established by GC NSW, they were doing a great job.

4. a.

Go to the Root of the problem.

No point trying to eradicate in scattered locations when Pest/Ferals are free to breed and spread from untreated areas in Nat. Parks.

As a State we need to bring it all together and I would suggest, Involve Hunting Clubs more often or consistently to work with DPI with the process of, Identifying, eradicating, reporting.

This coordination would be more effective if this responsibility was given to DPI Regional Game Managers to control.

b.

Assist Land Owners to employ "Trapping Systems" ie: pig traps, goat trap etc. help fund ?

Encourage the harvesting of wild goat.

Introduce a bounty on Ferals such as foxes and cats. ie: Sheep Graziers can lose 30pc of new lambs to fox and pig.

5.

The trigger lies in the realisation and acceptance of the actual cost of Feral/Pest species to:  
The Land Owner.

The State Dept. affected.

6.

Once again, Nat. Parks, feral/pest species freely migrate from NP's onto Private land holdings and when chased, retire back to their safe haven.

A user is not permitted to enter to eradicate said Pests. Turn your back, back they come.

7.

Extend the access and authority to the DPI Regional Game Managers.

8.

I firmly believe the programmes developed by GC NSW and now DPI controlled, worked extremely well in State Forests, BUT always came up against a Blank Wall with NP's NSW cooperation on controlled hunter entry to eradicate said Pests.

In fairness to NP Management, in being seen to do something may have involved SSAA on this subject.

NOTE. Hunter involvement is Commonplace in South Australia with NP Rangers in eradication programmes, same in the Kalbarri district of WA. I have witnessed both.

Constructive Comment.

It doesn't take a lot to work out, "in the interest of Public Safety" to restrict access to the Parks during the course of an eradication event.

Also consider, the number of NP's in NSW which are "Locked up" and Public access denied, ( Ref: Coolah NP Cattle Creek Rd, Cassilis. NSW)

(1) where Public Safety is not an issue.

(2) Feral pests are Free to breed undisturbed.

(3) Ferals are free to leave the NP and enter Private Land holdings, which they do consistently and return to their safe haven when challenged.

Compliance and Enforcement.

Land Owners can't be expected to be responsible the ingress of Pest animals onto their holdings when said animals encroach from uncontrolled locations.

Effective audits mean a cost to a Dept. to monitor.

New offences mean more bureaucracy.

Increased penalties mean "blame someone". This is a blight on the user when in effect the problem can be and in some areas, has been, created by Departments which, don't permit eradication assistance.

Shared Ownership.

1. Good practice = involvement and trust, can only be by "feet on the ground". This is already available with DPI Game Managers. Said GM's to be permitted, encouraged to feel out Land Owners on assistance required.

2. NC

3. "Why Not" not enough feet on the ground of authorised GM's to address all the issues. Where are they welcome, NOT in my Park.

4. NC

5. "HOW" Direct contact with user groups.

6. NC

7. "Are there Opportunities" YES, With involvement of user groups.

I have commented on User Groups reporting back to GM's on Pest findings, results etc., vegetation reports etc. it should be noted, very little of this type of reporting happens/takes place with the average walker/user etc., in NP's.

8. Once again, feet on the ground, GM's to meet and encourage Land Owners to organise responsible persons to assist with eradication work. All done at "NO COST" to the Land Owner, "COST NEUTRAL" to a Govt Department.

Priority Pest Species.

1.

I think Focus is determined by region, ie: in the Hunter Valley, Feral Pigs, deer and wild dogs are a priority. Other locations might prioritise the fox. ie: lambing areas, poultry farmers.

Eg. One poultry man I know is losing 18 birds a night to foxes.

3

2. GM consultation with land owners in this instance.

3. GM coordination of Licenced hunters to seek out said species.
4. NC.

#### Landscape Approach.

1. Give GM's, "Control" to inform, advise regions of his Dept. intention.
2. Is achievable but not limited to one specie.
3. Allow access (feet on the ground) and responsible reporting back to GM.
4. Education, vast but slow.  
Networks, Responsible Hunting Clubs.
5. How Can ? By GM involvement with the users, ie: getting to know/trust.
6. I have written on this subject before, user would report back to GM on,  
Animal control, weed control, fire hazard etc.

#### Emerging Issues.

##### Without Prejudice.

1. To me, the most emerging issue is the determined involvement of animal liberationists etc., who in most cases have NO personal exposure to the situation existing with the need for Pest Control. I see the same with the minute number of Bush Walkers who declare, they don't want to be shot. If eradication was in progress the locations would be closed to the Public. It happens in other States. I see the same bushwalkers going out with no emergency gear, becoming lost and costing this State, millions of dollars pa to rescue them. Fact.
2. NC
3. This is a very critical subject.
  - (a)  
I am a hunter with firearms, I ensure every shot is a humane despatch. It's all about shot placement.
  - (b)  
To the "Anti Hunter", who can see the need to reduce/eradicate Pest/Feral animals etc., will opt almost every time for "Baiting", there are of course the element who want to catch them all and Neuter them. Clever eh !  
Baiting is the most destructively cruel way to kill any animal and EVERY animal which comes in contact with its carcass. ie: 1080, using meat, pigs, dogs, foxes, will die a terribly slow death and then our Eagles, Hawkes, goanna, all feed on the carcass and they die.  
Same with herbivore baits. And then the decomposing carcass is subject to rain runoff, and the poison goes into our waterways. where does it end ?
4.
 

Yes. Encourage the harvest.

It is/was common place for locations, due to numbers to be Commercially outfitted with "Chillers", ie: Coolrooms for the collection of wild pig carcass under controlled conditions for the European Export market.

It is currently common place for Land Owners, managers, employees to muster wild goat and send to market. One Land Manager I personally know in the NSW Cassilis district has harvested over 800 wild goats this year and hasn't even scratched the surface, all have come out of the NP.
5.
 

As long as Pest/Ferals are free to roam uncontrolled in State owned areas, the answer is "NO".
6.
 

Drones are very "Unwelcome" to many Land Owners as an invasion of privacy.

How does one know, "is it armed", is it counting "how many cattle I've got", how much money in your bank account ?

#### Adequate Resourcing.

1. I firmly believe funding to NP's in NSW is extremely inadequate based on the Excessive number of Parks created to appease a section of the Parliament, resulting in Park Gates being locked to block entry and because the budgets required to maintain aren't there. Fire Trails according to law I believe cannot be closed so are redesignated to "walking tracks/ trails". It is as simple as this, we don't have the population to provide the taxation required to budget the number of Parks in NSW.
2. NC.
3. NC.
4. NC.
5. This opportune time is fantastic, revert back to the DPI Game Manager. Get the GM to involve NSW Hunting Clubs in organised hunting programmes in consultation with Regional areas, ie: Land Owners who need help. FUNDING. Forget it, these Clubs and members are "Self Funded" and willing to help. Biggest lead here is the NSW Federation of Hunting Clubs.
6. NC.
7. NC.
8. As I said in 5, Hunting Club members are SELF FUNDED and may only need to pay an application cost, "Not Excessive" to register their interest. If pig catchers spend time and money on removing pigs etc. for the purpose of gain, they should not be penalised.

#### Knowledge Building.

1. NC.
2. NC.
3. NC.
4. I feel this type of accreditation would exist with DPI, left over from GC NSW. ref: Amy Ware DPI
5. NC.
6. NC.
7. NC.
8. NC.

#### CONCLUSION.

In participating in this Review, I have endeavoured to offer Constructive Comment to questions raised and NC, no comment where I don't feel qualified.

With so many Departments involved, I feel this review is going to have a lot of hurdles to jump to achieve cooperation between areas.

My submission is aimed at "Control" and in reference to Private Land, Crown Land, State Forests and National Parks is bias towards "Controlled Firearms use" as a demonstrable Public Safety Benefit while achieving a reduction in Specie numbers.

Trapping, the location and Setting of Pest traps would be beneficial in all of these areas.

Costs. Materials for said trapping would in most cases on Public Land be the responsibility of the relevant Dept. OR in conjunction with user groups from the Public. ( there's two sides to a street) Land Owners may need financial assistance in this time of drought.

In accordance with the Guiding Principles, through the Game Managers and with the cooperation of the end users the impact to Government Departments and the Cost Effectiveness could be " Cost Neutral".

Use of Drones. Controlled use of Drones may be beneficial to State a Forest and National Parks BUT, considered by many Landowners as a total infringement of their privacy, disturbance to livestock etc.

Once again, thank you for allowing my submission.

Yours faithfully.

Stewart Husband.