

Report of Proceedings

of the

**Game and Pest Management
Advisory Board (GPMAB)**

**Hunting and Pest Management
Forum**

held at Penrith, NSW

on 21 October 2017

Compiled by: Bob Gough

Correct as at: 27 Nov 2017

Persons Consulted: Prof Robert Mulley, David Voss.

Executive Summary

- 1. Purpose.** The Game and Pest Management Forum was convened by the Game and Pest Management Advisory Board (GPMAB) at Penrith, NSW on 21 October 2017. The purpose of the forum was to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to hear how wildlife is managed in a range of situations by volunteer hunters in Australia and New Zealand; and to define the key issues surrounding the role of hunters in game and pest management in NSW. Over 100 stakeholders attended and took the opportunity to express their views and participate in focus groups that were designed to provide stakeholder driven direction for the GPMAB.
- 2. Report format.** This report of proceedings describes the activities conducted during the forum. The report format discusses the main points of each activity and directs the reader to related annexes that cover each activity in detail.
- 3. Morning Sessions.** During the morning sessions, six short presentations were delivered by guest speakers. These presentations discussed the role of the GPMAB; how hunters are contributing to conservation by addressing wildlife impacts in New Zealand, Victoria and New South Wales in a range of simple and complex environments ranging from small farms through high visitor use National Parks; how there is little scientific measurement of hunter effectiveness in the southern hemisphere; and the many opportunities where recreational and pest hunting can be aligned and used in wildlife management programs. A summary of these presentations is presented in the report.
- 4.** This set the scene for the afternoon focus group discussions, and placed participants in a position where they better understood how hunters can contribute to wildlife management; how science will measure the hunter's contribution; and the role of the GLU and GPMAB.
- 5. Afternoon Focus Groups.** The afternoon Focus Groups were facilitated by Board members and supported by Game Licensing Unit's (GLU) staff. These sessions allowed participants to consider five prominent aspects of game and pest hunting and to make recommendations to the GPMAB noting any assumptions or limitations. Transcripts of this information are included in Annexes A through F. At the completion of the group sessions; each group was given three minutes to back-brief the workshop on their discussion and took questions of fact from the Board and other participants. The priority issues from focus groups, and suggestions received from attendees after the forum are presented in Table One and in the final pages of this report.
- 6. Analysis of discussion points and development of themes.** Detailed analysis of the Focus Group discussions and priority issues highlighted a number of threads that were grouped into themes and analysed in detail in Annex G. Recommendations arising from the themes are included at the end of Annex G.

Table One Summary of Priority Issues from Focus Groups	
Focus Group	Priority Issues
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The public perception of hunters. 2. Improving hunting culture.
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve collaboration and engagement. 2. Biosecurity training. 3. Insurance. 4. Improve hunter image.
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Park accreditation. 2. Collaboration and relationship building. 3. Blaze orange. 4. Bio security. 5. Hunter LEAP training. 6. Citizen science.
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impediments. 2. Engagement models. 3. Operational models.
5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved internal communications. 2. Improved external communications.
Post Forum Suggestions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kangaroo management should be transferred from National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). 2. Comment on the economic value of hunting, the provision of facilities and infrastructure to benefit hunters, disruption of hunting activities by unregistered motorbike riders and general

**Report of Proceedings of the Game and Pest Management Advisory Board
(GPMAB) Hunting and Pest Management Forum
held at Penrith, NSW on 21 October 2017**

Introduction

7. The following report documents the proceedings of the GPMAB Hunting and Pest Management Forum, held at Penrith, NSW on 21 October 2017. The purpose of the forum was to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to hear how wildlife is managed in a range of situations by volunteer hunters in Australia and New Zealand; and then to work through the key issues surrounding the role of hunters in game and pest management. Over 100 stakeholders attended and took the opportunity to express their views and participate in focus groups that were designed to provide stakeholder driven feedback for the GPMAB.

Forum Administration

8. **Communications.** Communications before, during and after the workshop were excellent. Information for inclusion into this report was received in a very timely manner, and communications flowed well by email and phone. The facilitator wishes to thank the GLU staff and the GPMAB for their expertise, professionalism, openness and approachability.

9. **WHS.** The facilitator briefed those attending on the emergency evacuation plan and on participant behaviour. There were no behaviour or WHS issues on the day, and none reported to the facilitator post workshop.

10. **Venue and Catering.** The main venue and breakout rooms were of suitable size. The toilets were of suitable capacity and all parts of the venue were clean and well maintained. Panthers support staff were allocated for catering and audio visual management and were knowledgeable and helpful. The audio visual suite was of basic design and worked satisfactorily. A fixed microphone was attached to the podium for presenters, which had the effect of “anchoring” the speaker to the podium. A hand held microphone was provided for questions from the floor and worked reasonably well. A clip on microphone would have been useful for the facilitator and presenters to enable them to work “hands free” and to move around. The catering was of a good standard and variety, and portions were generous.

Summary of Morning Session Presentations by Guest Speakers

Presentation One: Coining the issue. (Prof Rob Mulley, Chair, Game and Pest Management Advisory Board).

11. Prof Mulley explained that the Board was established by Ministerial appointment to provide advice to the Minister on issues relating to game and feral animal hunting and pest management; and that the Board operates in a similar way to the Recreational Fishing Advisory Board; in that the Board operates separately to the GLU and is subject to the control and direction of the Minister, except with regard to advice provided to the Minister; and that the GLU provides administrative support to the Board.

12. Rob then spoke of the GPMAB achievements so far, including the Economics of Hunting in NSW research report, game bird research (quail and pigeon population estimates) and the response to NRC Report. Rob also advised how the Board has met with over 50 AHO's across NSW and conducted Board Meetings in 11 key areas across NSW in past 3 years.

13. Rob explained how the Board had developed position statements on many pest species and spoke of the key stakeholder issues that the Board have encountered at meetings with AHO representatives, including access to public and private land, concerns over illegal hunting and the NRC Report and impact on hunting.

14. Lastly, Rob explained the program for the day and explained how the Board will consider the key points from the focus group discussions to develop recommendations for the Minister for Primary Industries, The Hon Niall Blair.

Presentation Two: Hunting as a pest management tool for Sika deer in the North Island of NZ. (Mike Perry – DOC, Palmerston North, NZ)

15. Mike Perry is the Biodiversity Monitoring Manager for the Department of Conservation, at Palmerston North in New Zealand. <http://www.doc.govt.nz/kaweka-sika>. Mike spoke about Sika deer hunting in Kaweka Forest Park, where hunters help control sika deer in order to allow mountain beech forests to recover from the impacts of the deer.

16. The Kaweka Forest Park is a 60,000 ha area of public land near Hawke's Bay, North Island, New Zealand. In the late 1990s, a study found that browsing by sika deer was having a widespread detrimental influence on regeneration and species composition of the mountain beech forest within the Kaweka Forest Park. In 1998, the Kaweka Mountain Beech Project began to address the issue and the Kaweka Hunter Liaison Group was developed. The group agreed that aerial deer control supplemented by enhanced recreational hunting would be the control method used to address deer impacts.

17. Over the past 18 years, aerial deer control has been carried out over approximately 20,000 ha of the park. In the summer of 2016/17, DOC decided to cease aerial control and assess whether enhanced recreational hunting can maintain deer populations at the level needed for canopy recovery. In this program hunters are encouraged to harvest as many sika deer as possible in order to help the mountain beech canopy regenerate. DOC will carry out monitoring to evaluate whether or not aerial deer control needs to be reintroduced.

18. To increase hunter participation, DOC have placed huts in key areas for hunters to use, they also publish maps showing the density taken from faecal pellet count study; and are improving hunter access. There is no additional training required to participate in this program. Participants are simply requested to plan their hunting trip in an area that shows the need for further deer control, and to harvest more animals from areas that have higher deer populations. As the program is less than 12 months old there is insufficient data that would allow measurement, however; the program is widely supported by hunters, who are very keen to participate.

Presentation Three: Peri-urban deer management in Melbourne. (Steve Garlic, Chairman, ADA Deer Management Committee).

19. Steve Garlic discussed the ADA deer management approach and presented an overview of ADA programs in Victoria. He described the principles and assessment criteria used by ADA before committing to a program and presented case studies to show how ADA programs addressed deer impacts.

20. Steve noted that in Victoria, the ADA has been successfully managing overabundant deer on public and private land since 2004, and that ADA deer management programs use well led and coordinated volunteer hunters without change to existing legislation.

21. Program hunters use their own vehicles and equipment (e.g. Cat B firearms in “deer legal” calibers) and their own night vision (Infra Red or thermal Imaging) equipment, or night vision equipment purchased by the program. Steve explained that ADA programs focus on heavy female harvest, with operational parameters such as frequency of attendance, shooting times and methods being set by the landowner / manager. Participants are trained, accredited and vetted by ADA, and all ADA programs are internally audited to ensure they comply with legislation and humaneness. ADA has a rigorous in house training program, where non-performing hunters are offered retraining until they meet the required standard; and ADA use experienced hunters to mentor new inductees to the program. ADA also draw on the civil qualifications, knowledge and skills of their members to align training and education with National and/or international standards and criteria and to problem solve and adapt processes and techniques. Steve also explained that ADA has a detailed Code of Conduct and formal disciplinary process should hunters breach any property or program rules, procedure or policy, or any legislation.

22. In conclusion, Steve made the point that well trained and led volunteer hunters are able to meet the significant safety and operational constraints of complex deer management operations in any environment. He also noted that the keys to success revolve around effective leadership and management of resources, stakeholder engagement, social licence, detailed planning and balancing operational cadence to matches operator availability and capacity with management objectives.

Presentation Four: NSW NPWS Supplementary Pest Control Program and SSAA NSW Farmer Assist Program. (Ben Russell and Di Melham – Office of Environment and Heritage and SSAA NSW)

23. Ben and Di briefed the workshop on history of the Supplementary Pest Control (SPC) program with NPWS and spoke of the soon-to-be-released report that will explain the effectiveness of the program. Di spoke of the New South Wales SSAA Farmer Assist program in general terms and explained how interested members could participate. There was no discussion on the success of these programs or on the uptake by hunters or landholders of the farmer assist program.

Presentation Five: Hunter effectiveness and pest management – what does the science tell us? (Andrew Bengsen – NSW DPI Vertebrate Pest Research Unit)

24. The main point of Andrew's presentation is that it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of hunters in pest management programs because there is little science to judge such effectiveness. Andrew comes to a similar conclusion in a number of papers he has authored or co-authored - that hunters could possibly play a role in effective pest management and the use of hunters in such roles needs to be managed effectively and measured in detail.

Presentation Six: Recreational hunting and pest hunting – where do they fit? (Andrew Moriarty – NSW DPI Game Licensing Unit)

25. Andrew discussed the many opportunities where recreational hunting and pest hunting can be aligned; noting that the roles of recreational hunter and pest hunter are complimentary rather than separate, and that hunters have a significant part to play in wildlife management in New South Wales.

26. In conclusion, the morning presentations were an eye-opener for many, and set the scene for the afternoon focus group discussions. At the completion of the morning presentations, participants were in a position where they now better understood role of the GLU and GPMAB and how the Board acts as a conduit to the Minister; how hunters can contribute to wildlife management; and, how science will measure the contribution.

Persons Consulted: Prof Rob Mulley, Dr Andrew Moriarty, GLU Staff, Mike Perry, Steve Garlic, Andrew Bengsen, Di Melham, and Ben Russell.

Focus Group discussions

27. The Focus Groups considered five key aspects of game and pest hunting. Participants were requested to note any assumptions or limitations and to make recommendations. This information was captured on butcher's paper and later transcribed into a series of Word documents that may be found at Annexes A through E. At the completion of the group sessions; each group was given three minutes to back-brief the workshop on their discussion and took questions of fact from the Board and other participants.

28. Participants were allocated to focus groups by means of a coloured dot on their name tag. This allowed the GPMAB to ensure a good spread of participants, to allocate subject matter experts to specific groups and to deconflict potential issues. Members of the Board and support of the GLU staff were allocated to each focus group by their expertise and interest. The Facilitator visited each focus group several times to prompt discussion and monitor progress.

Focus Group Topics and Priority Issues

29. Table One (below) is a summary of the priority issues from the Focus Groups, and from two suggestions (Annex F) that were submitted post workshop. The priority issues from each focus group and the post workshop suggestions are discussed in the following section. Facilitator comments are in Times New Roman font.

Table One Summary of Priority Issues from Focus Groups	
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1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The public perception of hunters.2. Improving hunting culture.
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improve collaboration and engagement.2. Biosecurity training.3. Insurance.4. Improve hunter image.
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. National Park accreditation.2. Collaboration and relationship building.3. Blaze orange.4. Biosecurity.5. Leap training.6. Citizen science.
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Impediments.2. Engagement models.3. Operational models.
5	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improved internal communications.2. Improved external communications.
Post Forum Suggestions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kangaroo management should be transferred from NPWS to DPI.2. Comment on the economic value of hunting, the provision of facilities and infrastructure to benefit hunters, disruption of hunting activities by unregistered motorbike riders and general comments on hunting.

Focus Group 1. Hunting as a Pest Management Tool – Impediments, how and when? (Annex A.)

Priority issues

30. **Public perception of hunters.** Focus Group 1 felt that our own and the public's perception of hunters plays a significant role in the acceptance of hunting as a pest management tool. The group felt that hunters could improve their social licence and public acceptance through positive engagement with local communities, local government groups, community groups, organisations such as Landcare and the NSW Farmers Federation and the media.

31. **Improving hunting culture.** Focus Group 1 also considered that to improve our culture, hunters may require adequate training; and that hunters should develop the capacity with regard to providing subject matter expertise in animal ecology, the use of firearms or bows in pest management, navigation etc; and that we need to act immediately.

Focus Group 2. How can hunters and landholders collaborate better to achieve pest animal management objectives? (Annex B.)

Priority issues

32. **Improve collaboration and engagement.** Priority issues for Focus Group 2 are to improve collaboration and engagement between landholders and hunters and to blend landholder and hunter objectives so that landholders have access to trusted, reliable and competent hunters, who attend at times when they are needed; and hunters have sustainable access and are able to make a contribution.

33. **Bio security training.** Focus Group 2 felt that a Biosecurity module should be added to hunter LEAP. They also agreed that AHOs should access some specific hunter LEAP courses connected to hunting and stewardship in the belief that more training equals more credibility.

34. **Insurance.** There was some confusion within Focus Group 2 of insurance requirements and what was covered by the Game Licensing public liability insurance.

35. **Improve hunter image.** Focus Group 2 also commented on the absence of authentic dialogue, leading to mistrust of hunter motives and lack of confidence in hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes by landholders. Hunters need opportunities to demonstrate their skills and promote the benefits of hunting in order to improve hunter image.

Focus Group 3. How can hunting be used to better assist public land managers with pest animal management? (Annex C.)

Priority issues

36. **National Park accreditation.** Accreditation / qualification to hunt in NP on R – Licence.
37. **Collaboration and relationship building.** Build relationships with agencies – reduce their and our negative perceptions and empathize / understand the other person’s situation.
38. **Blaze orange.** Blaze orange worn by all people who recreate on public land i.e. bushwalkers.
39. **Biosecurity.** Managing the interface between public and private land both ways.
40. **Hunter Leap training.** Greater emphasis on training Hunter LEAP trainers / providers.
41. **Citizen science.** How can we incorporate citizen science? Do we need to develop recording apps?

Focus Group 4. Integrating hunting into Regional Pest Animal Management Plans. (Annex D.)

Priority issues

42. **Impediments.** Focus Group 4 agreed that risk, WHS, trust, infrastructure and an “air gap” between expectations and capabilities could all prove to be impediments to the use of hunters in pest management.
43. **Engagement and Operational Models.** From the transcript and notes, Focus Group 4 believed that an Engagement Model and an Operational Model were required, and all present agreed that the GLU Native Game Bird model using the Game Hunting Licence was a good model to base from. Engagement and Operational Models will be discussed separately below.
 - a. **Engagement Models.** Focus Group 4 suggested that the Engagement Model should include a mediator / broker / facilitator who would act as the single point of contact to liaise between hunters and government agencies; and a mechanism where individuals could sign up to offer their services, noting that this too would require co-ordination and facilitation. Focus Group 4 noted the risk of favouritism should the facilitator /co-ordinator be provided by an AHO.
 - b. **Operational model.** Focus Group 4 suggested that the Operational Model was mostly about managing risk. The group believed that given the range of target species and location specifics, each Operation would need its own written plan.

Focus Group 5. Identifying the benefits of hunting on public and private land in NSW. (Annex E.)

Priority Issues

44. **Improved internal and external communications.** Focus Group 5 agreed that hunting has positive social, environmental and economic benefits and that hunters need to let the public know about the value add of hunting through improved communications both internal and external. These areas will be discussed separately below.

a. Internal communications.

- i. **E-Newsletters and smart phone applications.** Focus Group 5 believes that communication between the GPMAB and AHO's (GPMAB to member and member to GPMAB) could be improved through setting up an online network or through E-newsletters, or smart phone applications.
- ii. **Policy and Procedure library.** The concept of a Policy and Procedure library, where Hunters could access documents for use and research and could contribute to relevant policy, procedures and Codes of Practice was supported by a number of attendees.

b. External communications.

- i. **Increase public awareness.** Focus Group 5 agreed that hunters need to increase public awareness of the RLC system, separate legal from illegal hunters in the public's eye, and expand the message that hunting is a cultural activity similar to fishing, where participants derive a mental and physical health benefit by harvesting organic food.
- ii. **Hunting as a "value add".** Focus Group 5 identified several other themes for external communication based around the "value add" of hunting. These include hunters augmenting other wildlife management on farm and providing an additional set of eyes and ears to landholders; and, how hunters can be used as citizen scientists.
- iii. **Social benefits of hunting.** Most hunters belong to government approved hunting organisations; and enjoy the physical and mental wellness benefits of hunting as a celebration of the circle of life. Hunters re-establish family bonds and share culture and ethics through hunting and use the wild harvest as a pathway for youth to discover the natural world, to get kids outdoors and learn new uses for technology e.g. GPS and satellite mapping, monitoring hydrology, predicting the location of animals by using a knowledge of their habits and known landuse preferences.

Post Forum Suggestions from Participants

45. **Information capture:** Suggestion forms were distributed among participants during the workshop. Two suggestions were received and are attached as Annex F. In Suggestion One, a participant was of the opinion that kangaroo management should be transferred from NPWS to the DPI. In Suggestion Two, a participant commented on the economic value of hunting, and suggested that the Government could provide facilities and infrastructure that would benefit hunters in the field, such as huts. The participant went on to explain what hunting meant to him, and made a number of general comments regarding unregistered motorbike riders, gun laws, insufficient compliance activities etc.

Developing themes from an Analysis of the Priority Issues from Focus Group Discussions

46. Detailed analysis of the Focus Group discussions highlighted a number of similar priorities that were grouped into themes and are presented at Table Two below. These themes are presented with recommendations for consideration by the GPMAB and GLU as Annex G.

Table Two. Themes for consideration by the GPMAB drawn from analysis of Focus Group discussions	
Theme	Description
1	Hunter Motivations, Capacity and Benefits
2	Impediments
3	Improving internal and external communications
4	Hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes, and Hunter education
5	Engagement and Operational Models

Conclusion

47. This report documented the proceedings of the GPMAB Game and Pest Management Workshop, held at Penrith, NSW on 21 October 2017. The workshop brought together over 100 stakeholders to hear how wildlife is managed in a range of situations by volunteer hunters. The opportunity to participate in stakeholder driven focus groups was well received and produced excellent outcomes. These outcomes will add significant feedback for the GPMAB and GLU.

Recommendation

48. It is recommended that the GPMAB consider the themes and recommendations drawn from analysis of Focus Group issues presented at Annex G.

Annexes:

- A. Transcript of Focus Group 1.
- B. Transcript of Focus Group 2.
- C. Transcript of Focus Group 3.
- D. Transcript of Focus Group 4.
- E. Transcript of Focus Group 5.
- F. Transcript of Post Focus Group Suggestions.
- G. Themes developed from Focus Group Issues.

Attachments:

- 1. Attachment 1 to Annex G Key Media messages.
- 2. Attachment 2 to Annex G Summary of Recommendations.

Transcript of Focus Group 1.
Hunting as a pest management tool – impediments, how and when?

Board and Staff lead: Andrew Glover (Advisory Board member) and Joe Amoroso, (GLU staff) (Yellow Group)

Impediments

1. Public Perceptions/Culture
 - a. Of hunters
 - b. Perception of ourselves
 - c. Landholders / Managers
2. Access / Opportunities
 - a. Reputation
 - b. Trust
 - c. Image
3. Ideology
 - a. The killing of wild animals
 - b. Hunting is not a ruthless act
 - c. Only paid professionals or farm employees should be used for wildlife management
 - d. Utilise citizen science
 - e. Hunter effectiveness
 - f. Available science on wildlife populations
 - g. Public attitudes to hunters (social licence)
 - h. Media and communications (Access to media platforms)
 - i. Mentoring / Stewardship (lacking)
 - j. Independent body to present data to the public
4. Politics
 - a. hunters engage with government groups / agencies including LGA, Shires, LLS and NPWS
 - b. Public Perception (social license?)
 - c. Lack of knowledge
 - i. Science
 - ii. Education
 - iii. Urbanization
 - iv. Public
 - d. Media
 - i. Why do we listen to it?
 - ii. How do we challenge it to build our reputation.
 - e. Beaucrats

- f. Polarise
 - i. How do we present as hunters?
 - ii. We use the meat taken from the hunt (and would be happy to share)
 - iii. Sustainable land use
 - iv. Hunters against law breakers
 - v. Leaving a carcass (missing head feeding predators)
 - vi. is antisocial behaviour that looks bad to nonhunters.

How

1. Improve the image of hunting
 - a. Engage local communities
 - i. Identify wildlife issues
 - ii. NGBM
 - iii. Local govt orgs
 1. LLS
 2. NPWS
 - i. Community groups
 1. Landcare
 2. NSW Farmers
2. Improve our culture
 - a. Require adequate training in
 - i. Marksmanship
 - ii. training
 - iii. Licences
 - b. Reduce Red tape
 - i. Chainsaw
 - ii. First aid
3. Research
 - a. Analyse Act and Regs to make it work
 - b. Submit a proposal to the board with credible information from scientists and hunters (including citizen scientists)
 - c. Voluntary harvest reporting on private land.
 - d. Collect Data
 - e. Present data
 - f. Use science
4. Community and organizational engagement
 - a. Licensed hunting = reduced illegal hunting
 - b. Hunters are happy to pay licence fees and to pay for the opportunity to hunt.
 - c. Revenue generates 1.7bn
 - d. Engage hunters as a whole (poss regardless of AHO?)

5. Education
 - a. Hunters
 - b. Landholders
 - c. Organisations
 - i. Document the professional skills of hunters.
 - d. Public
 - e. Education
6. Citizen science / corporate knowledge
7. Local knowledge
8. Hunting experience
 - a. – it's not just about hunting
9. Subject matter expertise
 - a. Animal ecology
 - b. Firearms use
 - c. Use of bows
 - d. Club (AHO) training
 - e. Navigation
10. Licensed hunting = reduced illegal hunting

When

1. Now
2. When an issue has been identified
3. Environmental factors
4. Political and Social opportunities
 - a. Revenue raising

What is needed?

2. Access
 - a. Hunter reputation
 - b. Trust (public and stakeholder)
 - c. Image of hunters (real V stereotype)
3. Media
 - a. Cost of Access
 - i. Money
 - ii. Services
 - iii. Work
 - iv. Alternate income

- b. Contacts
 - i. Must know a farmer to get access
 - ii. Hunters protect their patch
 - iii. Shared or exclusive access?
- 4. Offer advice – it's not just about hunting
 - a. Advice on wildlife populations
 - b. Advice on wildlife management tools
 - i. Netting / ferreting
 - ii. Ground shooting
 - iii. dogging
 - iv. bows
 - c. Write or contribute to Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) and Codes of Practice on:
 - i. Thermal / night vision
 - ii. Habitat manipulations
 - iii. Fencing
 - iv. Trail cameras
 - v. Military processes such as deconfliction
 - vi. Animal behavior (rutting etc)
 - d. Advise on Week day V weekend activities
 - e. The best time to use hunters:
 - i. (When is the impact of the target animal at its greatest?)
 - ii. Coordinated with farming practices, e.g. during lambing / calving, cultivation / crop sprouting and/or harvesting.
 - iii. During drought or disease outbreaks

Types of management tools

1. Where does recreational hunting fit?
2. Impediments to collaboration with government
3. Social impediments
4. Regulations – controlled use of firearms
5. Acts / Regulations and permissions
6. Cost = revenue benefits
7. Methods of wildlife control
 - a. Primary control methods are baiting and biological control
 - b. Habitat modification fencing
 - c. Trapping, shooting and ferreting

Research question: When is the best time with regard to season, weather, day or night.

1. Govt running costs
 - a. Licences
 - b. Wages
 - c. Compliance

Priority Issues

1. Focus Group 1 felt that our own and the public's perception of hunters plays a significant role in the acceptance of hunting as a pest management tool. The group felt that hunters could improve their social licence and public acceptance through positive engagement with local communities local government groups, community groups and organisations such as Landcare and the NSW Farmers Federation and the media.

2. Focus Group 1 also considered that to improve our culture, hunters may require adequate training; and that hunters should develop the capacity with regard to providing subject matter expertise in animal ecology, the use of firearms or bows in pest management, navigation etc; and that we need to act immediately.

**Transcript of Focus Group 2.
How can hunters and landholders collaborate better
to achieve pest animal management objectives?**

Board and Staff lead: Christine Hall (Advisory Board member) Sarah Chester and Troy Hogarth (GLU Staff) (Pink)

Transcript Landholder

objectives

1. Protection of livestock and crops.
2. Trustworthy, reliable, timely, competent, accredited hunters.

Hunter objectives

3. Access to hunt – to be there and to participate in the culture of hunting.
4. Willingness to assist in problem (overabundant) native and introduced wildlife management.
5. Ability and opportunity to hunt a targeted species, e.g. deer.
6. To practice, promote and create acceptance of hunting culture, and of ethical hunting.

Collaboration and Engagement between farmers and hunters

7. Pest Management Groups should use hunters as another tool in the “golf bag” of management options.
8. Could Pest Management Groups use AHO's in an area specific role?
9. Could AHO's in country areas sponsor city AHO's? or, could city AHO's set up country “chapters” or “branches”.
10. AHO collaboration model: Coordinator / Liaison Officer provides a single point of contact. Written policies and procedures. Roster during peak periods. Harvest returns. G Licence holders are insured. Facilitators are to ensure that there are representatives

Specific Points

11. Biosecurity module added to Hunter LEAP.
12. AHO should access some specific Hunter LEAP courses connected to hunting and stewardship – more training = more credibility.
13. Insurance???
 - a. G Licence Public Liability
 - b. Most AHO have PLI
 - c. Hunters need Personal Insurance so the landholder is not liable (**Note:** All stakeholders need a better understanding of their insurance needs)

Benefits

14. Insured hunters Public Liability and Personal Insurance to reduce risk to property and landowner.
15. Ongoing attendance and frequent visits.
16. Co-operatives – (ownership) AHO's and Registered Pest Commission? (Liaison Officer / coordinator).

Biosecurity

17. **Farm Biosecurity:** Increased Biosecurity benefits because frequent attendance by licensed hunters could deter illegal hunting.
 - a. **Biosecurity Protects:** Farm, livestock, contracts.
 - b. **Process:** Education (off farm) followed by individual farm induction leads to compliance and positive outcomes for all.
 - c. **Carcass disposal.** What are the state laws and any local ordinances? What are accepted (legal) methods? (Council tip, pit on farm, burn or lime on farm, local zoo etc)

What is missing?

18. Lack of authentic dialogue, leading to mistrust of hunter motives and lack of confidence in hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes by landholders. Hunters need opportunities to promote the benefits of hunting in pest control.

Priority issues for Focus Group 2

19. **Improve collaboration and engagement.** Priority issues for Focus Group 2 are to improve collaboration and engagement between landholders and hunters and to blend landholder and hunter objectives so that landholders have trusted, reliable and competent hunters, who attend at times when they are needed; and hunters have sustainable access and are able to make a contribution.

20. **Bio security training.** Focus Group 2 felt that a Biosecurity module should be added to Hunter LEAP. He also agreed that AHO should access some specific hunter LEAP courses connected to hunting and stewardship – more training = more credibility.

21. **Insurance.** There was some confusion within Focus Group 2 of insurance requirements and what was covered by the GLU public liability insurance.

22. **Improve hunter image.** Focus Group 2 also commented on the absence of authentic dialogue, leading to mistrust of hunter motives and lack of confidence in hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes by landholders. Hunters need opportunities to demonstrate their skills and promote the benefits of hunting in order to improve hunter image.

Christine Hall Explanatory Notes via email

23. Christine Hall provided the following Notes via email.

24. The vocal members of my group seemed to be more focused on the means to achieve collaboration between hunters and private landholders for the objective of problem animal management than just access for individual hunters.

25. **Timeliness of Operations.** Sarah Chester and I emphasized the economic imperative of managing problem animals during periods of high need, like prior to and during lambing, or at certain times of planting and growing crops. This seemed to be accepted and understood by the group.

26. **Additional Accreditation.** There was one member who felt that there needed to be a higher level of accreditation for hunters on private land than an R licence to ensure competence, ethics and safety. Troy discussed this with him and can tell you more about his concerns. We partially solved these by suggesting that AHOs which want to participate in Pest Management programs should access some of the existing extra courses offered by the GLU for hunters. By doing this they could demonstrate that they are committed to safety and effective hunting and are willing to make an effort beyond the ordinary. We added the suggestion that the GLU might include a Biosecurity Module to fit in with the new regulations that farmers have to comply with. One hunter is unable to access a property because of this as they have a supermarket contract and need to comply with strict conditions.

27. **Hunter Mentoring and Sponsorship.** The group were aware that the gap between the large numbers of urban hunters and properties where there are problem animal management needs was the big hurdle. There is no easy solution here and

part of this solution will only ever be for individual hunters who create contacts through friends and relatives. I suggested the idea of "Brother AHOs". This may be a fantasy, but we discussed the possibility that country AHOs might connect with a city AHO and become a kind of brother organisation which could potentially work together in a region. Equally there could be more than one AHO in an area that could work together through the Pest Management Committees.

28. **Insurance.** There was also a general awareness that private landholders are risk averse and that there is a wariness to allow access that might lead to an insurance claim that is not covered by Public Liability Insurance. We wondered if there is any possibility of some level of Personal Insurance that might be accessible to G Licence holders?

29. **Hunters need to improve their image.** Finally, and perhaps uppermost in people's minds, is a sense that many in the general community regard hunters with some suspicion and distrust. That our pursuit and sport is denigrated, if not reviled. They hoped that there could be some kind of campaign to educate the public about the ethics of hunters and our place in a scheme of conservation and management.

**Transcript of Focus Group 3.
 How can hunting be used to better assist public land managers
 with pest animal management?**

Board and Staff lead: Rob Mulley (Chair, Advisory Board), Kylie Middleton (GLU staff) (Green)

Transcript

1. Focus Group 3 discussed a range of issues and presented their information as a table in priority order.

Issue	Priority allocated by Focus Group	Average Weighting	Priority
Accreditation / qualification to hunt in NP on R – Licence	4,1,1,1,4,1,1,1,1,1,1,1	18/1.5	1
Build relationships with Agencies – reduce their and our negative perceptions <i>and empathize / understand the other persons situation</i>	2,1,3,3,1,2,6,6,2,2,2,2	32/2.6	2
Blaze orange worn by all people who recreate on public land i.e. bushwalkers	3,2,2,6,5,3,3,3	27/3.37	3
Biosecurity – managing the interface between public and private land both ways	1,6,5,2,3,5,2,5,3	32/3.5	4
Greater emphasis on training LEAP trainers / providers	5,5,2,6,4,4,3	29/4	5
How can we incorporate citizen science? Do we need to develop recording apps?	6,4,4,3,2,5	24/4	6

**Transcript of Focus Group 4.
Integrating hunting into Regional Pest Animal Management Plans.**

Board and Staff lead: David Voss (Advisory Board member), Mia Moriarty (GLU staff) (Red)

Transcript

Facilitator's Note: Please note that this Transcript was augmented with notes provided by David Voss by email. I have inserted David's notes in *italics* in the relevant sections of the transcript.

Qualifying the problem

1. Expectations – perceptions
2. Motivations
3. Engagement model – how?
4. Operational Model – credentials
5. Measuring success
6. Impediments – risk, OHS, trust, Firearm Regs/letter of permission, red tape – especially on Public Land, Policy – political decisions, infrastructure, POCTA S19A.
7. *Since Paul from LLS was in the room, I used him to "set the scene" on how the regional plans would work, and also to "sanity check" some of the more impractical suggestions being offered. It became clear that there is an air gap between the level of detail that LLS believe these plans will operate at and what hunters expect. In general, I believed the group was coming from a self centred view rather than embracing the objective, that being effective wildlife management outcomes as part of integrated programs.*

Engagement model

8. **Mediation / Brokerage.** Starting with the assumption that the door was open, Paul raised the issue that there is not one point of contact for him to call to bring hunters into the plan. This then lead to a discussion about the pros and cons of involving AHO's. *Paul was loath to see LLS involved at this level. His clear expectation was that an individual landholder would "engage" individual hunters. This to me is unlikely to deliver either the scale or intensity necessary for knock down or maintenance of wildlife populations.*

EOI or web site

9. The forum members were keen on a mechanism where individuals could sign up to offer their services. *The question in my mind was how effectively we could put together groups of "random" individuals and have them deliver results without some form of co-ordination. LLS will not do this. AHO's could, but would introduce the fear of favouritism which the group wanted to avoid. I got the sense this was largely an anti SSAA thing, given the number of people who walked out when Di spoke.*

Simple is best

10. The point was made that complexity will work against success. *Complexity works against both land managers and hunters buying in and then continuing to participate in the program.*

Many problems have been solved elsewhere

11. In discussions, the group realised that for every problem we needed to solve there was at least one working example in a related or unrelated field where that problem had been successfully overcome. *It dawned on me that the issue here is not with the supply side, it's with the demand side. Those who are claiming there is a problem or negative impact need to lift their game and find ways to take advantage of existing solutions before they ask for other changes, or public funds.*

Land manager to hunter

12. This was the take home message of this slide as to the preferred model. *Self interest overrode the primary objective here. Property based arrangements will not solve regional problems, and there is a limit to how much individuals can and will deliver.*

Operational model

Manage high risk / residual risk

13. John Mumford made reference to GC risk assessment where night shooting and vehicles were highest risk, noting that these risks cannot be eliminated, but need to be managed. *Valid, but obvious. Happens now but the landscape changes when it becomes part of an operation, OHS, etc.*

Individual plan per Op.

14. Given the range of target species and location specifics, we felt each Operation would need its own written plan. *Valid, but obvious, and is at odds with the individualism and KISS expressed elsewhere. Again, who pays, who does it, who endorses it, how is it monitored and enforced, etc. This is a program design challenge not a ground level challenge.*

"Credentials"

15. The question of ensuring competency of those who register. The concept of an R+ license was floated, with no one being able to answer who would pay for that, or run the assessments. *As with many of these responses, the forum threw up solutions to poorly defined problems. In seeking to keep AHO's out of the mix, the forum was blind to the holes that then opened up, and which LLS will not fill.*

GLU duck model using R license.

16. This was the take home message of this slide as to the preferred model. *Self interest overrode the primary objective here. Property based arrangements will not solve regional problems. There was a sense of opportunistic recreational hunting when what was required was an appropriately resourced "hit squad" which blanketed (saturated) a target area inside a defined window.*

Motivations (Hunters)

Sustainable access

17. It was felt that opportunities to return to the property to partake in recreational hunting would be a strong motivator to participate. In other words, volunteers were looking for introductions. *Another big disconnect. This will lead to high turnover of volunteers whether follow up access is made available or not (either way).*

Shelter / facilities

18. Access to things like wool sheds, showers, etc were seen as inducements to participate. *Agreed and understood, but yet another big ask for land managers given the underlying trust issue.*

Meat / skins / trophies

19. The ability to take home what they shot. *This is an issue with the SPC where the view is you should be out shooting more not stopping for pics and an amateur butchery session. What are they there to do?*

Experience

20. Participants would be looking to enjoy an experience, or to experience a lifestyle they would otherwise not have access to. *The great outdoors and all that. I would suggest that this is more important to the 80% of hunters we would not want on this program in order to ensure its success. The 20% we do want would be there for other reasons.*

Contribute to Environmental outcomes

21. I had to raise this, but once I did the room generally felt that contributing to a good outcome as part of an integrated plan was a positive.

Bounties?

22. Access to bounties would encourage hunters to get out there more often. *Putting a monetary value on results tests the government and landholders commitment to the program (or how seriously they view the problem we are seeking to solve) and would serve to offset the costs of participation, but not sure on the effectiveness, e.g. Vic?*

Interaction with land holders

23. Similar to experience, there is a desire to connect to individuals who are "living the dream". *Again, motivates the wrong type of participants and is inconsistent with the more mercenary attitudes we need to bring to pest hunting.*

Motivations (Land Managers)

Solution to problems

24. If the problem exists, this is a cheap and easy solution to help solve it voluntarily. *This is the case now but clearly externalities are getting in the way.*

Regulatory pressure

25. As above, but in response to external pressure rather than as a self-initiated measure. *Similar to above, but with a slightly more compelling reason to act.*

Compliance

26. Land managers were directed to get involved either due to a control order, or as part of a local collective. *To me this is the big stick which will be necessary in order to poke land managers towards the carrot.*

ROI

27. Pests down, profits up. *When all else fails, follow the money. This is one area where perception rather than fact will work in our favour.*

Impediments

Firearm Regulations & permissions

28. Clearly these serve to reduce hunter effectiveness on control programs. *If we want parity with "professionals" we will need to broker a deal whereby participants in recognised programs are able to access equivalent tools of trade as do land managers and pro shooters.*

Red tape esp. public land

29. There was a suggestion from the floor that LLS as facilitators of what was supposed to be a tenure neutral plan would not be able to direct NPWS what to do on their dirt. It was also seen that NPWS could continue to draw their shooters from the SPC if they were to be convinced to take part in a regional plan. *Not sure what to make of this. On the one hand land managers should be able to choose who they let on. On the other hand, details such as this will work against overall success.*

Policy - political decisions

30. If the political will was there to make this work it could be done. If there is not the political will to make this work then we are all wasting our time.

Infrastructure

31. Things like lack of access tracks into remote areas of public land (NPWS) and huts as seen in the NZ presentation were seen as helpful in order to keep hunters coming back to support the plans. *The issue here is getting into refuge areas to ensure there are no breeding areas to restock managed areas.*

POCTA S19.A

32. An example of indirect legislation which could be used to stymie hunter contributions to the plans. *Not sure how the regulatory framework could be managed to ensure that other legislation / regulation is subservient to the regional pest plans?*

Focus Group 4 priority issues

33. **Impediments.** Focus Group 4 agreed that risk, WHS, trust, infrastructure and an “air gap” between expectations and capabilities could all prove to be impediments to the use of hunters in pest management.

34. **Engagement and Operational Models.** From the transcript and notes, Focus Group 4 believed that an Engagement Model and an Operational Model were required, and all present agreed that the GLU duck model using R license was a good model to base from. Engagement and Operational Models will be discussed separately below.

- a. **Engagement Models.** Focus Group 4 suggested that the Engagement Model should include a mediator / broker / facilitator who would act as the single point of contact to liaise between hunters and government agencies; and a mechanism where individuals could sign up to offer their services, noting that this too would require a co-ordinator / facilitator. Focus Group 4 noted the risk of favouritism should the facilitator /co-ordinator be provided by an AHO.
- b. **Operational model.** Focus Group 4 suggested that the Operational Model was mostly about managing risk. The group believed that given the range of target species and location specifics, each Operation would need its own written plan.

**Transcript of Focus Group 5.
Identifying the benefits of hunting on public and private land in NSW.**

Board and Staff lead: Kath Clapham (Advisory Board member), Andrew Moriarty (Dir. GL) (Blue)

Facilitator's Note: The facilitator has added explanatory notes in italics

National Parks

1. Hunter's are a workforce multiplier.
2. Disincentive as NPWS Staff are paid to maintain their firearms licence.

Public awareness of R-L-C System

3. Explaining to campers.

Messaging to public

4. Separating legal from illegal hunters (and licenced firearms owners from criminals).

Messaging

5. Cultural hunting – wildlife – not helpful to separate out animals (demonize introduced wildlife?).
6. Good quality meat should be promoted.
7. Links to fishing – supporting recovery of fisheries in NSW.
8. Mental (and physical) health benefits e.g. Recreational fishing “wellness and well being”.
9. Communicate the health benefits of hunting. **Implied Task:** research info on hunting and wellness (fitness training pre hunt, commune with nature and renewing friendship and family bonds during hunt, post hunt enduring wellness effect).

Private land

10. Granting access to legal hunters can suppress / reduce illegal hunting by providing more “eye's and ears” on farm.
11. Promote R-Licence more as a reputable standard.

Private landholders

12. Workforce multiplier for farmers (repair and report broken fences, not location and condition of livestock and pests, may work or pay for access).
13. Use “Shut the Gate” signs and report illegal hunting.

Ecological benefits

14. Hunting can augment other management techniques.
15. About having a broader effect as a hunter – stewardship.
16. Benefit to younger Australians – gets kids outdoors, away from screen based activity and teaches real world responsibility, respect and problem solving.

Economics

17. Buy in local towns and spend local.
18. Identify as hunters and club / R-Licence holders.
19. Publish more about the benefits and standards of the R-Licence (add detail on KSA).
20. Communicate the wider interests of hunters.
 - a. “Bushmen and Bushwomen” - bushwalkers , bird watchers, environmentalists (environmental conscience)
21. Hunters add value to society.
22. Better network with AHOs + Board - refers to the point made in the session that communication between the Advisory Board and all the clubs (AHOs) needs to improve - possibly through setting up a network (online) or other means.

Themes

23. Who: Board / clubs (AHO's)
 - a. External comms.
 - b. Pitch to those who don't know.
 - c. Board to take a more active (*public?*) roll.
24. Communications about hunter standards, value add etc to public, farmers – Army Reserve add (blaze shirt under work clothes) NB, highlight the diversity of hunters and how we are united by shared values).

Value add – Hunters are:

25. (Land? Environmental?) stewards
 - a. Informed and in touch with rural and environmental issues.
 - b. Wildlife managers.
 - c. Bushcraft and survival knowledge (hunters are bushmen and bushwomen).
 - d. Providing an intelligence source to farmers.
 - e. Links to fishing.

26. Citizen scientists who are willing and able to contribute to science and to contribute to research.
 - a. (Hunters are a program / activity multiplier).
 - b. Have a broad effect in everything we do - disrupt illegal activity e.g. illegal hunting, meth labs, drug crops.
 - c. Have science based Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes (KSA) and experience e.g. hunting skills = bushcraft skills, navigation, survival, resilience, first-aid – all are science based.

Social Benefits of hunting

27. Wellness – a celebration of the circle of life, in nature, outdoors, it's about living the reality of daily experiences in the bush.

28. Active and passive recreation.

29. Outlet (pathway) for youth to discover the natural world. Gets kids outdoors and shows new uses for technology e.g. GPS and satellite mapping, monitoring hydrology, predicting the location of animals by using a knowledge of their habits and known landuse preferences.

30. Allows family to re-establish bonds and share culture and ethics in the daily experiences of bush life.

31. Wild harvest of meat, fish, vegetables and fruit is organic, low fat nutrition

32. "Hunting is not all fat old white men who like guns"

Get the message out about the benefits – more direct messages

33. Intel provided to landholders about their property.

34. Hunters as citizen scientists- disease detection story (other good news stories? Population monitoring, discover new species, biosecurity, knowledge of wildlife behaviour and habits).

Moderators?

35. Bushcraft and Fieldcraft –retain a cultural icon – the Australian Bushman/Bushwoman/ Bushperson "Bushy".

36. Training - Societal benefits of hunters trained in first aid, navigation, bushcraft, fieldcraft (Workplaces have long recognised the benefit of first aid training for employees).

37. Membership of (Govt approved) associations who pass on culture and ethics, who self regulate by peer review, and have formal policies for members.

Priority Issues

38. **Improved internal and external communications.** Focus Group 5 agreed that hunting has positive social environmental and economic benefits and that hunters need to let the public know about the value adds of hunting through improved communications both internal and external. These areas will be discussed separately below.

a. **Internal communications.** Focus Group 5 believes that communication between the GPMAB and AHO's (GPMAB to member and member to GPMAB) could be improved through setting up an online network or through E-newsletters, or smart phone applications.

b. **External communications.**

- i. **Increase public awareness.** Focus Group 5 agreed that hunters need to increase public awareness of the RLC system, separate legal from illegal hunters in the public's eye, and expand the message that hunting is a cultural activity similar to fishing, where participants derive a mental and physical health benefits of harvesting organic food.
- ii. **Hunting as a "value add".** Focus Group 5 identified several other themes for external communication based around the "value add" of hunting. These include hunters augmenting other wildlife management on farm and providing an additional set of eyes and ears to landholders; and how hunter skills are science-based skills and how hunters can be used as citizen scientists.
- iii. **Social benefits of hunting.** Most hunters belong to government approved hunting organisations; and enjoy the physical and mental wellness benefits of hunting as a celebration of the circle of life. Hunters re-establish family bonds and share culture and ethics through hunting and use the wild harvest as a pathway for youth to discover the natural world, to gets kids outdoors and learn new uses for technology e.g. GPS and satellite mapping, monitoring hydrology, predicting the location of animals by using a knowledge of their habits and known landuse preferences.

Transcript of Post Forum Suggestions from Participants

1. **Information capture:** Suggestion forms were distributed among participants at the workshop. Two suggestions were received.
2. **Suggestion One.** A participant suggested that kangaroo management should be transferred from NPWS to the GPMAB.
3. **Suggestion Two.** A participant commented on the economic value of hunting, and suggested that the Government could provide facilities and infrastructure that would benefit hunters in the field, such as huts. The participant explained what hunting meant to him as follows:
 - a. The chance to relax and get away from the city to one animal kingdom to another.
 - b. The ability to hunt which is in my DNA from my European background.
 - c. To use skills with firearms or bows for the purpose of hunting.
 - d. Enjoy the outdoors have a fire, cook, eat and drink with trusted colleagues.
4. The participant then commented on a number of issues as follows:
 - a. That on every hunting trip he had done to a New South Wales forest had been disrupted by unregistered motorbike riders operating in the vicinity of the hunting area. The participant wanted this to stop as he was concerned about the safety risk.
 - b. That he felt there are not enough Rangers and Police doing patrols and policing this behaviour; suggesting that hunters should put up small orange flags to indicate hunter presence. Participant commented that while he understands the forest is for everyone, he felt that the presence of other forest users in hunting areas was a safety issue.
 - c. That in Pennsylvania State Forest, he had seen people driving around in vehicles looking for animals to hunt and killing fauna; commenting that he felt hunters need secure places to hunt, such as managed Game Parks. He was also keen to see National Parks opened up for Hunting.
 - d. That he felt what is required is uniform gun laws across all states, commenting that QLD and VIC seem to be another country.
 - e. That he felt there were too many laws and nowhere to hunt, and that a decline in hunting would have economic impacts such as jobs lost in gun shops, couriers, importers and 4WD sales.

Themes for Consideration by the GPMAB Drawn From Detailed Analysis of Focus Group Discussions

Introduction

1. The Focus Groups conducted as part of the GPMAB Forum raised a number of priority issues of interest to the Board and the GLU. These are listed in Table One of the Report of Proceedings, and reproduced below. The Facilitator analysed the issues raised in Table One in detail and grouped them into themes for consideration by the Board and GLU.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this document is to present a detailed analysis of the Focus Group discussions in order to give the Board and GLU a number of themes as a start point towards resolving the key issues impacting on the use of volunteer hunters as a pest management method on public and private land in NSW. Where appropriate, the Facilitator has included comments (in Times New Roman font) based on the Facilitator's experience of current "best practice" in North America, Canada, Europe, the UK and New Zealand, and in researching, reporting and managing similar matters in Victoria and other Australian states.

Table One Summary of Priority Issues from Focus Groups	
Focus Group	Priority Issues
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The public perception of hunters. 2. Improving hunting culture.
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve collaboration and engagement. 2. Bio security training. 3. Insurance. 4. Improve hunter image.
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Park accreditation. 2. Collaboration and relationship building. 3. Blaze orange. 4. Bio security. 5. Leap training. 6. Citizen science.
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impediments. 2. Engagement models. 3. Operational models.
5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved internal communications. 2. Improved external communications.
Post Forum Suggestions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kangaroo management should be transferred from NPWS to DPI. 2. Comment on the economic value of hunting, the provision of facilities and infrastructure to benefit hunters, disruption of hunting activities by unregistered motorbike riders and general comments on hunting.

Themes

3. Analysis of Focus Group discussions showed a number of common discussion threads. These threads were grouped together into themes, and are presented below. Table Two lists the themes in brief. Each theme is then discussed in detail, and recommendations are provided.

Table Two. Themes for consideration by the GPMAB drawn from analysis of Focus Group discussions	
Theme	Description
1	Hunter Motivations, Capacity and Benefits
2	Impediments
3	Improving internal and external communications
4	Hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes, and Hunter education
5	Engagement and Operational Models

Theme 1: Hunter Capabilities, Motivations, Capacity and Benefits

Hunter Capabilities

4. **Hunter capabilities.** Hunters have a range of skills that allow us to contribute at multiple levels. We know that we are a workforce multiplier and that we can extend the duration and reach of programs through volunteering. We want to expand volunteer hunting into landscape scale operations across multiple land tenures. We are administratively self-supporting and are heavily engaged as stakeholders. We are in an ideal position to conduct research, analyse information and contribute to science-based recommendations that will improve wildlife management in Australia.

Hunter Motivations

5. **Hunters want to improve our image.** All focus groups agreed that hunters have a poor public image. Our image problem has many causes. Events that are outside of our control, such as mass shooting events in the US, the criminal misuse of firearms and a hostile media play a part; however, there are a number of factors that we can improve, such as poor hunter behaviour and the politicising of Australian firearms ownership (that has led to firearms owner militancy and a polarised firearms discussion). These negative perceptions are used by those opposed to hunting and firearms ownership to deny hunters many opportunities to prove themselves worthy of community trust. The perception mismatch caused by the negative image of hunters is also a significant element in the denial of Australia's hunting culture, where those opposed to hunting seek to keep hunters hidden from the Australian narrative.

6. **Hunters are still here, and keen to improve our image!** The important point is that we are still here, we know we have a role in wildlife management, and we realise that it is up to us to change the public view.

7. **Supply or demand?** With tens of thousands of R and G licence holders there is no issue with “supply”. However, the “demand” aspect is poorly defined, and land managers appear to be reluctant to take advantage of the solution offered by volunteer hunters. This may be due to mistrust, or a lack of understanding of the capacity and capabilities provided by volunteer hunters.

8. **“A Fair Go for hunters”.** A lack of social licence and authentic dialogue regarding the benefits of hunting as a wildlife management tool; combined with poorly understood hunter motives and very poor public confidence in hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes (largely caused by “transference” or “blame sharing” by political opportunists and sensationalist media reporting) has created an environment where hunters have significant difficulty in proving their worth. Put simply, Hunters need a “fair go”.

Matching Hunter and Land Manager Motivations

9. An assessment of the motivations of land managers towards engaging volunteer hunters is useful in matching hunter motivations and capacity to landholder need.

Landholder needs

10. **Solution to wildlife and related human impacts.** Landholders need cost-effective solutions to wildlife management. Using volunteer hunters as part of an integrated wildlife management plan can extend the reach and duration of the plan. Landholders may also consider charging a fee for access for recreational hunters to camp and hunt on their properties, and use the income generated to offset wildlife and other farm management costs.

11. **Safe, respectful and effective hunters.** Landholders need to know that volunteer hunters are safe and effective, and that they will respect landholder requirements without supervision. Most focus groups felt that making landholders aware of the current R licence and Hunter LEAP training would satisfy the majority of landholder requirements. Some land managers, such as NPWS may require additional training to meet internal WHS or corporate requirements (at the same level as required by their own staff) however these requirements are readily met by dedicated individuals with suitable study and application to the task, and cannot be considered an impediment. Additional competency training to meet such requirements, in the form of an R+ license could be considered however the cost of such training and ongoing assessment would need to be part of any consideration before an R+ license was introduced.

Hunters need

12. **Sustainable access.** The opportunity to develop a relationship with landholders and to return regularly to a property to hunt is a strong motivator to participate. This is a positive in that by forging long-term relationships both hunters and landholders achieve a better understanding of each other’s strengths and weaknesses.

13. **Shelter / facilities.** Many hunters prefer to camp, however; some would pay for access to facilities and infrastructure such as being able to camp in a shearing shed or sleep in workers accommodation with access to showers. It is acknowledged that such access would require trust and is a burden on landholders however; there is an opportunity for landholders to charge fees for access to infrastructure to offset the cost.

14. **Access to the wild food harvest.** It is common for most if not all hunters to take the opportunity to harvest meat, skins and trophies when they hunt. This could be an issue in wildlife control programs where the goal is maximising the cull. However the detail of collecting any harvest is a simple matter to work out prior to the cull, and, based on the Victorian deer management program experience, in any successful cull there is usually ample opportunity for those present to harvest meat without impacting on the success of the activity.

15. **Enjoyment of the hunting experience and giving something back.** Regardless of whether the hunter is hunting recreationally or engaged in pest management activities, one of the key motivations for hunters is to experience a lifestyle or be part of an activity that they would not otherwise have access to.

16. **Contribute to Environmental outcomes.** Most hunters feel that contributing to positive environmental outcomes as part of an integrated plan is a positive.

Hunter Capacity

17. **Time poor but low-cost.** Volunteer hunters are often time poor. However; this varies at different times of people's lives. Hunters with young families and busy jobs will have little time to contribute to hunting whereas retirees may be able to dedicate significant time towards hunting. While the ability of hunters to contribute time to programs is a consideration, the reality is that the pool of volunteer hunters is large, and free, landholders and will quickly resolve this issue by either granting access to people who have time to contribute to the program or by enlisting additional hunters to achieve the required effect.

Opportunities to expand Hunter capacity

18. **Bounties.** It was noted that access to bounties could encourage hunters to hunt more often. Placing a monetary value on results through bounties does test stakeholder commitment and could serve to offset the costs of participation. However; the effectiveness of bounties is often questioned.

19. **Comment - bounties:** Offering bounties for problem wildlife has had mixed success. In Queensland, rural landholders joined with local councils to offer wild dog bounties. This raised the value of the individual dog scalps to a level that attracted dog trappers from other states, and while the effect was largely unmeasured, landholders certainly reported a reduction in wild dog impacts, and considered the bounty effective. At the other end of the scale the \$10 Fox scalp bounty offered in Victoria was widely reported as administratively costly and largely ineffective, however; it is notable that little measurement of any reduction in fox impact followed the Fox scalp bounty.

20. **Comment - Designing a successful bounty program.** The common factor among unsuccessful bounty programs is that they are overregulated and administratively burdensome, because they rely on individual scalps or body parts to be turned in at check stations where the shooter's details are recorded and a cheque posted out. They also often take field staff away from their duties, for example; dog trappers were taken from fieldwork to process fox scalps in the Victorian Fox bounty program.

21. One example of a successful and effective bounty model for wildlife management is where in some parts of the United States coyotes are trapped, microchipped, ear tattooed, and released in areas where coyotes are a problem. Shooters are encouraged to shoot every coyote they see and if they shoot an ear tattooed coyote they simply return that animal to the local wildlife agency where the animal is checked for a microchip and the shooter receives a significant prize such as a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

22. **Improved physical access.** Many attendees were impressed with the New Zealand sika the program, where the DOC installed huts for hunter accommodation and encouraged hunters to use helicopters to access remote parts of the control area. Improving physical access to hunting areas will allow hunters to maximise their time in wildlife management. Consideration could be given to opening management roads, upgrading existing tracks, creating new access tracks, and even to the creation of a recreational vehicle registration permit (as occurs in VIC) that would allow hunters to use off-road vehicles with basic safety fittings on forest tracks, but not on main roads.

The Benefits of Hunting

23. **Practicing and renewing Culture.** All focus groups noted that hunting is a cultural activity, and that the motivations for hunting were very similar as those of fishing in that they allowed participants to practice culture, renew family and cultural bonds and share culture and ethics in the daily experiences of outdoor life, whilst sharing the wild harvest of meat, fish, vegetables and fruit. Being in the outdoors hunting has mental and physical health benefits that can improve wellness and wellbeing.

24. **Social and health benefits of hunting.** Hunting is an excellent pathway for people of all ages to discover the natural world. Hunting brings a number of social and health benefits. Hunting is first and foremost a celebration of the circle of natural life. It's about living the reality of daily experiences in the outdoors.

25. **Hunting benefits younger Australians.** The benefit to younger Australians cannot be understated. Hunting gets people outdoors and teaches real world responsibility, respect and problem solving. Hunting is also a good pathway for youth to discover new uses for technology, such as using GPS and satellite mapping to monitor hydrology and vegetation growth in order to predict the location of animals by using their knowledge of animal habits and known land use preferences.

26. **Economic Benefits.** Recreational hunting generates significant tourism income across specific and related sectors, and in remote rural areas.

27. **Private and public land benefits.** Hunters are resilient and practical people with a wide range of knowledge and experience including bushcraft, Bush lore, navigation, survival and first-aid skills. The regular presence of hunters on a property can suppress illegal activity such as illegal hunting, meth labs and drug crops by providing a physical presence and more “eyes and ears” on farm or in the forest.

28. **Workforce multiplier.** The use of recreational hunters as part of wildlife management plans and programs can be a workforce multiplier for private and public landholders. Hunters extend the reach and duration wildlife management programs, and are more than happy to repair and report broken fences, note the location and condition of livestock, wildlife and weeds. Many hunters will work or pay for access.

29. **Ecological Benefits.** Hunting is one of a range of management tools that can be used by the landholder to augment wildlife management programs and to extend the reach and duration of other wildlife management techniques.

30. **Citizen scientists.** Hunters are citizen scientists, and the hunter’s detailed knowledge of wildlife behaviour and habits allows them to have a role in any research activity involving animals and plants or the natural environment. Hunters can collect samples from harvested wildlife, or can monitor and report the spread of weeds or new species. In other States, hunters have played a significant role in population monitoring, in National Parks and on public and private land.

Theme 1 Conclusion

31. **Improving hunter image.** Hunters all agree that we need to improve our image, and are very keen to do so. Modern hunters have a complex range of motivations, expertise and capacity, and a range of skills that allow us to contribute multiple levels. Hunters know that we are a workforce multiplier. We want to expand volunteer hunting into landscape scale operations across multiple land tenures. We are administratively self-supporting and are heavily engaged as stakeholders. Lastly, hunters are in an ideal position to conduct research and analyse information and contribute to science-based recommendations that will improve wildlife management in Australia.

32. **Landholder motivations.** Landholder motivations are poorly understood, and an assessment of the motivations of land managers towards engaging volunteer hunters will be useful in matching hunter motivations and capacity to landholder need.

Theme 1 Recommendations

33. **Improving hunter image.** Recommendations for improving hunter image are included in the Communications Theme.

34. **Landholder motivations.** It is recommended that significant effort is applied to engaging both public and private land managers in order to better understand their motivations and how their motivations and needs can be met by including hunters as part of their wildlife management plans.

Theme 2: Impediments

35. **Hunter image.** With regard to impediments, most focus groups commented that hunters have an image problem and public perceptions are a significant impediment to the acceptance of the role of hunting in conservation and wildlife management because it separates and dislocates hunters from landholders, land managers and the general public. Hunter image will be dealt with in the communications theme.

36. **Risk.** Conservative land managers will generally have a low appetite for risk and will be wary of activities they perceive may result in workplace incidents. The stakes are high and a land manager who makes poor land management decisions can lose their job or their livelihood. That said, landholders and land managers make significant decisions daily using guidance from industry based risk models, therefore; risk can be managed as a process. Hunting related risk should be managed the same as all other physical risk – through the application of industry based risk assessment models and the use of WHS practitioners to develop policy and procedures and by communicating the reality of the low levels of risk posed by hunting in communications plans and through direct collaboration, where land holder concerns can be worked through.

37. **Insurance and WHS.** While it was noted that the GLU provides public liability insurance for hunters; and that most approved hunting organisations have public liability insurance to indemnify land managers for any act or omission by their members; Focus Group 2 asked if it was possible for hunters to indemnify land holders, i.e. to “release” landholders from their general duty of care under Federal and State WHS Act and Regulations.

Comment – insurance and WHS. This question points to a lack of understanding of what public liability insurance provides; and to a lack of understanding of Federal and State WHS Acts and Regulations by both hunters and land managers.

Stakeholders should refer to their public liability insurance policy to understand what is and is not covered. The WHS “duty of care” states that persons are liable for any act or omission on their part which causes an incident; and is applicable to all farm visitors and to land managers themselves.

Both the Federal and State WHS Act and Regulations are very clear that no person may release another person from the general duty of care.

38. **Firearm Regulations & permissions.** Several groups commented that they felt firearm regulations and permissions were unnecessary red tape to reduce hunter effectiveness on control programs. Some argued that volunteer hunters should have access to restricted category firearms if they are to have parity with contract (professional) shooters in recognised programs.

Comment - volunteers competing with contractors: In general, scientists and public land managers who have worked with both professional shooters and volunteer hunters view them as complementary rather than competing capabilities.

The strength of recreational hunters will always be in “mass”, i.e. in creating an effect through the use of large numbers of shooters, using category B firearms, in sustained wildlife management programs. We are not in competition with contract shooters. Rather volunteer hunters are a separate group that augments wildlife management programs with the tools available (and should be measured as such). For example, in Victoria, 50,000 recreational hunters use CAT B firearms to hunt on public land, including some National Parks. In effect, this is one of the largest scale and longest running wildlife control programs in Australia. In addition, around 1000 “upskilled” volunteer hunters from ADA and SSAA, alongside contract shooters, conduct complex deer management operations in National Parks under the direct control of Parks Victoria staff, extending the reach and duration of the programs.

39. **Legislative impediments.** The POCTA S19.A. (which prohibits Game Parks) was cited as an example of legislation that could be an impediment to wildlife management. Consideration of such legislation, and of the effect of and from Game Parks should be included as part of risk management in regional pest plans.

40. **Access impediments - National Parks.** Most of the attendees felt that the present SPC system that provides exclusive access to control programs in National Parks to SSAA is unfair, in that it does not include all hunting organisations; and unsustainable, because it draws from a small pool shooters (possibly less than 30).

41. Expanding the use of suitably trained and accredited volunteer hunters should be seen as a workforce multiplier for public land managers such as NPWS. The SPC trial has concluded and the outcome of the report is much awaited. Given the success of similar programs in National Parks in other states and overseas it should be assumed that the use of volunteer hunters in wildlife management programs in National Parks will continue; and that such programs will gradually expand as they are adapted to meet local requirements.

42. **Moderators.** Access to sound moderators (“silencers” or “suppressors”) for use by shooters in wildlife control programs has received some attention of late, and research into if they are beneficial, and how they could be made available to recreational hunters is warranted.

Theme 2 Conclusion

43. The Focus Groups agreed that the effectiveness of hunting in wildlife management will not be fully recognised until public acceptance of hunting is a pest management tool (social licence) improves. Many of the impediments mentioned by the focus groups will reduce or disappear with increased social licence.

44. **Insurance.** From the discussion in Focus Group 2 there is some confusion over insurance.

45. **National Parks.** All attendees agreed that access to national parks should be for all hunters who can meet the requirements.

46. **Moderators.** Use of moderators or suppressors will improve command and control, reduce hearing loss for shooters and improve animal welfare outcomes, and, given the widespread use of suppressors in a number of countries and the low rate of crime involving the use of these items, there are a few valid reasons to deny access to suppressors.

Theme 2 Recommendations

47. **Public liability Insurance.** In order to give stakeholders a better understanding of their insurance needs and what public liability insurance provides, it is recommended that a fact sheet explaining what public liability insurance is and what it covers be placed on the GLU website.

48. **Duty of care.** It is recommended that an explanation of the WHS duty of care applicable to all stakeholders be sourced from the NSW WHS Act and Regulations. This information should be placed on a fact sheet with stakeholder WHS duties and posted on the GLU website.

49. **National Parks.** It is recommended that the GPMAB and volunteer hunters should take an active role in monitoring the SPC trial and in suggesting improvements to public land wildlife management programs. It is further recommended that the GPMAB and AHO's should call for extension and expansion of the SPC program to include all hunters who can meet the NPWS requirements.

50. **Moderators.** It is recommended that the GPMAB consider how using suppressors would benefit hunters. And, review current NSW firearms registry requirements for eligibility, use and safe storage in order to assess the possibility of making recommendations to the Minister on hunter access to suppressors.

Theme 3: Improving internal and external communications

Additional considerations that will influence successful communications

51. **Hunters are missing from the Australian narrative.** Hunters are missing from the Australian narrative (along with female farmers and any mention of the real land use of Australia's first nation peoples). Australians revere the ANZAC and "Australian Bushman" legends but seem unable to accept that the Bushman/Bushwoman (Bushy) was most often a hunter or a trapper who used firearms for wildlife management as part of their daily living. Many attendees noted that the poor public perception of hunters is also a significant element in the denial of Australia's hunting culture, where those opposed to hunting seek to keep hunters hidden from the Australian narrative.

52. **Hunters have an image problem.** The attendees agreed that negative perceptions of hunters and of hunting is a significant impediment to hunters having a meaningful role in pest management because it separates and dislocates hunters from landholders, land managers and the general public. The attendees agreed that hunters must improve our reputation in order to gain social licence and public trust; and that the effectiveness of hunting in wildlife management will not be fully recognised until public acceptance of hunting as a pest management tool (social licence) improves.

53. **Collaboration and Engagement between farmers and hunters is very poor.** In an effective wildlife management model, Pest Management Groups could use hunters as another tool in the "golf bag" of management options. However; collaboration and engagement between farmers and hunters is very poor. There are a range of models that could be attractive to farmers such as "fee for access" that should be explored. The GPMAB and the GLU can also draw on the strengths of the NGB model that the GLU currently administer for the management of ducks on rice crops.

54. **Killing animals can be an emotive issue.** The attendees agreed that the general public views killing as being within the realm of paid professionals or farm employees. Whereas, hunters see hunting as a cultural activity, part of the natural order; and as an opportunity to harvest protein from the wild. Many commented that the "Locivore" movement is a very positive opportunity for hunters.

Improved internal and external communications

55. Internal communications can be improved by making documented processes and policies easily accessible to stakeholders interested in using hunting as a pest management tool, and by regularly advertising education options in the Hunter LEAP program. The use of respected and fair media platforms to communicate external messages will allow hunters to better present our standpoint and the benefits of hunting. Internal and external communications are dealt with in detail on the following paragraphs.

Internal communications

56. There was a comment made in one focus group that communication between the Advisory Board and AHO's needs to improve - possibly through the creation of a network. The GLU website would be the obvious vehicle for such a network. Internal communications should focus on:

57. Improving culture through improved knowledge skills and attitude.

Hunters can improve Australia's hunting culture by improving our knowledge skills and attitudes (KSA). This may involve improving technical, bushcraft/field craft and biological knowledge and skills through initial and ongoing training in marksmanship, chainsaw, navigation, four-wheel-drive operation and first aid training, and/or training to improve knowledge of the biology and habits of hunted species to address any skills gap identified. It is felt that in turn this will lead to improvement in public perception of hunting (NB. It is noted that Hunter LEAP training covers many of these areas, and that in many cases improving the public understanding of training already completed is required).

External communications.

58. External communications should focus on improving the image of hunting, expanding collaboration with other stakeholders, and communicating the knowledge, skills and attributes of hunters.

59. **Improving the image of hunting.** We can improve the image of hunting by engaging local communities through community groups such as Landcare and the New South Wales Farmers Federation to:

- a. Explain the role of volunteer hunters in wildlife management, our skills and training and what we can offer, and how to use us to best effect.
- b. Develop and explain our Engagement and Operational models and how they contribute safe and effective operations (discussed in detail separately).
- c. Identify wildlife issues where hunters can contribute. For example, organised hunters could negotiate with government authorities such as LLS and the NPWS to combine efforts on landscape scale programs (NB. Local people solving local issues in a low-key approach can be very effective and generate significant social licence).
- d. The GLU may consider using extension officers to engage stakeholder through Pest Management Groups and LLS to explain how Pest Management groups could use hunters as another tool in the "golf bag" of management options. The GLU could also use extension officers or AHO's to organise the hunter effort and liaise with LLS and Pest Management Groups.

Key media messages

60. One participant commented that he found the Army Reserve TV advertisement, where a range of people were wearing their army uniform under work clothes was very effective. This participant suggested a similar advertisement using hunter blaze orange would highlight the diversity of hunters and how we are united by shared values. Key media messages are presented with explanatory comments as Attachment 1 to this Annex, and are summarised in the table below.

Table Three: Key media messages for hunting
Hunting and fishing are cultural activities as old as mankind.
Hunting, fishing and living in the outdoors have recognised mental and physical health benefits.
Hunting has ecological benefits.
Hunting has economic benefits.
Hunters are well-trained, safe and respectful.
Licensed hunting = reduced illegal hunting.
Most hunters belong to government approved hunting organisations (AHO's).
Hunters are citizen scientists.
Public awareness of R-L-C System.

Theme 3 Conclusion

61. The workshop attendees recommended that the development of a communications plan be given the highest priority. The Communications Plan should highlight the successful use of hunting is a pest management tool and the key messages noted above in order to improve the image of hunting.

62. Several workshop attendees also suggested that communication plans be developed to cover hunting incidents, wildlife management post bushfire, and criminal activity; noting that such plans are a wise investment that can be used when issues arise, or when suitable environmental factors present.

Theme 3 Recommendations

63. **Internal communications and improvements.** The following recommendations are made:

- a. **E-Newsletter.** The GPMAB consider an email subscriber based newsletter to improve internal communications.
- b. **Improving hunter ethics and culture.** The GLU should conduct a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to identify any skills gap with regard to hunter culture, ethics, knowledge skills and attitudes. This TNA will inform any expansion of training offerings in the Hunter LEAP.
- c. **Improved processes.** The GLU should consider making documented processes and policies easily accessible to stakeholders interested in using hunting as a pest management tool. It is further recommended that the GLU regularly advertise education options in the Hunter LEAP program.

64. **External communications - Improving the public perception of hunters.** The following recommendations are made:

- a. **Hunters are missing from the Australian narrative.** That any external communications plan raise the issue that hunters are missing from the Australian narrative and that those opposed to hunting and firearms ownership actively work to hide the fact that the Australian Bushman was in fact a hunter, in order to deny our hunting culture; and to keep us out of the Australian narrative.
- b. **The positive aspects of hunting.** The external communications plan should address the positive aspects of hunting to society; including the environmental, economic, physical and mental health benefits; the positive aspects of hunting when included in wildlife management plans; and the role of hunters as citizen scientists, in order to increase the public acceptance of hunting as a pest management tool and to increase social licence.
- c. **Explaining LEAP.** The GLU should explain Hunter LEAP to landholders and land managers to improve public understanding of hunter knowledge skills and attitudes.

65. **Improving the image of hunting.** The following recommendations are made:

a. **Community engagement.** The GPMAB and GLU should engage local communities through community groups such as Landcare and the New South Wales Farmers Federation in order to:

- i. Explain the role of volunteer hunters in wildlife management, our skills and training and what we can offer, and how to use us to best effect.
- ii. Develop and explain our Engagement and Operational models and how they contribute safe and effective operations.
- iii. Identify wildlife issues where hunters can contribute. For example, organised hunters could negotiate with government authorities such as Local Land Services and the National Parks and Wildlife Service to combine efforts on landscape scale programs (NB. Local people solving local issues in a low-key approach can be very effective and generate significant social licence).

66. **Collaboration and Engagement between farmers and hunters.** It is recommended that the GPMAB consider using extension officers to engage farmers through Pest Management Groups and Local Land Services in order to explain how pest Management groups could use hunters as another tool in the “golf bag” of management options.

67. **Key media messages.** It is recommended that the GPMAB and GLU consider and develop the Key media messages summarised in Table 3 and in Attachment 1.

Theme 4: Hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes and education

68. The general feeling of the workshop was that knowledgeable and respectful hunters will improve hunter culture, and that this in turn will improve social licence.

69. **Lifelong learning is valuable for hunters.** The workshop generally felt that improving technical, bushcraft/field craft and biological knowledge and skills through initial and ongoing training is beneficial to the individual and to improve public perceptions and social licence. Training in marksmanship, navigation, first-aid and the operation of chainsaws and four drives as well as training to improve hunter knowledge of the biology and habits of hunted species would address any skills gap identified.

70. **Positive exposure ethics and culture.** Participants also believed that regular involvement with the hunting community exposes hunters to hunting ethics and culture as well of their role as environmental stewards in wildlife management; and will lead to positive attitudes and an improvement in hunter behaviour. In turn this will lead to improvement in public perception of hunting (NB. It is noted that Hunter LEAP training covers many of these areas, and that in many cases, improving the public understanding of training already completed is required).

71. **Additional Accreditation.** A small number of participants suggested additional accreditation may be required in order to demonstrate commitment and skills, or to comply with biosecurity. Additional accreditation discussed in detail below:

- a. **R+ Licence.** One participant felt there should be a higher level of accreditation for hunters on private land than that provided by an R licence; arguing that this additional accreditation would ensure compliance, ethics and safety. (**NB.** Troy Hogarth discussed the matter with this participant and may be able to advise further.) This led Focus Group 2 to discuss how AHO's interested in participating pest management programs such as the SPC could demonstrate specific competency as required by the program. Focus Group 2 believed that such additional competency should be provided by the GLU for hunters. Other focus groups had similar discussions about additional competencies, but could not agree on who would administer, fund or manage such training.
- b. **Biosecurity training.** Two of the Focus Groups discussed Biosecurity training and suggested that the GLU might include a Biosecurity Module to fit in with the new regulations that farmers must comply with. (**Comment:** These modules could consist of an online education program followed by on farm induction to ensure compliance.)
- c. **Comment: Carcass disposal.** Pest Management culls can result in a large number of wildlife carcasses the required disposal. Is carcass disposal an issue that we need to address before we begin discussions with the New South Wales Farmers Federation? What are the state laws and any local ordinances? What are accepted (legal) methods? (Council tip, pit on farm, burn or lime on farm, local zoo etc).

72. **Hunter Mentoring and Sponsorship.** Focus Group 2 discussed the difficulties for the large number of urban hunters in finding rural properties where they can hunt. This is not because there is a shortage of wildlife management, issues, rather; the issue is largely because of the conservative nature of farmers who may be concerned that they cannot trust unknown hunters and are worried that they may end up with problem wildlife and problem shooters. The group accepted that there is no easy solution to this issue, and that individual hunters need to make a concerted effort to gain hunting access. The altruistic idea of “Brother AHO’s” that could sponsor hunters was suggested, and the group discussed the possibility that country AHO’s might connect with a city AHO and become a kind of brother organisation which could potentially work together in a region. Equally there could be more than one AHO in an area that could work together through the Pest Management Committees.

Theme 4 Conclusion

73. Most participants agree that improving technical, bushcraft/field craft and biological knowledge and skills through initial and ongoing training is beneficial and relevant. Participants also noted that Hunter LEAP training covers many of these areas, and that improving the public understanding of training already completed may be all that is required. One participant suggested additional accreditation may be required in order to demonstrate commitment and skills, or to comply with biosecurity.

Theme 4 Recommendations

74. **R+ licence.** Noting the issue of who should own the training and administrative liability involved in such a program, it is recommended that the development of an R+ licence be considered if it could be used to gain additional access to programs such as the SPC.

75. **Biosecurity training.** It is recommended that the GLU consider inclusion of a Biosecurity Module to fit in with the new farm bio security planning requirements.

Theme 5: Engagement and Operational Models

Additional considerations that will influence successful Engagement and Operational models

76. **The role of LLS.** There was a suggestion from the floor that LLS as facilitators of what was supposed to be a tenure neutral plan are unable to direct the NPWS.

Implied Task. Research the relationships between government agencies to define who has the lead role. This may require ministerial level discussion and formal direction, or may be agreed through MOU.

77. **NPWS.** The point was raised that NPWS could continue to draw their shooters from the SPC if they were to be convinced to take part in a regional plan.

Comment - access to national parks. This thread was discussed in other themes. Clearly the access to national parks afforded to the SPC is much coveted by hunters, most of whom have no idea how such programs are managed, and may reconsider their ability to commit to such programs if they understood the significant commitment to training, the level of control exercised by NPWS, and the ongoing administrative liability of these programs. In the facilitator's experience managing similar programs in Victoria, less than 1% of hunters have the knowledge, skills and attitudes; and can actually commit the time required to successfully participate in these programs.

NPWS, as an independent agency, may well continue to partner with SSAA in the SPC. However; there are two factors that may influence NPWS decisions. 1.) If programs expand they may well exceed the capacity of SSAA to provide trained operators and 2.) The NPWS as a government agency should be required to demonstrate fairness in its use of volunteers, and any AHO who can demonstrate that they can manage and maintain similar skills to the SPC should be able to apply to volunteer in control programs with NPWS.

Engagement and Operational models

78. The purpose of Engagement and Operational models is to provide a framework for collaboration and engagement between stakeholders, including public and private land managers, government agencies such as LLS, conservation agencies such as Landcare and Trust for Nature and hunters.

79. Engagement and Operational models should enable landscape scale wildlife management, and would fit well in regional operational plans. These models will allow Pest Management Groups to use hunters as an additional method in the management options "Toolbox".

80. Focus Group 4 suggested that their preferred engagement and operational model is the GLU Native Game Bird model using R licensed hunters and GLU extension staff to liaise between hunters and government authorities, New South Wales Farmers Federation and individual landholders to ensure supply meets demand and act as a brokerage service.

81. Focus Group 4 commented that an engagement model required a single point of contact for public and private land managers and government agencies to engage with who could bring hunters into the plan. This facilitation or brokerage role could sit with AHO's, the GLU or LLS, however; the role requires access to a significant body of hunter volunteers in order to deliver the scale and intensity necessary for landscape scale wildlife management.

82. Members of Focus Group 4 agreed that purpose of an Operational Model is to outline the scope of operations and to identify and manage risk. It would be expected that the operational model is flexible and adaptive in its application.

83. **Other engagement and operational models.** Focus Group 2 felt that pest Management groups could use AHO's in an area specific role, or could engage with individual hunters who were keen to be involved.

84. **The use of volunteer coordinators.** Focus Group 2 also discussed an AHO collaboration model were a volunteer Coordinator / Liaison Officer from the AHO provides a single point of contact. They noted the following requirements for success:

- a. A coordinator would abide by agreed and documented policies and procedures.
- b. There would be a roster during peak periods.
- c. Harvest returns would be required to track catch per unit effort.
- d. Facilitators are to ensure that there are representatives from all AHO's in the area. And,
- e. Hunters would be issued a written consent letter indicating where and what they can hunt.

Comment -harvest returns. Harvest returns only measure the cull, and suggest that the population is known and that harvest rates are set. The focus of modern wildlife management is on the reduction of impacts. Therefore; an effective measure of the reduction in impacts is required.

Individual plan per Operation

85. Focus Group 4 felt that given the range of target species and location specifics, each Operation would need its own written plan, and noted that this degree of planning may increase complexity. David Voss made the point that such planning would have an administrative cost and asked who would pay that cost, who would endorse the plan (and take legal responsibility for the operation), and how the plan would be monitored and enforced. David concluded that this is a program design challenge rather than a ground level challenge.

Comment - simple operational planning processes and information delivery formats.

The Australian Army use a simple planning process known as the “Military Appreciation Process” (MAP) to plan for individual operations. Information on the MAP is readily available for use by civilian organisations.

In addition, the Army use a template format for the delivery of information from the MAP based on the acronym SMEAC, which stands for Situation, Mission, Execution, Command and Control, Administration and Communications. It should be noted that the SMEAC format is not in itself a planning process though it is often used as such by inexperienced operators in non-military agencies, often with incomplete and sometimes dangerous results.

The strength of the MAP and SMEAC is in the speed and simplicity of delivery to experienced operators, however; the weakness of the process is that it requires experienced operators who know the risks involved in processes they are using. Both the MAP and SMEAC also rely heavily on the use of Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) and on experienced operators who are empowered to develop, adapt, document and disseminate new policy and procedures.

Registering interest in participation in programs

EOI or web site

86. Workshop members were keen on a mechanism where individuals could sign up to offer their services. And it was suggested that a similar mechanism to the NGB model that GLU currently administer for ducks on the rice would be useful. David Voss questioned how effectively the GPMAB or GLU could put together groups of "random" individuals and have them deliver results without some form of co-ordination. David noted that LLS will not do this, and that will AHO's could coordinate this task; but the use of AHO's could introduce perceptions of favouritism.

Theme 5 Conclusions

87. **National Park access.** There is benefit in researching the relationships between government agencies to define which agency has the lead role in wildlife management in order to understand agency relationships. The general feeling from those who attended is that any AHO who can demonstrate that they can manage and maintain similar skills to the SPC should be able to apply to volunteer in control programs with NPWS. Alternatively, if it could be profitable, the GLU could manage the training, administrative and ongoing management liability.

88. **Engagement and Operational models.** There are a number of Engagement and Operational models that would enable Pest Management Groups to use hunters as an additional method in landscape scale wildlife management, and that would fit well in regional operational plans. It would be expected that the chosen model is flexible and adaptive in its application.

89. **Individual plan per Operation.** Given the range of target species and location specifics, each Operation would need its own written plan; and the administrative cost of such planning is noted. The adaptation and use of pre-existing planning and information delivery processes such as the MAP and SMEAC will assist.

90. **Registering interest in participation in programs.** A mechanism that allows individuals to register interest is required, and a similar process to the NGB model used by the GLU would be useful. It was also noted that coordination and leadership of the hunter effort would be required, and that this was occurring in other states, who may be able to provide advice on successful processes.

Theme 5 Recommendations

91. **National Park access.** It is recommended that the GPMAB and GLU research the relationships between government agencies to define which agency has the lead role in wildlife management in order to understand agency relationships; and use the knowledge gained to promote the expansion of the SPC program in National Parks. This expansion could be managed by AHO's, or, if profitable, by the GLU.

92. **Engagement and Operational models.** It is recommended that the GPMAB investigate successful engagement and operational models, and use them as a guide in designing the GPMAB Engagement and operational Model, ensuring that the selected model fits well in regional operational plans and is flexible and adaptive in its application.

93. **Individual plan per Operation.** Noting that such planning does carry an administrative burden; it is recommended that given the range of target species and location specifics, each Operation should have a tailored written plan. The adaptation and use of pre-existing planning and information delivery processes such as the MAP and SMEAC may provide a useful start point.

94. **Registering interest in participation in programs.** It is recommended that a mechanism that allows individuals to register interest be considered; and that a similar process to the NGB model used by the GLU would be a useful start point. It is further recommended that the GPMAB and GLU review how coordination and leadership of the hunter effort occurs in other states in order to best understand the requirements and develop a process.

Conclusion

95. The themes and considerations discussed in the preceding pages highlight the key issues and may be developed further as discussion themes for ministerial communication.

Key Media Messages

Hunting and fishing are cultural activities as old as mankind. Hunters are a culturally diverse group who are united by shared values of respect. Hunting and fishing are cultural activities that teach real world responsibility, respect, resilience and problem solving, and are both an opportunity to harvest protein from the wild, and to renew bonds with family and friends. Australians should remember that most Australian Bushmen and ANZAC's, and their wives, mates and children were hunters.

Hunting, fishing and living in the outdoors have recognised mental and physical health benefits. Hunting gets young people outdoors and shows new uses for technology; e.g. GPS and satellite mapping, monitoring hydrology, predicting the location of animals by using a knowledge of their habits and known land use preferences

Hunting has ecological benefits. Pest hunting can augment other management techniques and its application is only limited by public perception and lack of social licence.

Hunting has economic benefits. Hunters spend money in regional areas, and hunting generates \$1.7bn annually for the New South Wales economy.

Hunters are well-trained, safe and respectful. Hunters voluntarily undertake a suite of firearms safety and field safety training.

Licensed hunting = reduced illegal hunting. Hunters are as affected by illegal hunting and poor hunter behaviour as are communities and landholders. Hunters are an extra set of eyes the bush and on farms and support the "close the gate" initiative.

Most hunters belong to government approved hunting organisations (AHO's). Hunting organisations pass on culture and ethics, self regulate by peer review, cover their members for public liability insurance, and have formal policies for the management of member behaviour. Hunters undertake training through their AHO to improve their knowledge and pay licence fees for the privilege of hunting.

Hunters are citizen scientists. Hunters have a detailed knowledge of animal ecology and behaviour, firearms and archery safety, navigation, bushcraft and the natural world. Hunters are in an ideal position to offer advice on population management and the management of wildlife conflict, and to collect information on wildlife populations or other aspects of biosecurity and land management such as weed incursions.

Public awareness of R-L-C System. Explain the R-L-C system to campers and other bush users so that everyone knows what other bush users are doing.

Summary of Recommendations from Annex G

1. A summary of the recommendations from Annex G is presented below.

Table Two. Themes for consideration by the GPMAB drawn from analysis of Focus Group discussions	
Theme	Description
1	Hunter Motivations, Capacity and Benefits
2	Impediments
3	Improving internal and external communications
4	Hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes, and Hunter education
5	Engagement and Operational Models

Theme 1: Hunter Capabilities, Motivations, Capacity and Benefits

Recommendations

2. **Improving hunter image.** Recommendations for improving hunter image are included in the Communications Theme.
3. **Landholder motivations.** It is recommended that significant effort is applied to engaging both public and private land managers in order to better understand their motivations and how their motivations and needs can be met by including hunters as part of their wildlife management plans.

Theme 2: Impediments

Recommendations

4. **Public liability Insurance.** In order to give stakeholders a better understanding of their insurance needs and what public liability insurance provides, it is recommended that a fact sheet explaining what public liability insurance is and what it covers be placed on the GLU website.
5. **Duty of care.** It is recommended that an explanation of the WHS duty of care applicable to all stakeholders be sourced from the NSW WHS Act and Regulations. This information should be placed on a fact sheet with stakeholder WHS duties and posted on the GLU website.
6. **National Parks.** It is recommended that the GPMAB and volunteer hunters should take an active role in monitoring the SPC trial and in suggesting improvements to public land wildlife management programs. It is further recommended that the GPMAB and AHO's should call for extension and expansion of the SPC program to include all hunters who can meet the NPWS requirements.

7. **Moderators.** It is recommended that the GPMAB consider how using suppressors would benefit hunters. And, review current NSW firearms registry requirements for eligibility, use and safe storage in order to assess the possibility of making recommendations to the Minister on hunter access to suppressors.

Theme 3: Improving internal and external communications

Recommendations

8. **Internal communications and improvements.** The following recommendations are made:

- a. **E-Newsletter.** The GLU consider an email subscriber based newsletter to improve internal communications.
- b. **Improving hunter ethics and culture.** The GLU should conduct a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to identify any skills gap with regard to hunter culture, ethics, knowledge skills and attitudes. This TNA will inform any expansion of training offerings in the Hunter LEAP.
- c. **Improved processes.** The GLU should consider making documented processes and policies easily accessible to stakeholders interested in using hunting as a pest management tool. It is further recommended that the GLU regularly advertise education options in the LEAP program.

9. **External communications - Improving the public perception of hunters.** The following recommendations are made:

- a. **Hunters are missing from the Australian narrative.** That any external communications plan raise the issue that hunters are missing from the Australian narrative and that those opposed to hunting and firearms ownership actively work to hide the fact that the Australian Bushman was in fact a hunter, in order to deny our hunting culture; and to keep us out of the Australian narrative.
- b. **The positive aspects of hunting.** The external communications plan should address the positive aspects of hunting to society; including the environmental, economic, physical and mental health benefits; the positive aspects of hunting when included in wildlife management plans; and the role of hunters as citizen scientists, in order to increase the public acceptance of hunting as a pest management tool and to increase social licence.
- c. **Explaining Hunter LEAP.** The GLU should explain the Hunter LEAP to landholders and land managers to improve public understanding of hunter knowledge skills and attitudes.

10. **Improving the image of hunting.** The following recommendations are made:
- a. **Community engagement.** The GPMAB and GLU should engage local communities through community groups such as Landcare and the New South Wales Farmers Federation in order to:
 - i. Explain the role of volunteer hunters in wildlife management, our skills and training and what we can offer, and how to use us to best effect.
 - ii. Develop and explain our Engagement and Operational models and how they contribute safe and effective operations.
 - iii. Identify wildlife issues where hunters can contribute. For example, organised hunters could negotiate with government authorities such as Local Land Services and the National Parks and Wildlife Service to combine efforts on landscape scale programs (NB. Local people solving local issues in a low-key approach can be very effective and generate significant social licence).
11. **Collaboration and Engagement between farmers and hunters.** It is recommended that the GPMAB consider using extension officers to engage farmers through Pest Management Groups and Local Land Services in order to explain how pest Management groups could use hunters as another tool in the “golf bag” of management options.
12. **Key media messages.** It is recommended that the GLU consider and develop the Key media messages summarised in Table 3 and in Attachment 1.

Theme 4: Hunter knowledge, skills and attitudes and education

Recommendations

13. **R+ licence.** Noting the issue of who should own the training and administrative liability involved in such a program, it is recommended that the development of an R+ licence be considered if it could be used to gain additional access to programs such as the SPC.
14. **Biosecurity training.** It is recommended that the GLU consider inclusion of a Biosecurity Module to fit in with the new farm bio security planning requirements.

Theme 5: Engagement and Operational Models Recommendations

15. **National Park access.** It is recommended that the GPMAB research the relationships between government agencies to define which agency has the lead role in wildlife management in order to understand agency relationships; and use the knowledge gained to promote the expansion of the SPC program in National Parks. This expansion could be managed by AHO's, or, if profitable, by the GLU.

16. **Engagement and Operational models.** It is recommended that the GPMAB investigate successful engagement and operational models, and use them as a guide in designing the GPMAB Engagement and operational Model, ensuring that the selected model fits well in regional operational plans and is flexible and adaptive in its application.

17. **Individual plan per Operation.** Noting that such planning does carry an administrative burden; it is recommended that given the range of target species and location specifics, each Operation should have a tailored written plan. The adaptation and use of pre-existing planning and information delivery processes such as the MAP and SMEAC may provide a useful start point.

18. **Registering interest in participation in programs.** It is recommended that a mechanism that allows individuals to register interest be considered; and that a similar process to the NGB model used by the GLU would be a useful start point. It is further recommended that the GPMAB and GLU review how coordination and leadership of the hunter effort occurs in other states in order to best understand the requirements and develop a process.