

ASJ

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

The political voice of the SSAA

So, do we feel safer now that \$60 million has been spent on buying back handguns from licensed firearm owners?

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In this issue

ASJ

**The political voice
of the SSAA**

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A word from the President

Handgun buy-back

The handgun confiscation process has now or is shortly coming to a close in most states of Australia, with some jurisdictions extending the process because of logistical problems. The Association has committed considerable financial effort to counteract the effects of this legislation on not only SSAA members, but all pistol owners across the country.

Current indications are, that at least 25 per cent of licensed shooters Australia-wide have 'surrendered' their handguns. Some states now have amnesties being put in place - check with your state or territory SSAA branch for further details.

Of course the \$60 million-plus spent on buying back handguns from licensed, law-abiding handgun owners will have no effect on reducing crime. Had the money been spent on tracking down and punishing organised crime, illegal gun trafficking or gangs, Australian society may have seen a benefit. Again, it is much easier to persecute those who readily admit to owning a firearm, have filled out the paperwork, complied with legislation and are on a police computer database.

We can only hope that through our continued lobbying and by public protest politicians will one day realise that their own statistics (Australian Institute of Criminology) show that more than 90 per cent of all murder

by firearm is by those who do not have a firearm's licence, nor do they have a registered firearm.

With rights comes responsibility

The SSAA campaign on firearm security, 'Secure your gun, secure your sport', has met with considerable praise from the heads of firearm registries across the country. In NSW the police are committed by a Commissioner's decree to inspect the security arrangements and confirmation of serial numbers of registered firearms in the state.

It is of concern that a similar process may extend to other states, so I urge all members to be responsible and comply with the security arrangements of their respective state legislation. Do not allow firearm security to be yet another thorn in the side for the shooting sports. It's your responsibility to protect your firearms and your sport.

Bill Shelton
National President

WE WANT YOUR GUNS

Don't hand in or sell off your special firearms to just anyone. Help preserve Australia's firearms heritage and donate them to the SSAA National Firearms Museum for all firearm enthusiasts to see. Contact the SSAA National Secretary Roy Smith on 02 9833 9444.



A colossal waste

The handgun buy-back scheme has cost taxpayers \$60 million in the past three years. More than 100,000 firearms have been imported into the country. 4BC radio's Chris Adams interviews Dr Jeanine Baker, SSAA President (SA).

Chris Adams: Whether or not you support the initiative of various governments to get rid of handguns, the information that has come to light today is clearly bizarre. Taxpayers' money is being wasted. Representatives of sporting shooters' groups have told me this before, but it's always been on suspicion. Now, someone has identified the number of weapons being brought into the country and it appears to be more than we've collected in buy-back schemes. The handgun buy-back has cost us about \$60 million so far. That is a lot of money. And yet, in the past three years more than 100,000 guns have been imported. So, have we spent \$60 million to get the weapons off some people, only to have more imported? Something is very wrong here. Dr Jeanine Baker is the President of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia's South Australian branch. She's on the line. Hello Jeanine.

Jeanine Baker: Good afternoon Chris.

Adams: This sounds very, very bizarre. Let me start with Port Arthur. Has there been any impact on gun crime since the buy-back scheme that followed that?

Baker: No, that's something that we've been monitoring very closely and there has been no noticeable impact. There was a decreasing trend in firearm misuse and crime well before Port Arthur.

Adams: What about the recent handgun buy-back?

Baker: It is too early to see any of the figures obviously, but we're not anticipating any decrease in handgun misuse because it has

already been shown by the Australian Institute of Criminology that it's not the licensed firearms owners that are causing the crime. The government only bought back handguns from licensed firearms owners in this buy-back.

Adams: So the handgun buy-back has cost about \$60 million so far? Do you know how much we've spent buying back weapons altogether?

Baker: About \$600 million.

Adams: It was reported in *The Australian* that 100,000 firearms have come into the country in the past three years. What sort of firearms are they?

Baker: They would be a mix of everything - shotguns, rifles and handguns. This does also include firearms that go to the police. The Western Australian police have recently replaced their old police revolvers with the brand-new Glock.

Adams: How much of the \$100,000 for firearms imported into Australia would have gone to the military, police or security firms?

Baker: I don't have the figure in front of me. I know that about \$4000 worth of firearms went to the Western Australian police.

Adams: [Laughs] I get the impression that we've been spending a hell of a lot of money to buy back some firearms, while a hell of a lot of others have been flooding in with no control.

Baker: The firearms that are coming in through customs imports are coming in with controls. We know where they go. If they are for civilians, they are going to licensed firearms owners who have undergone police checks. The problems we have are with the smuggled firearms we don't know anything about. Those are the

of money

firearms that are a real concern to us at the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia. Because they are not registered and do not belong to licensed firearms owners, the firearms are not traceable.

Adams: It seems to me that the buy-back spiel was put out by the government, and I know that a lot of people in your organisation didn't agree with it. The spiel was that if you reduced the number of firearms in the community and you spend a lot of money doing it, gradually the presence of weapons in the community has to diminish. It seems, however, that we are letting all these weapons in anyway.

Baker: I guess that argument can always be countered by the existing facts. We know that crime doesn't decrease, homicides don't decrease and suicides don't decrease merely because you take firearms out of circulation. People resort to other ways. But the talk about taking handguns or firearms out of the community may well be valid - you could use the same argument for cars, if you take all the cars off the road, you're not going to have car deaths.

Adams: We can probably argue back and forwards all day about this. I suppose the key question in relation to this is have we really done anything by having the buy-back scheme? Has it achieved anything in your view at all?

Baker: Nothing at all. I believe we should have invested that money in the police for fighting crime or in hospitals to save lives. There comes a point when you have to look very closely at gun control and the methods that you're using. As far as I am concerned, buying back firearms from people who have undergone checks by the police - to prove they are fit and proper to hold a firearms licence - does not solve anything.

Adams: I appreciate your time Dr Baker. It seems hellishly confusing to me. Here we are bringing in all these firearms, only to be getting rid of them at a huge cost to taxpayers... ●

Letters

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ASJ
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Please explain

I was wondering if someone from the SSAA or one of your readers could explain the process a shooter's licence application undergoes once it reaches the firearms registry in NSW.

I come from a rural upbringing and was lucky enough to grow up in a generation where I took my first head-shot rabbit with a single-shot bolt action .22. I purchased my first shotgun with my first tax return. When I was old enough, I joined the army and was a keen shooter for a number of years. I still laugh at the amount of ammunition I would purchase before going on annual leave. Probably get locked up for trying to buy that much ammo now.

Then along came the wife and a young family. Before too long shooting took a back seat as other interests came along so I let my licence lag.

When my son turned 14 years old, I set about correcting the situation. My old licence was pre-computer record times so it was off to safety awareness training, which was good to brush up on.

In January this year, we sent our licence applications to the Firearms Registry. At the time I was quoted about 12 weeks to process, which was not too bad. The end of April came and went with nothing from the registry. So, I telephoned to see what was happening. I was told that the application was officially received on the February 2, 2004 and everything was going along nicely. That we should receive our licences the beginning of June.

My gripe is that I served my country for 12 years in the army, and it took less time for a national security clearance from ASIO than it takes to get a shooter's licence in NSW.

In the immortal words of Ms Hanson, can someone *please explain*.

G McMahon, NSW

Ethical hunting continued

In reply to last ASJ's ethical hunting story:

The second question (of those printed) to Mr Manning is one I have had put to me more than once.

The first 17 years of my working life in Australia was in supply of power tool and machines to the abattoirs in Australia and freezing works in New Zealand. My reply has been, "Which is the more defenceless animal, the wild deer or the rabbit with the option of flight or concealment or the captive breed cow or sheep?" Did the members have meat on their dinner plate? Did they have the right to sanction the killing of those animals?

Dumb questions irritate me.

Richard Byrne by email

Gun Control -



So John Bradshaw MLA wants to see armed security in State Parliament. Didn't he hear the PM say "Self defence is not a valid reason for owning a firearm" or is this just another example of parliamentary privilege.

SHANE CAUDWELL
Porongurup
Sunday Times (Perth)
23/5/04

The funeral of Jason Moran. New handgun laws did nothing to prevent his death at the hands of the so-called Melbourne underworld. Picture by Caroline Flammea, Newspix. Note photograph repeated from front cover.

Melbourne residents have been subjected to the sound of gunfire as criminals defy attempts to eliminate illegal ownership and criminal use of firearms.

Karel Zegers, author of a press release on the subject for the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (Vic) said, "The SSAA (Vic), representing law-abiding gun owners in Victoria, want to expose the failure of recent gun buy-backs and hastily prepared legislation. The SSAA has always stated that confiscating guns from sporting shooters would not reduce murder and mayhem, as demonstrated by the recent shootings during broad daylight in Melbourne.

"There is absolutely no evidence that even indirectly supports a case that firearm registration, amnesties and buy-backs have any effect at all on criminal behavior, or the reduction of firearm-related crimes.

"The bottom line is that criminal elements in any society ignore the law - that is why they are called criminals. It is also noteworthy that Gun Control Australia, a group promoting firearm confiscation, is nowhere to be seen or heard during these very public shootings."

Mr Zegers continued "The SSAA (Vic) is appalled at the statement made on national TV by Gun Control Australia that they are not interested in guns held by criminals. If Gun Control Australia is not interested in people being killed by criminal gunmen, why are they so interested in guns that do not kill people? Why is Gun Control Australia not concerned about gun-related fatalities so brazenly performed by criminals using unregistered illegal firearms?"

Sporting shooters obey the law and for their conscientious behaviour, they are denied access to a large range of sporting firearms.

In Victoria they can be legally subjected to random police inspections of their homes. Their favourite sport and pastime is subjected to senseless restrictions, all of which are reducing their international competitiveness.

The conclusion is that government policies and buy-backs have been both an abject failure and a complete waste of millions of taxpayers' dollars. This money should have been spent on hospitals, education and increased police resources to tackle the real criminals. ●

Fact or Fiction?

“If you impose greater penalties on handgun owners it is not going to impact on the persons who are likely to use them in crime”

Jenny Mouzos -

Australian Institute of Criminology - AAP
23/10/02

Misdirected Laws

Part from the widespread misery to the families of the victims (yes, even criminals have families), the recent spate of underworld killings underline the ineffectiveness of the much vaunted ‘gun laws’. Predictably, next year’s ABS statistics will show a resulting upsurge in murder by firearms that may be used to tighten the screws even more on the law-abiding shooter.

But controlling criminal misuse? That was never what so-called gun control was all about. But not to let the facts get in the way of political directions, the people who have already wasted millions of our taxes are not likely to publicly admit their errors. These laws by their very nature are misdirected. They are unable to prevent crime; therefore to show a result, that result has to be the pointless harassment of enthusiasts.

Deer Sign newsletter
April 2004.

MEDIA RELEASE



**SPORTING
SHOOTERS'
ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA**

Handgun bans do not reduce illegal gun violence

SSAA spokesperson Dr Jeanine Baker has expressed concern at the gun control lobby's lack of understanding about NSW firearm legislation and criminal violence. Dr Baker has pointed out that the United Kingdom ban on legal handguns after the Dunblane shooting clearly failed to have the desired affect.

“Since the handgun confiscation in the UK, total homicide (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) has risen by 69 per cent. Based on the UK Home Office's own figures, it is clear that a total ban on legal guns in the UK has not enhanced public safety,” Dr Baker said.

“In the UK, the £UK90 million confiscations have denied funds, which could have been used for hospitals, schools or to reduce illegal gun crime. In Australia, the gun control lobby seems intent on promoting the view that buying back legal firearms from people - authorised by the Police Commissioner to own them for sporting purposes - will prevent violence and crime. At the same time the Home Office and the Australian Institute of Criminology's own data makes it clear the money could be better spent.

“The Swiss Small Arms Survey encompasses everything from handguns to sub-machine-guns with a focus on the global black-market in illegal firearms. The survey is set against the backdrop of the UN Program of Action on Small Arms, where SSAA representatives have been active for about seven years, promoting initiatives on record keeping, marking and transparency in cross-border sales. The UN recognises that the purpose of enhancing international cooperation to eradicate illicit transnational trafficking in firearms is not intended to discourage or diminish the lawful use or ownership of firearms,” says Dr Baker.

Comments:

Dr Jeanine Baker
SSAA

www.ssaa.org.au

This release and fact sheet at www.ssaa.org.au/nsw.html
Buy-back quotations at www.ssaa.org.au/quoteozbuy.html
Gun Control quotations at www.ssaa.org.au/quotezanti.html

“... those who commit homicide in Australia are individuals who have circumvented legislation and will be least likely to be affected if further restrictions on firearm ownership are introduced.”

Australian Institute of Criminology, 2000.



Lapointe makes the point

*Eugène Lapointe, the former secretary general of CITES (Convention International Trade in Endangered Species) and current IWMC World Conservation Trust president recently joined the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities in Nuremberg, Germany, to give an official lecture on issues relating to hunting and conservation. His lecture deals with new cultural imperialism, how NGOs (non-governmental organisations associated with the United Nations) threaten sustainability and reasonable use of resources. His book, *Embracing the Earth's Wild Resources*, further discusses his ideas.*

Dear fellow hunters, talking about NGOs in the field of wildlife conservation is not an easy task. There are several versions of NGOs and it is therefore impossible to define them. A friend of mine, the late Felipe Benavides used to say, “NGOs are like mushrooms, they grow up everywhere, all the time...but be careful, while some of them are good, most are poisonous.” In the international field of conservation, we use the expression NGOs instead of ‘interested groups’.

In fact, you, the forum, constitute an NGO...but a good one.

You have asked me if I am a hunter. Yes I am and proud to be. In fact, I have hunted for seven decades, starting in the late ‘40s as a young child, when I was hunting, fishing and trapping with my father for our family subsistence in the wilderness of Canadian north-east. In my adulthood and due to too many business trips, I had no time to hunt. However, three years ago, the opportunity arose and I successfully returned to my own spirituality: moose hunting.

When did human beings first become ‘mankind’? When did we cease to be beasts of the field and become, albeit in crude form, ‘society’? These questions are, necessarily, rhetorical; they have no clear and indisputable answer. Some would date the dawn of civilisation from the day men started to band together in groups for mutual protection. Others view civilisation as being coterminous with man’s development of tools. Some commentators of a more artistic bent emphasise man’s emergence from the brutishness of savagery with the origins of culture, with the day the world’s first artist dragged charcoal across his cave wall to depict the world around him.

As I said in opening this talk, none of these answers is definitive. They are all seminal moments in the development of mankind but



Artwork by Mike Barr

we do not know which, if any, of them was the seminal moment. However, one thing that I, personally, will state with the utmost conviction is that they all share one common focus: the hunt. Men did not first come together for the polite conversation and company by the fireside. They did so because they realised that only by doing so, and working together, could they bring down the large mammals that were to supply so much of their protein. What tools did early man produce? Bowls, dishes, musical instruments? No. His first tools were those of the hunt and the butcher - spears, knives, axes and scraping stones. And what did he draw on those early cave walls? Family groups, self-portraits? Of course not; his early forays into art have only one subject - the hunt - the animals that were its prey and the men who participated in it. In short, ladies and gentlemen, one of the most seminal moments in the development of humanity, the moment when man ceased to be a beast of the field may have been the moment when he realised that he could, systematically, exploit the other beasts of the field by hunting them.

In other words, the hunt is core to our very nature as human beings and when we participate in the hunt, individually or collectively, we are expressing something that is truly basic to our humanity. Countless millennia ago, we perfected the hunt to a point where only an accomplished minority need participate in it, while their fellows could concentrate their efforts on other undertakings - stock rearing, arable cultivation and, ultimately, computer programming.

Today, few of us in the West hunt of necessity. Our skills in agriculture and husbandry have brought us to the point where we can supply virtually all of our protein requirements through the grim products of agribusiness. Today, we of the hunting fraternity do not pursue our calling because of need - we hunt because we want

to, because, in hunting, we re-establish contact with our vestigial selves, with the men and the women who first realised that they might conquer the world around them as opposed to simply being its victims. We relish our interplay with wild nature and the wildlife that inhabits it, just as did that first man who drew on the cave walls to communicate to his fellows his joy and elation in the hunt. The fact that, today, we do not hunt to eat does not make our hunting any-the-less moral. How could something that is so fundamental to our souls and our history be immoral? If hunting is immoral, then we had better see to getting rid of the human race because, as I believe I have already demonstrated, hunting is fundamental to our very nature.

Moreover, I believe that the worthiness and morality of our hunting is immediately evident in the hunter's *modus operandi*. Who is a better conservationist than the modern hunter? Imagine what a world we would live in today if most men practised the ethics of the hunter. The hunter respects his bag limits. Did any of the executives of Enron or Parmalat evince any similar restraint in the pillaging of their shareholders? The hunter respects the seasons, taking only what he should take when he should take it. Do we see any similar reticence in modern society? I do not think so - seize what you can, when you can and get as much of it as you can, may be a fundamentally American urban philosophy but it has found fertile soil as well, on this side of the Atlantic. In addition I should point out, in this context, that the modern hunter does not play by the rules because he is afraid of getting caught in violation of those rules. To the contrary, he plays by the rules because he knows that the rules are good for him and for his sport and the wildlife that he loves.

The law-abiding hunter, we now know - and I stress that we

know - is a positive force in the natural environment. I can think of no example where hunters and regulators have worked together sincerely that has not been beneficial to wildlife.

In an example close to my personal experience as secretary general of CITES, the big game hunting fraternity has been of huge assistance in underwriting the health of the southern African elephant population. National authorities in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe have worked with hunters to guarantee the health and, indeed, the growth of their elephant populations. The hunters have paid hefty fees for the privilege of hunting elephants. Those fees, combined with the funds from the accompanying sales of ivory, have financed the conservation programs that, otherwise, these poor countries might not have been able to afford. The Campfire Program is a wonderful example of this synergy.

Meanwhile, to the north in Kenya, hunting was banned in 1977 and, consequently, there is very limited funding for conservation in general or game wardens in particular. The field is left clear for the poacher, who pays no fees and cares nothing for the health of the elephant population. Therefore, we can conclude that 'no use or no trade' endangers the elephant population in Kenya. I think that we should simplify this tale to the level of a child's fable. We could call it, 'A Tale of Two Elephants' and explain how one elephant, that could be legally hunted and shot, stood an excellent chance of living a long and healthy life while his cousin, who was totally protected from hunting had little chance of surviving his adolescence. I understand that the Forum, and one of its founding members Safari Club International, has had some initial discussion about an effort to return hunting to Kenya. If this could be done, this would be an incredible victory not just for those who wish to hunt in Africa, but those of us working worldwide for the ideal sustained and reasonable use of our natural resources.

Hunters are moral beings and their activities have a positive impact on the environment. So, why have hunters been demonised? Why would anyone want to prevent the hunter from practising his craft - and let us face facts, there is a legion out there that wishes to rein in and, ultimately, forbid, our activities. Here I detect two complementary, negative, developments.

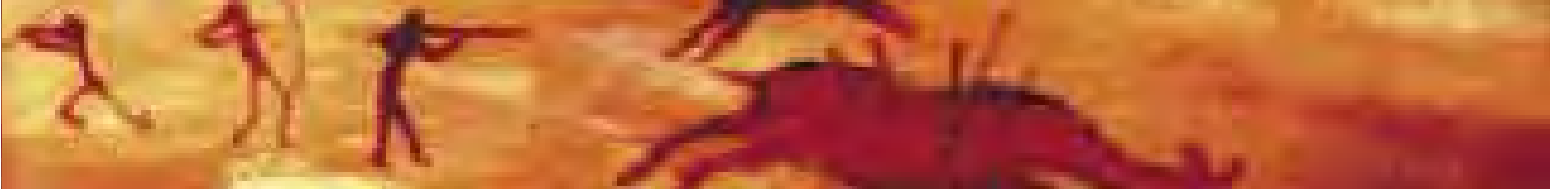
There are those among us who are more than willing to sign up to the belief in the so-called 'perfectibility' of man, the removal of more and more of his animal nature, to be replaced by a new, 'higher' sensibility. I think, in this context, we can safely equate 'perfectibility' with 'more like me' - you will achieve a better character if only you will agree to the need for *you* to become more like *me*. Probably the most notable exponent of this philosophy was Maximilian Robespierre, a dour vegetarian who sincerely believed that man was, and must, be capable of rising to the higher mental state that he had attained. For those who demurred from this undertaking, he had a simple answer



...the big game hunting fraternity has been of huge assistance in underwriting the health of the southern African elephant population. National authorities in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe have worked with hunters to guarantee the health and, indeed, the growth of their elephant populations.

- decapitation. We now live in a world inhabited by a new generation of Robespierres, men and women who are convinced that they are the guardians of a new, higher morality and who do not hesitate to seize the tools of coercion to use against those who refuse to follow their path.

Mr Robespierre's way with his critics brings me neatly to my second point - the evermore obvious emergence of cross-cultural and personal intolerance often practised in the name of left-wing politics and supposed environmental concern. Here, in Europe, few countries, with the exceptions of Norway and Iceland, have a whaling culture. Our stake in the question of whaling is minimal to non-existent. And yet, every year, we see the pathetic spectacle of the US rounding up its circle of European puppets to parade into the



halls of the International Whaling Commission to condemn Iceland, Japan and Norway for taking and eating whales as they have done for centuries. Just who do we think we are - the international food police?

Does a Japanese diner need to seek the permission of President Bush, Prime Minister Blair or Chancellor Schroeder before he determines what he may, and may not, put in his mouth? What right have nations such as France, Spain and Germany to tell South Africa and Botswana how they may, or may not, care for their elephant populations? Why have we suddenly become so eager and willing to fly around the world and wag the finger of disapproval in the faces of men and women whose history and cultures is nothing like our own and who have no desire to adopt our social or dietary mores. Even the British Empire did not make Indians convert to Anglicanism and eat fish and chips. But now, intolerance is the order of the day. Europe instructs Japan to alter its diet; the US demands that Europeans consume genetically modified foods that Europeans do not want. Sooner or later, someone is going to tell Indians to start consuming those cows wandering around New Delhi. *Yes*, intolerance is the order of the day, but intolerance is strictly motivated by financial greed.

Species targeted by hunters of all origins such as elephants, whales, seals, felines are often projected as the prime representatives of the beauties of nature. In the eyes of the NGOs all are, as I said, benign, almost cuddly - something that you might want to snuggle up to on a cold and rainy night. However, the emotions and feelings raised by the beauties of nature must not lead us to forget the cruel realities of nature. As Alfred Lord Tennyson so fearsomely reminded us, nature is, in reality, "red in tooth and claw". The law of natural selection, as communicated to us by Charles Darwin, is steeped in violence, the dominance and ultimate annihilation of the weak by the strong. Up close, nature can be truly horrifying.

But for many of us today, the sight of a butchered animal is so strange as to be offensive and, in line with our new spirit of intolerance, we are no longer satisfied simply to abjure hunting ourselves. We demand that others follow our example. Do they not wish to arise to that 'higher' level of 'perfectibility' that we, ourselves, have attained? If they do not wish to so arise, then they must be made to do so, to confront the error of their ways by having their prehistoric, indeed barbaric, pastime forbidden by the state. Such is our modern practice. Unused to the realities of nature, many citizens demand that we treat the wild flora and fauna around us as part of some great friendly park system or 'sanctuary'. They wish, above all else, to remove man from interaction with this wild environment because, not understanding nature itself, they equate all that they find distasteful in it with man - remove man from the equation and nature will return to some imagined utopia that, supposedly, existed

many millennia ago.


The tools in their hands are formidable. Until recently, they had almost exclusive access to the world media. They successfully raised huge sums of money for such frivolous undertakings as returning a domesticated killer whale to the wild where, naturally, it died. They demand that the strong nations place trade embargoes on those smaller nations who insist on abiding by the doctrine of sustainable use. Even as we are here today, they demand that the US close its market to beluga caviar because, supposedly, the beluga sturgeon is endangered. Who is going to care for the beluga when the fish has no value? Who will replenish the stocks if that activity brings no commercial reward? In the United States, the demands of the NGOs have become part and parcel of the Presidential election agenda, with Democratic and even some Republican candidates vying with each other as to who will devote him - or herself most thoroughly to the implementation of the NGO agenda.

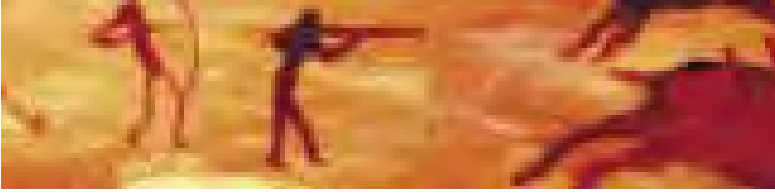
We cannot afford to pretend that the situation is going to get better by itself. Granted, our own organisation, IWMC, has, during the past three years, enjoyed some notable successes in accessing major opinion leaders in the international media. However, the momentum is still very much with the other side. Why is this? We have morality and science on our side. Why are we not moving forward?

I fear that the answer to this question is somewhat depressing - the extreme NGOs are active; they are cooperating and they are spending. The forces of sustainable use are, by contrast, divided. Many share a lamentable tendency to procrastination, delaying necessary spending programs in the forlorn hope that somebody else will put his hand into his pocket and pay to resolve the problem at hand while benefiting from the free ride.

Those who feel this characterisation be too harsh should consider the regular meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. Prior to each COP meeting, the NGOs meet extensively to determine who will push which issue - opposing the sustainable use of abundant species of whales; countering efforts to reopen the ivory trade and attempting to close as many elephants hunting grounds as possible; taking all opportunities to go after traditional trappers and fur industries; blaming the commercial fishing operations for the demise of their dearest cetaceans. Each NGO then focuses its human and financial resources on that issue while, simultaneously, using it to galvanise a fund-raising campaign. When some fund-raising campaigns succeed and others fail, they move financing about between them. United they stand and, all too often, prevail.

Do we see any similar level of cooperation between the world's timber, hunting, fishing and trapping interests? Is there an identical commitment to financing and pressing a broad front sustainable-use agenda? We do not. Typically, each interest delays confronting an NGO assault until the very last minute and, even then, each interest



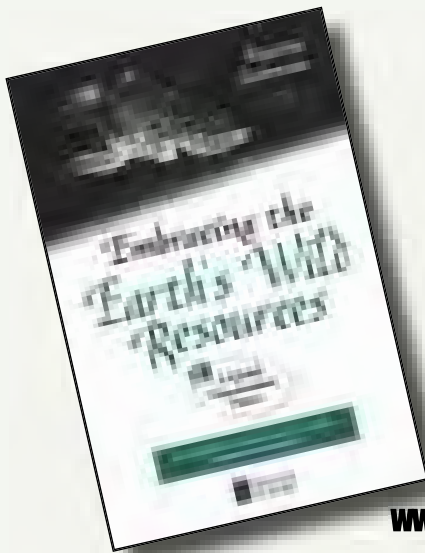


fights its own issue with relatively little assistance from others who, theoretically, support a broad sustainable-use agenda. Divided, we fall.

All too often, we simply refuse to see the commonality of our interests until it is too late.

NGOs will not go away if we ignore them and *they* will not focus their attentions on the other guy if only we keep our heads down. Indeed, the NGOs cannot go away. They are vast consumers and expenders of wealth who must perpetually move forward with new agendas and new targets in order to finance their vast infrastructures. I often compare them to the mystical shark in the water that must go forward to eat, and eat to go forward.

If we are to turn the tide, we are going to have to evince a similar commitment to cooperation between all sustainable-use interests. We are going to develop a similar commitment in communicating our message, in putting our troops into the field and providing them with the level of financing necessary to do the job. If we do this, the public will listen and respond. The only question we need to ask ourselves now is - do we have the intestinal fortitude to bring ourselves to address the task? ●



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After working prominently in the field of international conservation for more than 20 years, Eugène Lapointe has at last put pen to paper and produced what he describes as a compendium of conservation thought, opinion and analysis, in his long-awaited debut book, *Embracing the Earth's Wild Resources*. Targeted at those interested in the state of conservation today and students of political science, this book should also be required reading for CEOs. After defining conservation, Mr Lapointe pulls no punches as he challenges the protectionist orthodoxy of the modern environmentalist movement and, through a series of detailed examples, exposes the modus operandi of groups such as WWF, Greenpeace and PETA. ●



2004 Victorian Hunting Guide

Philip Brown

Vic SSAA Conservation and Pest Management Convenor

Those people who have received their 2004 *Hunting Guide* may have noticed it is somewhat reduced compared to its predecessors. The short explanation for this is that all hunting organisations and trade sponsors withdrew their paid advertising. The cause of this unprecedented boycott was another show of arrogance and bad faith on the part of DSE (Department of Sustainability and Environment).

Following the dismal production that was the 2003 *Hunting Guide*, the Victorian hunting organisations approached DSE with a request for greater input into future hunting guides. This was initially agreed to and discussions were held to determine the best way for hunting organisations to contribute. Because much of the dissatisfaction with the 2003 *Hunting Guide* was levelled at the cover illustration, it was agreed that the hunting organisation would supply photographs for 2004. As an aside, DSE informed us that two officers were specially tasked with photographing the rusty, bullet-riddled water level gauge that graced the 2003 *Hunting Guide* in order to “factually illustrate environmental conditions in Victoria”.

For a brief period, cordial discussions were maintained between DSE and the hunting organisations, to the point where it was suggested that the Minister be approached to endorse the 2004 *Hunting Guide*. This ‘truce’ lasted until the first photographs were sent in to DSE for consideration. At this point it was discovered that hunting scenes showing actual quarry were out. The reason given was that the hunting guide is distributed to groups other than hunters and the realisation that human existence is at the expense of other creatures would cause grave psychological trauma in the sensitive.

After some heated exchanges, the hunting organisations were informed that despite earlier undertakings DSE retained full censorship rights of the hunting guide and any hunter input would be entirely at their discretion. Shortly thereafter a draft cover was circulated showing a retriever with a sandbag dummy in its mouth, to illustrate the ‘hunting experience’. Further protests were lodged but DSE was not interested in listening.

I am not certain who initiated the process but in a cascading protest all the hunting organisations withdrew their advertisements from the hunting guide. This was accompanied, or followed, by the withdrawal of trade advertising, leaving DSE virtually without funding for the production or distribution of the 2004 *Hunting Guide*.

In a belated move to buy back financial support, DSE changed the cover illustration but this was far too late.

It is unfortunate that DSE proved so intransigent, not least because it had been hoped to gain the Minister’s endorsement of the hunting guide.

If you believe that the hunting guide should be produced by hunters, not bureaucrats with hidden agendas, write to the Vic Minister expressing your disappointment with the current situation and requesting the creation of a statutory game management council. ●



Animal Welfare

Animal welfare: the right firearm and ammunition combination

Paul Peake talks with veterinarians Dr Paul Hopwood and Dr Matt Draisma

Many of us remember being taught the basics with an air-rifle supplied by parents with no hang-ups about firearms. It was assumed that boys would hunt - it was simply a question of learning how to do so safely and ethically. Graduation to a single-shot .22 rimfire rifle usually happened once mum and dad were satisfied you knew what you were doing and were sufficiently mature enough. The abundance of rabbits (prior to the inroads of myxomatosis and calicivirus) and the suitability of the .22 for taking small game at close range made it the logical choice and the most popular firearm in Australia. Times have certainly changed and hunters are now expected (and in some cases, required) to take all classes of game with a single shot. As common and reliable as the .22 rimfire is, perhaps its role in the hunter's gun cupboard needs to be reassessed. Paul Peake interviews two veterinarians - one a long-time hunter and the other an animal welfare expert to get their thoughts on the question.

Paul Peake

When we go hunting is it essential to ensure that game is taken with a single shot? What are the critical factors to achieve this?

Dr Paul Hopwood

In order to take game with a single round there are two critical factors - bullet placement and stopping power. Put simply, it's the

firearm/ammunition combination you choose, together with how well you use it and from how far away you take the shot.

PP

What advice would you give to hunters looking to improve animal welfare outcomes?

PH

There are a number of very simple things you can do. First, use an appropriate calibre and make sure the firearm is tuned for accuracy. Second, choose ammunition designed for the particular game you're hunting. Third, get as close to the target as possible and perhaps most importantly, practise your marksmanship skills regularly.

PP

From an animal welfare viewpoint, what do you think of the .22 rimfire as a hunting rifle?

PH

You're going to get me into hot water with the .22 rimfire fan club. It's a great round for plinking or using at the rifle range, but it has limitations when it comes to hunting. It's best suited to small game taken at close range. Using subsonic ammunition you can sit near a warren and take rabbit after rabbit without disturbing the paddock. The problem arises when people try to use the calibre beyond its effective range. Dr Matt Draisma has

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a wealth of hunting experience, and knows which calibres work best in particular situations; he's probably in a better position to answer the question. The way I see it, the problems with the .22 rimfire begin when people try to stretch the round beyond its capabilities.

PP

Dr Draisma, would you agree with Dr Hopwood's comment that the .22 rimfire is very limited as a hunting round?

Dr Matt Draisma

Yes, I agree. The problem with the .22 rimfire is that accuracy deteriorates significantly after 50 metres or so, and its stopping power is poor when it comes to long-range shots. Many .22 rifles deliver the best accuracy with subsonic ammunition, so using high-speed .22 ammunition doesn't overcome the round's inherent limitations, as accuracy can suffer with increased velocity - certainly with increased range.

PP

OK, how would you stock a gun cupboard to cope with common Australian hunting conditions?

MD

While the round has its limitations, in a basic gun cupboard I'd definitely have a .22 rimfire. I'd add a .223 centrefire rifle, a .308 centrefire rifle and a 12-gauge shotgun. I'd use the .22 for close work on small game with tuned subsonic ammunition. I'd use the .223 with 50-grain hollow- or soft-point projectiles for small to medium game at intermediate distances and I'd use the .308 with 150- to 180-grain projectiles for medium to large game. For the shotgun I'd choose BB or No. 2-sized shot for things like hares, No. 4 for rabbits and ducks, and No. 7.5 for smaller birds.

PP

You've chosen a .223 and a .308 from a very wide range of options. I'm sure some hunters arguing ballistic performance would suggest alternatives such as the .22-250.

MD

Undoubtedly, but ultimately we're talking hunting and animal welfare. While there's certainly a broad range of useful and effective calibres available, a basic set-up which includes a .22, a .223 and a .308 allows for the close-quarter hunting of small game, longer distance work with small- and medium-sized animals and a capacity to take larger quarry. As with rifles, depending on the choice of ammunition, shotguns can be adapted for a wide range of applications and all four types of firearm are capable of taking game cleanly when used within their respective limitations. From a hunting perspective, there's a lot of satisfaction and confidence to be gained from knowing you can achieve good animal welfare outcomes. At the end of the day, it is a duty, not an option, for all hunters to aim towards excellence. ●

NSW Game Council fact sheet

The NSW Game Council has been specifically formed to help achieve sustainable game management.

- More than 95 per cent of NSW is inhabited by some species of wild or feral animal. Feral animals left unmanaged can adversely affect the environment and agricultural production.
- Rural Lands Protection Board rangers currently spend about 60 per cent of their time eradicating feral and pest animals
- Foxes, rabbits and pigs are the most abundant pest animals in NSW. Wild deer have not been included in previous statewide surveys and have been identified as moderately abundant and emerging in importance as a game animal.
- Worldwide game hunting plays an integral role in land management plans and is recognised as an important and legitimate tool in nature conservation.
- NSW agriculture studies recommend that hunting can be appropriately incorporated into pest control plans. Currently, 22 per cent of the feral pig population is culled by hunters. A further eight per cent is managed by commercial hunters. The NSW Game Council aims to decrease the feral pig population further through a formal licensing system applying to crown lands.
- Nearly \$69 million per annum was generated in Australia by deer hunters through tourism and associated industries.
- In NSW and adjoining states, there are more than 250,000 licensed hunters.
- 'Game' by definition is animals living in the wild including deer, California quail, pheasant, partridge, peafowl, and turkey. Pest animals are classified as pig, wild dog (not dingo), cat, goat, rabbit, hare and fox.
- Under the Game Council's licensing system, people will not need a game licence to hunt pest species on private property. A licence will be required to hunt pests on public land. Hunting of game will require a licence on both public and private land.
- Any hunter who wishes to hunt in state forests or crown land will need to buy a game licence. Hunters wanting to hunt deer or game birds also will need to purchase a game licence.
- Licenced game hunters will not hunt in national parks. Holders of Game Council licences will need to pass a licensing test and abide by a code of conduct in order to hunt on state-declared public land.



NSW Game Council opens in Orange

The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Ian Macdonald, has officially opened the NSW Game Council office at the University of Sydney, Orange campus.

The Game Council was established under the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* and is designed to help manage game animals, pest animals and promote responsible hunting on public and private lands.

“Establishing the NSW Game Council is an important milestone that will help hunters play a more active role in conservation and sustainability,” Minister Macdonald said.

“Approximately 95 per cent of the state is inhabited by some type of wild or feral animal. The role between the government, the NSW Game Council and hunters is crucial as we work together to conserve our natural habitat.

“Through game management we will ensure sustainable game populations that will also benefit the interests of farmers, graziers and the general public. For example, the state government last year helped destroy a record 10,000 feral pigs across NSW through a coordinated shooting program.”

Left unchecked, feral pigs and other pest species can damage native plants, attack livestock, cause erosion, spread disease and destroy crops, pastures and fencing.

According to Minister Macdonald, key functions of the NSW Game Council include:

- Administering a system of game hunting licences

- Providing advice to the government on game management
- Working with other agencies on pest animal control measures
- Making recommendations to the government on the gazettal of public lands for hunting
- Funding conservation projects on rural lands, particularly projects that involve habitat restoration.

“Two immediate priorities for the Game Council are to create a licensing system and a code of conduct for hunters,” said chairman of the NSW Game Council, Robert Brown.

This licensing system will form the backbone of the council, and licence terms and fees will be finalised and rolled out during the next few months. Funds raised through the licensing system will be used to help educate hunters on how they can contribute to conservation management. Many of the hunting clubs and associations have codes of conduct in place, but the Council will create formal, statewide guidelines to better promote responsible hunting.

“Many countries worldwide now regulate game hunting in this manner and we look forward to utilising their experience to create the best system in NSW,” said Brown.

The NSW Game Council is comprised of 16 members. The council will employ ten people by 2005, including four who will be based in Orange and six field officers. These staff will implement the licensing, education, and promotion of conservation management. ●

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