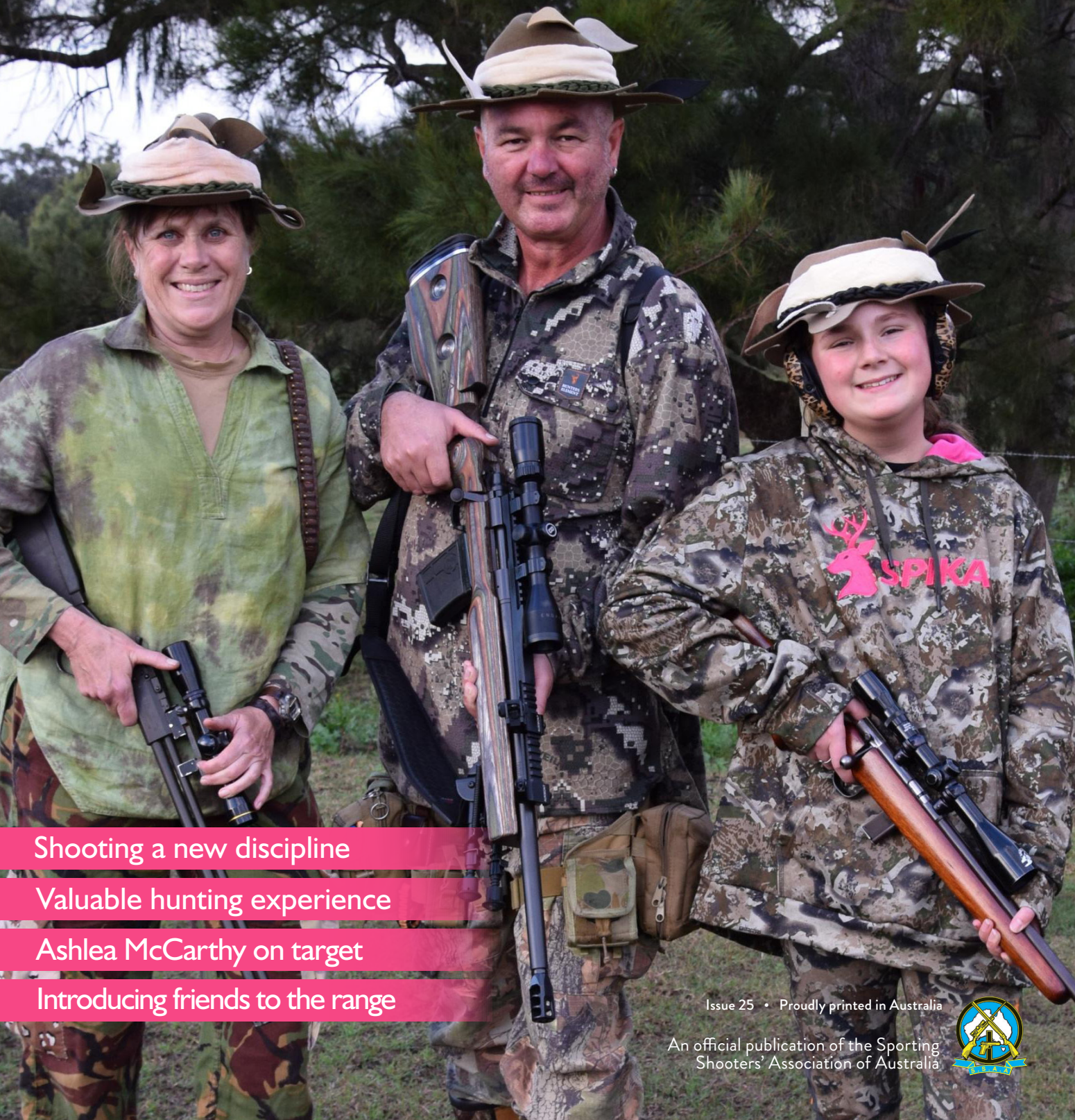


AUSTRALIAN **WOMEN'S** SHOOTER



Shooting a new discipline

Valuable hunting experience

Ashlea McCarthy on target

Introducing friends to the range

Issue 25 • Proudly printed in Australia

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Editorial

Rachael Oxborrow

Welcome to this 25th edition of *Australian Women's Shooter*! This issue is packed with stories that reflect the passion, dedication and thrill of being part of the shooting community.

I share a recent experience venturing beyond my usual position shooting into the fast-paced world of Practical Shooting. It's been an eye-opening journey that I hope inspires others to step out of their comfort zones and try something new in the sport.

From Olympic moments to pop culture and the fashion world, Laetisha Scanlan celebrates the diverse ways shooting can engage mainstream media and the general public. I hope it encourages you to keep pursuing your own goals with confidence and enthusiasm.

We're also proud to showcase Ashlea McCarthy's remarkable two-decade shooting career, as told by Thomas Cook. Ashlea's accomplishments, from national records to her role as a mentor, remind us of the impact our community can have when we support each other.

In a special feature, Jamie Heimann recounts her first hunting trip with a Junior Firearms Permit. Jaime's excitement in the field, learning to identify game and making her first successful shots, captures the essence of learning and growth that many of us remember from our own first hunts.

For those thinking of bringing friends and family into the sport, Suzy Balogh's guide offers valuable advice to make their introduction to a SSAA range enjoyable, safe and memorable.

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SHOOTER**

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Taking aim

with Laetisha Scanlan

Shooting sports in Paris: A moment in the spotlight

With the 2024 Olympics now in the rearview, it was great to see Australia secure a well-deserved bronze medal in Women's Trap. This achievement highlights the immense dedication and countless years of training required to perform at the highest level in a highly competitive and technical sport. But beyond the medals, the true beauty of the Olympics lies in the moments that capture the public's imagination - the stories that transcend the event itself and keep our sport alive in the minds of millions.

The rise to fame of Turkish pistol shooter Yusuf Dikec is a memorable one. While his team claimed silver in the mixed team shooting event, it was Yusuf himself who became an overnight sensation, with social media fuelling his meteoric rise. His calm, nonchalant demeanour, combined with his minimal hearing protection and ordinary prescription glasses, quickly caught the public's eye. Memes of him, dubbed the 'coolest hitman' of the Olympics, spread like wildfire. It's stories like these that bring a human element to our

sport and connect it to a wider audience. Shooting has often struggled to gain the kind of mainstream recognition enjoyed by other sports, but Yusuf's viral fame is proof that these moments can bridge that gap. By simply being himself, he became the face of Olympic shooting for a new generation - one that may have otherwise overlooked the sport altogether. The power of social media, for better or worse, means that anyone, like Yusuf, can become a global sensation overnight.

The ongoing cultural impact is further encouraging, with athletes, celebrities and fans dressing up as Yusuf for Halloween, continuing the meme trend and keeping the narrative alive. These pop culture moments, while fleeting, can have a long-lasting effect on the visibility and relevance of a sport. And it is these kinds of viral phenomena that can help to push shooting into the broader consciousness and ensure it maintains its place in the global sporting landscape.

Another story that made waves in the 2024 Olympics came from South Korea, where pistol shooter Kim Ye-ji turned heads not just for her sporting prowess, but for her remark-

able fashion sense. After returning from Paris, she graced the cover of *Vogue Korea*, a major milestone for any athlete, let alone one from the world of shooting. For a shooter to appear in such a prestigious fashion magazine is a monumental achievement that underscores the potential for shooting sports to break into unexpected arenas. It's also a reminder that, despite the challenges of modern media landscapes, our sport can thrive in the most tumultuous times.

While these may seem like small victories in the grand scheme of things, they're crucial for the survival and growth of our sport. The world is changing, and the way we consume media is evolving faster than ever. Pop culture moments, the viral trends, and the athletes who embrace them, play an integral role in ensuring shooting sports remain relevant and continues to captivate new audiences. They help dispel misconceptions that shooting is outdated or unsafe. Instead, they highlight the individuals who make the sport exciting, relatable and engaging.

WOMEN'S-ONLY COMPETITION

Only female SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on the back of an envelope and send it to:

SSAA Online Shop voucher
Australian Women's Shooter
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at
ssaa.org.au/win



Competition closes February 28, 2025

Win!

GIFT voucher

a \$200 gift voucher

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Biting the **BULLET**

A test of nerves for **Rachael Oxborrow** as she goes from position shooting to practical

When I think of target shooting, I think of precision, accuracy and strength, not necessarily of action, energy and speed. For those seasoned target shooters reading this you could assume I'm a scoped-rifle position shooter, and you'd be right.

Recently, I've made it a goal of mine to step out of my comfort zone and this is how I came to trying out the SSAA discipline of Practical Shooting. My brother and father, who had also traditionally been scoped-rifle positional shooters until they branched out, have been raving about Practical Shooting for some time now. It has become a source of healthy competition between the two of them as my brother Kyle is quick and strategic, and my father Tony favours accuracy and practice to maintain his edge.

About six months ago I began threatening to turn up and stake my claim in the family tussle, and my follow-through wasn't as bad as I'd expected. My tool of choice was my father's Smith & Wesson Victory Series Performance Center Target Model .22 semi-automatic handgun with a 6" fluted barrel and red dot sight. My tactic was to hope that my ability, developed over years of rifle shooting, was transferrable.

Safety and support

I was required to have my father stand with me for support throughout the three courses of fire as the competition involved participating in a holster accreditation training course to carry loaded magazines and a pistol holstered on my waist.

This safety requirement was handy as I've probably only used a semi-automatic handgun

about six times and I found the loading and clearing procedures foreign and confronting.

The other shooters at the SSAA range and the Range Officer were also a support to me, discussing the various courses of fire, tactics I could take and tricks for new players.

I also found it useful to stand back and observe the other competitors to learn how to approach what was happening.

Speed, accuracy and strategy

My usual approach to my favourite competitions of 3-Position, Field Rifle and Metallic Silhouette involves three processes:

1. Set-up – make sure I have all my bits and pieces from shooting glasses, hearing protection, water bottle and set-up at my position.
2. Pre-shoot prep – once the Range Officer calls time, I make a habit of checking my shooting position, target position, body set-up

and awareness and have a mental review of what I need to do.

3. Shot routine – everyone has their own pattern that works for them and while I'm not as stringent as I probably could be, I do make a point of certain habits with loading, lowering my sight picture down to the target and not holding the shot for too long.

However, with a competition completely out of my comfort zone in firearm function, shot processes and course of fire, I was uneasy. It became clear to me how important these processes are to my target shooting, even though I've never placed much emphasis on them as they've developed organically.

By the end of the shoot, I had started to find my feet and a few factors I'll be paying attention to next time include:

1. Counting the shots for each course and planning where I'll need to change magazines to choose the most efficient plan.

2. The clothing I wore was fine for the day and standard for rifle position shooting, but my boots were too heavy for the dynamic movement needed with this competition.

3. My hearing protection was standard, but because I was shooting more rapidly and with a different type of firearm I was more bothered by the sound and found it distracting, so earplugs *and* earmuffs will be onboard next trip.

4. My stance needs work, and you can see in photos I am uncomfortable with what I'm doing.

Testing my boundaries

Considering I've only recently tested my boundaries of target shooting to explore open sight shooting via Lever Action Silhouette, I'm quite proud of how the day went. I was able to push through the uncomfortable feeling of an unfamiliar shoot after being competent and assured in my processes for several decades.

The biggest learning point for me in both this experience and making the transition has been to embrace asking questions. My fellow competitors have always been willing to explain and review my approach and I highly recommend being curious and testing out a new competition next time you come across one at the range. ●



Running through each course of fire with the Range Officer and stage designer.



Moving positions in a course of fire was unfamiliar for Rachael.



Rachael will work on her stance.



SHINY Eyes

Jamie's first wild harvest,
one for the pot.

Jamie Heimann scores a hat trick of hares on her first hunt with a Junior Firearms Permit

Recently, I was out spotlighting with Dad, Mum and Pop. I've done this before with Dad and family, but this time was different. I've had my Junior Firearms Permit for a year and a half, since I was 12, but this was my first hunt with it. This trip I was using a .22 long rifle that's been in our family for about 60 years. Rifles with this calibre are mainly used for hunting small game such as hares and rabbits. That's because the bullets are smaller and won't make a big mess of the animal or travel too far if you miss.

After firing the rifle at the SSAA range, I was excited to hunt with it for the first time. In the field, I'd always been the person holding the spotlight or the camera. While those earlier trips had been successful for my family,

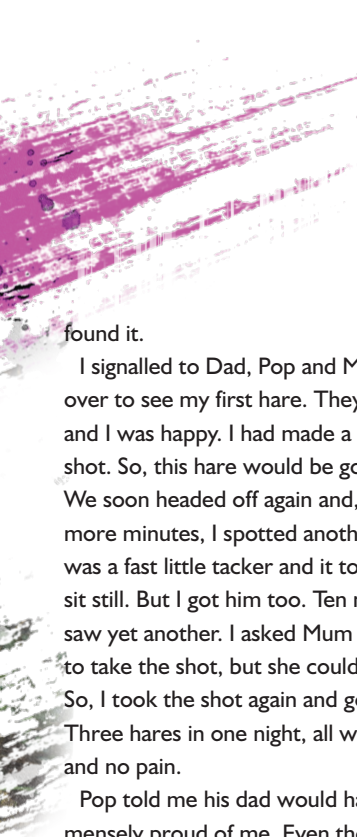
getting feral pigs, foxes, cats and more, they hadn't been 'my' successes. It was my time to shine.

We are lucky enough to hunt on a huge cattle property of one of Pop's friends. A few of the spotlighting paddocks were freshly sown with oats, so it was easy to see around, and we knew the small game would be attracted to it. As we scanned with the light, I realised I'd never really concentrated hard on how to tell one animal from another at night. I know that eyeshine is what really stands out. The problem is, I had no clue what colour eyeshine goes with which animal. So, I couldn't tell if the shiny eyes belonged to a big, small, native or domesticated animal.

On that night, we saw eyeshine in the paddocks that turned out to belong to cats,

foxes, hares and rabbits. We also saw animals in the trees that were likely either possums or owls. I was always the first to see their eyes in the darkness, and we would carefully drive towards them.

Dad said that I could hunt hares and rabbits, so I worked out their eyeshine is red in the spotlight beam. When I saw the first hare, I knew immediately what I was looking at. Pop stopped the car and Dad shone the spotlight in the area where I'd seen the animal and, once outside the car and I'd lined it up in the sight, I cocked the rifle and took the shot. Sadly, I just missed first try, Dad said it was "buck fever" and to slow down and concentrate on my breathing. So, I cocked the rifle again, concentrated on my breathing - and I got him! I saw where the hare fell, and taking the torch,



found it.

I signalled to Dad, Pop and Mum to come over to see my first hare. They were proud, and I was happy. I had made a clean head shot. So, this hare would be good for the pot. We soon headed off again and, after only five more minutes, I spotted another hare. He was a fast little tacker and it took a while to sit still. But I got him too. Ten minutes later, I saw yet another. I asked Mum if she wanted to take the shot, but she couldn't see him. So, I took the shot again and got him first go. Three hares in one night, all with a clean shot and no pain.

Pop told me his dad would have been immensely proud of me. Even though I've never met 'Grand-Pop', I felt like he was with me from the stories Dad and Pop have told me over the years. And I felt like I did him proud since every Heiman has been a great shot and all have hunted with their Heiman parent. Now, here I was heading on that same journey too, and it was a great moment.

As soon as we got back home, I did more research on eyeshine. It turns out that the colour comes from the tapetum lucidum (shining layer). This is a layer of tissue behind the retina of many animals' eyes which helps them see better in the dark by amplifying light. It acts like a mirror for unabsorbed light, giving the light a second chance to get absorbed by the eye. When this happens, some light escapes the eye through the pupil, and this is what we see as eyeshine. The assorted colours we see in different animals is because of the assorted minerals and metals that make up the shining layer. It's like how different metals burn different colours in fireworks.

My research led me to think that eyeshine might be based on what they ate, hence the distinct colours. But then I thought that animals who are mainly active at night have red eyeshine. I found out that some animals have different eyeshine if they are domestic, wild or different breeds. And to make things even harder some animals, like a fox, can have different eyeshine depending on their age. An adult fox, being taller and older, will mostly

Eye shine chart

White	Deer, cattle, humans
Blue	Horses, thylacines, domestic dogs
Green	Cats, sheep, wild dogs, spiders, goats, donkeys, camels (sometimes yellow)
Red	Owls, pigs, hares, rabbits, kangaroos, rodents, wombats
Orange/ Yellow	Cattle, foxes (and red)

reflect a yellow/orange colour, sometimes even red, and young foxes can appear green. And the eyeshine of a horse can be yellow, green or even blue.

It appears there is no one rule for eyeshine, but one thing is for sure, I can't wait to go spotlighting again to learn more. ●

Hare number two for Jamie.



Hare number three taken by Jamie with the family's trusty Australian made Sportco .22LR



The Australian team finished 2nd Overall in the Teams event at the 2014 NRA Lever Action Silhouette Nationals. L to R: Michael Hutton, Ashlea McCarthy and Dave McCarthy.

Targeting greatness



Two decades of dominance in the shooting sports for Ashlea McCarthy, who's not done yet, not by a long shot, writes **Thomas Cook**

It was as a member of the Air Force Cadets that Ashlea McCarthy first tried her hand at shooting. There were plenty of other exciting experiences for Ashlea, such as skydiving and abseiling, but shooting is what struck her. As she excelled in the many extracurricular activities with the Cadets, it was her eye for shooting that truly shone.

From there, Ashlea joined a 'Youth Training' scheme for the shooting sports, beginning her shooting campaign as a relative latecomer at age 19. Getting involved with a bunch of her friends, all joining at the same time, Ashlea progressed through the shooting ranks, as she did with the Cadets, rapidly. In her roughly 20-year involvement, Ashlea has achieved incredible success, such as:

- 1st Individual and 3rd Team Overall representing Australia in 3-Positional at the 2012 Pacific Regional Shooting Championships in New Zealand
- Representing Australia in 3-Positional at the 2013 NRA National Smallbore Championships in the United States
- Representing Australia at the 2014 NRA Lever Action Silhouette Nationals in the US, coming:
 - 6th Overall in 3-gun
 - Women's Champion in Lever Action Rifle
 - Women's Champion in Smallbore Rifle
 - 2nd Overall in Pistol Cartridge Lever Action Rifle (Team)

- 1st Master Grade - Lever Action Rifle (Team)
- 2nd Master Grade - Smallbore Rifle (Team)
- Representing Australia in 2014 for Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette, receiving the 'High Chicken Award' for most chickens shot offhand along with 1st in the AA scoped match, setting a women's record of 47/60
- Overall 3-gun winner at the 2016 SSAA Cowboy Lever Action Nationals held at the SSAA Para Range
- National record in Muzzleloading in the Vetterli event (100.3/100) and 100m Offhand Cartridge Rifle (214/250) at the 2016 SSAA Muzzleloading Nationals held at the SSAA Para Range

- Representing Australia in the 2017 International Gallery Rifle World Championships in Ireland
- Ladies 3-gun Champion at 2017 SSAA Lever Action Nationals held at the SSAA Para Range
- Overall winner in Field Rifle 2-gun at 2018 SSAA Scoped 3-Positional & Field Rifle Championships held at the SSAA Para Range
- National Record in 3-Positional Rimfire - Prone (200.11/200) at SSAA Scoped 3-Positional & Field Rifle Championships held at the SSAA Para Range.



Ashlea with her Muzzleloading National Record target in 2016.



Ashlea shooting 3-Positional at the 2012 Pacific Regional Shooting Competition in Tokoroa, NZ.



Ashlea competing in the 2017 IGRF World Championships in Tullamore, Ireland.



The 3-Positional shooting line at the 2013 NRA National Smallbore Championships at Camp Perry, US.

Clearly, in her two decades of sports shooting, Ashlea has tried her hand at many disciplines and a variety of rifles. These days, Ashlea mostly spends her time shooting Gallery Rifle, Lever Action Silhouette, Rifle Metallic Silhouette and Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette.

Ashlea has had minimal 'coaching' as such, apart from a little with the 3-Positional discipline. In terms of 'training' to stay on top, Ashlea gets to the SSAA range as often as she can, saying she "just gets out there and shoots, taking part in every event and competition, helping everything become muscle memory."

Although Ashlea has admittedly not given it too much thought, she says "mental strength is definitely more than 50 per cent of the equation." For her own success, Ashlea says

she "tries not to focus on other people, just on my own shooting, while not worrying about my score or anyone else's." A lover of music, she finds this can help, even "singing songs in my own head." One of Ashlea's proudest moments is "beating my husband to be the Overall 3-gun winner at the 2016 Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette National titles."

To prepare for comps, Ashlea says she "increases the frequency of shooting in the lead-ups," saying she "does more matches, competes in every way possible and creates a comp-type environment." To help achieve this, Ashlea "continuously goes through the motions with her shot routine under match rules." Practice makes perfect they say, and rightly so!

But it's not all just discipline about disciplines for Ashlea, who says "a big part of my social life is at the range" where she "shoots

with family and friends." In fact, Ashlea even met her husband at the Nationals at her now-home range of SSAA Para in South Australia. So strong was Ashlea's connection that she moved to South Australia from Victoria over a decade ago and now has a family with Dave, whose father Bill McCarthy was the caretaker of the Para branch for many years. Beyond this, Ashlea has made many close friends through her involvement with the SSAA Para Range and says it's a fun place to be, as are the other SSAA ranges across the country.

And that really is the message that the SSAA and Ashlea would like to send. Spending time at a SSAA shooting range is an enjoyable and safe experience, that no-one should fear. Ashlea says that many don't get that "firearms are not intended for bad purposes or unsafe when handled correctly." Guns = bad seems



The Australian Team at the 2017 International Gallery Rifle Federation World Championships. L to R: Andrew Matis, Dave McCarthy, Ashlea McCarthy, Joanne Fenwick and Don Rob.

to be the stigma for those uneducated on the matter, who simply don't understand how safe and rewarding the shooting sports are.

SSAA ranges are a safe and fun zone run by qualified SSAA Range Officers and experienced shooters. They will put a stop to anything untoward in a heartbeat. Having said that, everyone at SSAA ranges does the right thing. "Safety comes down to common sense," says Ashlea. "There's no grey area - it's all black and white - simply follow the rules and regulations."

Despite her many successes, including starting a family of her own, Ashlea still has a couple of aspirations when it comes to the shooting sports. "I'd like to shoot a score of 40 in Lever Action Silhouette," she said. "I'd

also like to get a Gallery Rifle team together" added Ashlea. Although it's a team of five, Ashlea is keeping an eye on things and thinks she is well on her way to achieving this particular goal... watch this space.

And apart from further refining her shooting skills, what Ashlea really wants to do is "keep having fun!" and I don't think there's anyone or anything stopping her from getting exactly what she wants.

There's no denying that the shooting sports have enhanced Ashlea's life, including through family and friendships. So, what advice has Ashlea got for anyone considering getting involved in the shooting sports? "Give it a go!" she reckons. And we couldn't agree more! ●



Ashlea shooting Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette.

Good friend and current SSAA President Andrew Judd presenting Ashlea with a medal at the 2017 SSAA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette Nationals.





Introducing your friends to the shooting range

Ensure the best outcome thanks to **Suzy Balogh OAM**, who covers everything you need to think about

Taking your friends to a SSAA shooting range is a rewarding experience. If they haven't shot before, it will be exhilarating. And if your friends are licensed but not tried your discipline of shooting, they will gain a sense of accomplishment from trying something new. You will surely be proud to introduce your friends to something you love to do. Your friends will experience the skill and mindfulness that goes into your sport or pastime and feel the camaraderie and satisfaction shooting at the range brings.

There are formal ways of introducing your friends to shooting, such as with a company that conducts try shooting sessions professionally or going along to your SSAA shooting club's open day. These formal events are tailored around the 'try' shooters' enjoyment and are well planned, very friendly, festive, and accom-

modating with generally all the expertise and equipment necessary for a safe and comfortable shooting introduction. However, many people want to introduce their friends and family personally to the range, which can be accommodated. It's always good to check with the club first. If you are planning to introduce them to shooting yourself, here are things to consider, ensuring you keep safety and enjoyment as priorities.

Inform the SSAA range

Inform the range you will be bringing along a new shooter or a licensed shooter new to the range. Establish whether you can personally show them how to shoot.

Book them in, get details of what the range expectations are, what photo identification is necessary and if there are any documents that require filling in. Be sure to check the age re-

strictions and parental supervision requirements for your state or territory. Book any suitable equipment to hire if you do not have it.

Pick a time when the range is quiet, as there will be less people around to be nervous in front of. A quiet time will have less noise and distractions, and SSAA Range Officers will be more able to readily assist if required.

If you are not up to the task of instructing your friend (be honest) seek a professional coach or instructor to take them for their first shot or to stand by and keep an eye on proceedings with you. SSAA clubs will have someone with proper accreditation, training and experience in dealing with new shooters.

Demystify it with structure

One of the things that makes people nervous about going to the range is that they do not know what to expect. Structure an outline of



Suzy (far left) showing three of her friends the ropes.

what they are going to do. Discuss the plan with them, ask for questions and try to help address any fears or expectations they may have. Send them the outline.

An example may be:

1. Arrive at range.
2. Undergo a safety briefing including any etiquette or range commands.
3. Listen to instructions and watch a demonstration.
4. Know what to do if there is a jam or misfire.
5. Know where to point the firearm safely.
6. Know how to place the firearm down or how to pass it to the instructor safely.
7. Stance.
8. Loading the firearm.
9. Gun mount/positioning.
10. Sighting, aiming/pointing, triggering.
11. Unloading the firearm.
12. Proving it safe.
13. Time to ask any questions before taking up the firearm.
14. Prepare firearm and ammunition.
15. Dry firing under instruction.
16. Live firing under instruction.
17. Mini competition / test what you have learnt / keep or record score.
18. Clearing firearm.

19. Cleaning firearm.

20. Storing firearm.

21. Debriefing.

Logistics checklist

- Is there a formal police form that needs completing to be approved to shoot in your state or territory? Check prior to going to the range that your friends can meet the necessary requirements, such as the Police Declaration P650 form in New South Wales
- How much will it cost, do you need to book in, pre-pay?
- What photo ID or documentation is required?
- Do you need to do an online introductory course or watch a video beforehand?
- How long will you be at the range for?
- Outline how to behave at the range and that they need to be sober to shoot
- What clothes and shoes to wear
- What to bring to the range – sunscreen, sunnies, wet weather gear
- If they have prescription glasses, bring them along
- If they have their own hearing protection, bring it along
- Should they pack food and water?

Outline the shooting side of things

- What discipline will they be shooting?
- What type of gun will they be using and how does it work?
- What type of ammunition and how does it work?
- What will they be aiming at – paper, silhouette, clay target?
- Will shooting be indoors or outdoors?
- How will it be scored?
- Will they be shooting standing, kneeling, prone, using a bench?
- Pass on useful website links, such as the SSAA venue and club they are visiting, competitive shooting matches and instructional videos along with anything else you may think will help prepare them.

Things you may need to know about your friend

- How strong or physically fit are they?
- How mobile are they?
- Do they have any injuries or health issues that need to be considered, eg, missing thumb, bad knee, diabetic, allergic to wasps or bees etc?
- Are they tall, short, petite, deep chested?
- How is their vision and hearing?
- Are they left or right-handed?
- Do they require lower recoil options? If so,



plan to minimise this, eg, lighter rounds, padding, recoil absorbers, modified stance and modified equipment. Let your friends know the processes or equipment that are in place to minimise recoil.

Be reassuring

Discuss with your friend that if they get a little too nervous, overwhelmed or excited that they should let you or the instructor know, put the gun down safely or allow the instructor to take it off them. Then they can sit down and take calming breaths, drink water or even a sweet drink.

It is also handy to know how much experience

someone has if you are introducing them to a new discipline or range. Sometimes experienced shooters or hunters may have habits which are not desirable on the range you are currently at. For example, field shooters and those defence trained often point the gun at the ground, something highly undesirable on a clay target range as there is so much concrete around and ricochets may happen if the firearm is accidentally discharged.

Alternately, people that have never fired a gun before may be particularly nervous as they do not know what to expect and may need a little more reassurance and guidance.

Arriving at the range

Ranges are notoriously difficult to find so make sure the location details are clear for your friends. It is ideal to travel together but if not let them know where to park and where to meet up with you.

Outline what the signing in process is when they arrive at the range. Let your friends know if they will need to wear a range attendance sticker or wristband. If bringing licensed shooters along that have their own firearm, let them know the range requirements such as signing it in, where to store it and where to assemble.

Your friends may like to know if you will be meeting up with other friends, regular shooters and even SSAA Range Officers. Also give them the basics like the locations of the toilets and canteen.

Tips on how to instruct new shooters

For those friends learning to shoot for the first time, you will need to think about everything they do. Little will be automatic for new shooters. They will need to know how to stand or position themselves, how to hold the firearm and where to place their hands, how to load and unload the firearm, how to sight along it and whether to aim or point. Explain everything before your friend gets their hands on the firearm, which can be heavy, as you do not want to be giving a laborious explanation while they're holding it up.

When instructing a new skill, a good process is to explain it, show them how it is done, explain again, allow them to ask questions, then get them to tell you what they are going to do and then allow them to practice it (with the firearm unloaded). When you feel they understand the process and can do it safely, then the firearm can be loaded. Be alongside them to guide and explain and to take charge if required.

Minimise instruction when they are firing. Remember shooting is a self-paced skill, particularly for beginners. Your friends will have hearing protection on, and sometimes new shooters can be quite stunned and unsure of what to do, therefore not listen very well. Appropriate touching cues can be especially useful to communicate with them. Let them know prior that you may be helping position



Suzy (left) with the daughter of an experienced rifle shooter, having a go here with a shotgun.

the firearm, moving their hands and fingers to the correct spots on the gun, showing them where to place their head and where the gun will go on their chest/shoulder. A tip for rifles and pistols is to take your friends to an outdoor range or a spacious indoor range first as it is usually a little less overwhelming and 'fishbowl' than a small indoor range.

Start simple and do what you can to make your friends comfortable by reducing recoil and helping them feel like they are achieving something by hitting the targets - make them easy. Use light loads, padded jackets and a good fitting gun and easy target presentation for clay target shooting. For paper targets or silhouettes, maybe a .22 pistol or a scope on a .22 rifle.

Your friends may love it, some may hate it, and some may have a couple of shots and then just say that it is not for them, and they have had enough and just want to observe. Try to be understanding of their needs. Just think that by initiating someone to shooting, even if it is just coming along to the range and seeing your enjoyment from them being

there, you have educated them on sports shooting and how it can be a wonderful pastime.

Making the day special

Maybe have a picnic planned for after your session, get tee shirts or caps made up, present them with their own special ear protection. You could even tee up some of the regular shooters to come and greet your friends and make them feel welcome. Take photos and videos, give them take home mementoes such as a clay target, empty casing or cartridge, paper target or score sheet.

Follow up questions

Be ready for follow up questions, as you know your friend is going to ask them: "When can we do it again?"; "How do I get my license?"; "How much time and money do I have to put into it?"; "How do I join this club?"; "Can I try different disciplines, firearms and calibres?"

Have details of the next license course or even a club application form handy. Plan a

trip to the gunshop. Even if they do not become licensed and a SSAA member at least your friends will know the sport you are involved with, why it brings you joy and will be supportive of your endeavours, and they might just become some of your greatest cheerleaders!

If your friends have had an enjoyable and safe introduction to the SSAA range, then that is a win! ●



A take-home memento from shooting pistols in an indoor range.

“ A tribute to service

I was very interested in the story on the historical military service of Kath Heiman's ancestors in the September issue (#24) of *Australian Women's Shooter*. Many of us 'older generation' have similar stories of family members serving in the various military branches in World War One and World War Two. What particularly piqued my interest in this story was just having read Peter FitzSimons' book *The Last Charge of the Australian Light Horse*. It's an enthralling read on the 'dering-do' of the Anzacs at Gallipoli and in Egypt in particular. Having read the book, I can understand why the Anzacs detested most of their English officers of the 'old boy network', most of whom had no clue as to the modern warfare of that time. General Sir Edmund Allenby being the exception to the rule. The Anzacs were the most courageous, versatile troops anyone would be proud to command. These men, and sometimes boys, were used to tough condition in Australia in the 1800s and early 1900s and excelled in the desert conditions that in some cases were similar to home...

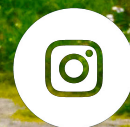
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