

**Submission to the Legislative Council Government Administration Committee A**  
**From Michael Bennett, 16466 Tasman Highway, Llandaff, Bicheno, 7215**  
**and from "Kingston" Conara.**

### **Foreword**

Kingston, Lyndel Poole and Simon Cameron are named frequently in this submission. Lyndel is my dearest friend and support and has been managing Kingston for ten years. During that time I have divided my time between there and my house at Llandaff, south of Bicheno, and have been privy to their problems with deer, and Simon has become a friend too.

I am originally English, a lifelong naturalist, and an Australian citizen now with twenty years in Tasmania.

A number of references go back to 2013 when Kingston's troubles with deer and the GMSU were at their peak. I put together my views in a document entitled "A Fly on the Wall" arguing from the position of an outsider and disinterested observer and sent it to an MP who had expressed interest in the problem. I heard nothing more but have been able to refer to it though some of my views have changed.

### **A Brief History of the Present Problems.**

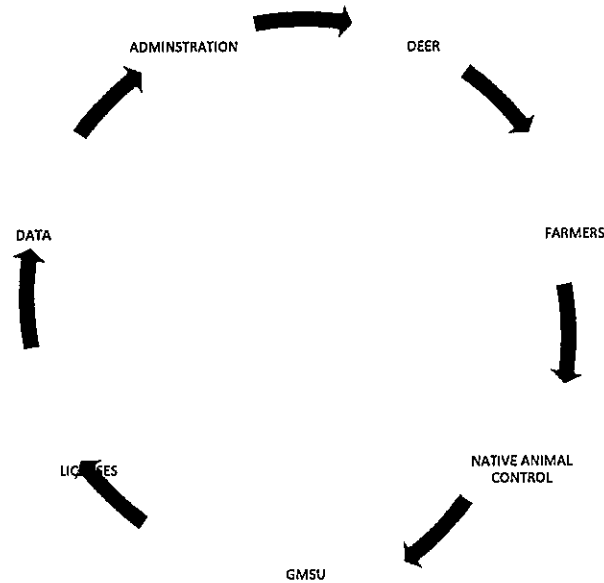
Dates and numbers are derived from "A Statement of Current Management Practices for Tasmanian Fallow Deer, (STOMP) 2011," issued by the Wildlife Management Branch, except those from Reid.

The deer population in 1970 was estimated at 8000, (Wapstra 1971) P.R. Reid in The Manual of Australian Agriculture, 1981, said 6-12000 and by 1990 a DPIPWE unpublished report gave an estimate of 16-20,000. Interest in wild capture for deer-farming flourished briefly in the 70s and 80s, sufficient to agitate the shooting community and a Tasmanian Deer Advisory Council was set up by Parks and Wildlife.

The State's prime conservation body might have been expected to argue for rigid control of an introduced feral but seems to have regarded deer as a sporting asset. In view of the damage from buffalo, foxes, horses, starlings, pigs, camels, cane toads, carp, cats, gorse, capeweed and the multitude of agricultural weeds the decision seems odd. However, that decision surely had a cultural component too; firearm use, hunting and fishing and the bush are parts of Tasmania's culture. For many of the decision-makers, in P&W or not, *to hunt to control deer* was the answer.

The next step, probably sponsored by hunters, was where the seeds of the current problem were sown. In 1993 an American, Brian Murphy, was invited by TDAC and P. and W., to offer a model to satisfy hunters, State and landowners. Murphy came from The Wildlife Society of America, a shooting organisation which seems to award its own credentials. He was essentially a salesman as was his successor, Graham Hall.

## The Murphy Model



The model assumed shared purpose and mutual help, but from its inception was only about deer. Shooters (Meat-Eaters) were not as keen as the Hunters ('Trophy -hunters') and were not easily convinced and many are still not happy. The second small group are the drivers here. **The scheme led to an erosion of landholders' rights to control a listed pest.** Native wildlife was merely an ineffective bargaining chip. Bigger landowners benefit from 'Property Entrance Fees.' Note that money is not mentioned.

The consequences have been significant for farms, forestry, conservation and eventually perhaps for public safety. England has a deer problem from which have come deaths and road accidents and when deer populate the leafy small blocks around the towns and the green belts there will be similar problems here.

### Deer Numbers.

In May, 2010, DPIPWE published a population estimate of 30,000 following 20,000 by Hall (2005) The Unit had to concede some increase but has countered this by claiming a breeding success of only 17% when high fecundity must have been a prerequisite for deer farming. The Wildlife Department relies heavily on information from Shooters' Logbooks and these are available only from properties with Game Management Plans, issued by the Game Management Services Unit, while other deer have no official existence though the East Coast is now infested. Bicheno and adjacent properties have resident mobs and deer have been hit on the roads within the town boundary. Some of these are undoubtedly releases joining an extending range. The deer-farming interest was short-lived but people continue to breed and release them.

Certainly deer range and populations have increased since the inception of the scheme and increased use of irrigation for pasture and cropping has created favourable conditions for deer, wallabies and possums. Agriculture is changing rapidly and a twenty-year-old control procedure, questionable from the outset, is inadequate.

Four years ago at Kingston 15 deer a month was the average kill, now it is twice that. **Any guess is as good as the Department's and a present population of 100,000 seems possible.**

There is evidence that no accurate figures, quotas or parameters for regulating numbers exist. (Transcript of Court Proceedings, Dept. v Lyndel Poole, Kingston Manager. CD and transcript held at Kingston.)

Recent estimates at Kingston (8000 acres) in 2016 have been 300 plus on a new seeding at midnight, 120 on another during late afternoon, and regular mobs of 20 and 30. A report came during 2015 of a mob of 4-500 on a property on the outskirts of Launceston and the writer was flagged down by an excited motorist to see a movement of deer like a migration of wildebeest at "Windfalls" on the Lake Leake road. There are many such reports, usually from people who work with stock and have an eye for numbers. If anecdotal evidence is heavy and drawn from disparate sources and a theme emerges it has to be considered.

### **The Farmers.**

A few landowners gain as they carry numbers of shooters but **there is no argument for requiring someone whose commercial decision is that he does not want deer to maintain them for other people's pleasure or profit.** The Dept. acknowledges that deer cannot be eliminated so that farmer's efforts can be no threat to the species. Some landowners worked with TDAC, with the Tasmanian Deer Association and the Department, creating an alliance and the deer issue now seems to be ring-fenced throughout Government Service.

### **Administration ----a classic --- Establish, Consolidate, Expand.**

Murphy stayed for 3 years, long enough to overcome initial resistance from 'meat-eaters' who were wary of the outcomes of the proposition, anticipating the power plays which would ensue. Despite the much publicised figures of 4000+ annual licences some have nowhere to shoot legitimately while the deer population runs out of control. **Erosion of landholder rights and consolidation of Departmental power began in 1990 when P.&W. floated the idea of Property-based Game Management** and the notion from STOMP,2011, "that landholders use access to land for deer-hunting as a means of attracting hunters who are then required to kill wallaby and possum in exchange for hunting rights." From 1993 while Murphy was here, this was coupled with Quality Deer Management, a project based on a belief that selective shooting would improve the quality of trophy heads.

The grip was then tightened with the issue of 'Fallow Deer Observation and Wildlife Harvesting Logbooks' so data collection began, sufficient to warrant the establishment of a Game Management Services Unit in 1996. STOMP 2011, claimed 120 PBMGs and 15 years after the idea was mooted the Unit felt sufficiently confident to deny deer control to a landowner outside the deer range without a PBMG unless he makes application under the Nature Conservation Act, when he will be required to nominate shooters and negotiate a complex of short term permits.

In 1997 Graham Hall, also associated with the Wildlife Society of America, was appointed and with an assistant travelled the farms pushing PBMGs and QDM.

Wildlife Regulations make provision for the issue of Crop Protection Permits to landholders to prevent damage to 'stock or plants.' The Department's interpretation slid to a definition of something planted or sown, with a proviso that an inspection by the Dept. may be ordered to ascertain need and once more **the farmer's decision is eroded.** The permits were issued under the Wildlife Regulations and these allowed the farmer to issue to his shooters sub-permits and numbered tags to be attached to the dead animals, perhaps for only one foray.

Any unused were handed back to him for issue to others, thus ensuring that the deer were killed in a short time, i.e. a cull, a blitz on numbers. However, CPPs can also be issued under the Nature Conservation Act and here the landholder is required to nominate shooters and the sub-permits are issued from the Unit and may be used only by the nominee, so the cull is frustrated and **again the farmer's freedom is undermined.**

The Quality Deer Management idea fostered a reluctance to kill deer among the devout and utes bore stickers "Let them go, let them grow." Many farmers now complain that shooters are reluctant to cull, they want more and more deer. Ninety farmers signed Simon Cameron's petition in 2009 though none backed him publicly. One of them, plagued with deer and associated intrusions told of 150 cull tags, of which 50 were used in a fortnight by the farmer while the 100 issued to the shooters were not used at all or strung out so the cull, the removal of 150 deer, was nullified. Farmers tell of cull tags issued but ignored. **For guests of a property owner to undermine a host's business decision is outrageous yet it happens constantly.** There is a truculent belief in a sort of Customary Right among some of them.

During the first hearing of Dept. v. Lyndel Poole, Colin Spry, then Senior Wildlife Officer, conceded that requests for CPPs are issued or not at the whim of whoever in the Dept. receives the application. **Again the farmer's professional judgment seems not to be considered.**

#### Licences and Income

The 4792 deer licence holders (Game Tracks, 2016), paying \$67.95 annually are not an homogenous group though the deer lobby speaks as if for all. **The leaders are a small, politicised group of fervent believers whose influence is out of proportion to their numbers.** Farmers, and to a lesser extent the taxpayers, are underwriting these hunters, who create self-serving estimates of income generated by their activities. Income from licences will not cover costs at the GMSU.

#### Native Animals.

Control of native species like Wallabies and Possums was a beguiling trade-off which has not worked. Independent work in the Midlands revealed crop and pasture loss to native animals ranged from 81% close to cover to 41% half a kilometre out, with the average in the survey area being 22%, so after 20 years the benefits seem less than promised.

That the contract would be sufficient was unrealistic; kangaroo is not a staple of diet now and there is no legal market for amateur kills.

Hunters are required to shoot so many times or kill so many head per year. There are more than 30,000 firearms licence holders beyond the 4000+ deer licence holders. The deal is one-sided since the shooters usually take only what **they** want and fudge the figures.

The notion that native animal control needs the lure of deer is false and it cannot be done by recreational shooters alone. Crop Protection Permits unless used at once for a cull become simply an extension of the season for shooters.

## Data Collection

The general pattern in shooters' records is to inflate native animal kills and minimise numbers of deer. Apart from Kingston records evidence is anecdotal but the sum is that shooters' records are not to be believed. 'How many do you reckon we saw?' is not adequate though the entry is accepted. In 2007 there were 1000 to 1500 deer on Kingston and 200 were visible from the house regularly while our shooters' records show 30s. We have records of 8 and 10 hour 'hunts' with few deer seen and none shot at that time. The people on the ground, the farmers and managers, know how haphazard the logs are, yet from them statistics are derived and presented, sometimes in the shooting press, as proofs of successful management.

The most dubious count came from the GMSU itself from an inspection on 4.4.2011 when Leguis and North claimed to have recorded 265 Bennett's Wallabies during a 6 (?) hour inspection.

Our commercial shooter was getting \$9 per animal, shooting at least once weekly from dusk often to 2 or 3am. Records show that over 8 visits in Feb. 2011 he shot 283 and from 5 visits in March he had 138. During April he had 102 from 3 visits and 193 from 6 in May, and he shot over the whole property and knew where to go. His records show that he killed 60 to 70% of what he saw. If a kill rate of 65% is allowed he saw an average of 54 roo over 19 visits so the official count is dubious indeed.

## Comment on the above.

"The most dubious count came from the GMSU itself."

This took place on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010 when Leguis and North claimed to have seen 265 wallabies and 45 deer. That two people with no knowledge of the property picking their way in the dark through unknown territory with a spotlight should stumble on those numbers is incredible. Comparison with the commercial shooter's logs has been cited. If he had seen 265 he would have shot 170.

The work was unconvincing and advised Kingston to "accept that eradication of deer at a property level is not practical or *appropriate*."

Because the report raised doubts the writer had it reviewed and was tempted to print the reworking in its entirety, but it is long and would extend this piece unreasonably. However, to add weight to an earlier comment on GMSU bias and their statistics, some errors will be shown.

DSE (Dry Sheep Equivalent) is the food consumption of a 2 year old dry sheep maintaining a body weight of 45kg. The report used 0.9 which is wrong and conveniently reduces deer damage. The accepted relationship between body mass and metabolic rate is proportional to the power of 0.75. The value of 1.8 is usual for Fallow Deer (Tuckwell 2003, Deer Farming Handbook) but Locke (2003) in a Government paper used 3.1 for males and 2.1 for females.

A farm's carrying capacity is the DSE it can maintain in a period of food shortage. The informed estimate for Kingston in drought is 3000 and 5000 in good conditions. The report uses 6000 which is again wrong.

The survey method was unreliable and the data was taken as the total number of animals on the property though an estimate of the area covered was 930 acres out of 7800 on which sheep, and deer, are run. The totals, accurate or not, should have been multiplied by 7800/930, a factor of 8.4.

The calculation of the DSE for 265 wallabies was wrong and the survey claimed deer density as 1.42 per square kilometre. Properly conducted walked transect surveys by day by another branch of the same Department in 2002, 2005 and 2009 gave an average of 5.9. The last survey was done 5 months before the GMSU's one and the last transect was along Kingston's boundary.

The reworked figures with a wallaby number derived from records including the commercial shooter's and using DSEs of 1.8, 3.1 and 2.1, and 2.5 as a compromise between the higher rates, with the property area factored in, gave percentages of DSE stocking rates for deer ranging from 10.4% to 19% compared with the 0.66 of the spotlight survey.

There is more but the reworked data suggests that the GMSU's focus favours the deer interest. At the time the chatter in the fraternity was that 'Kingston is killing all the deer.' This adds to the view stated in "Data collection" that some figures need to be treated with caution.

For the record a later survey involved two people and two vehicles towing 4WD ATVs. Neither ATV was taken off its trailer and Lyndel Poole took Leguis on her own ATV while his companion sat in the farm office.

#### **Poaching related to abundance of deer.**

The first point to make is that poachers and deer-shooters are not separate groups; the deer-shooter is where he is supposed to be, the poacher is the same man where he is not supposed to be. Poaching is rife and is surely related to the abundance of deer.

In each settlement in the deer-range there are deer-chasers and the back roads are searched constantly after dark. Kingston has a 12 km public road entry and we find tyre tracks and 'calling-cards,' beer cans or spent cartridges regularly. The shooters have to be travelling at least from Campbelltown, Conara, Evandale or Launceston. The activity is a sport in itself and a dangerous one and a **Police Officer warned Lyndel Poole to stay clear and call as there will be drink and firearms on board and loss of face (Ms! LP) is explosive.**

The police are stretched and deer-chasing is so embedded that they probably argue that the Wildlife Officers should deal with it. Perhaps the looseness of the Regulations, as seen in Kingston's dealings, makes prosecution difficult for the Unit, or there is no wish to draw attention to embarrassing problems or no-one wants to do it.

#### **Firearms and Deer**

'The Mercury' of 7.6.12 reported 126,654 weapons held on 35,000+ licenses. An MP said 38,000 while the writer was told 'restricted information' by the Firearms Dept. In 2012 4325 deer licences were issued and each year the number has grown, as does the number of weapons held, since 1300 new weapons were registered between July, 2011 and March, 2012. The deer population grows too under the protection of Government agencies and enthusiasm for deer hunting is viral. Growing firearm ownership and their illegal use must surely be related to abundance and visibility of deer and the looseness of control. **(15.6.16. ABC News 24. Australia sixth biggest importer of firearms.)**

#### **Impacts on Private Land.**

The 90 signatories to Simon Cameron's petition agreed that deer damage was a problem and though none backed him one told him of a \$30,000 crop loss. When he addressed the TFGA he had no response though a few members afterwards agreed informally. During a period when Kingston was not allowed CPPs a count of deer on four areas of grazing showed:

10 hectares of Tama (a sowing) -----	20
9 hectares improved -----	60
16 hectares pasture -----	16
9 hectares new grass -----	11
<b>Total 107 and (60 Foresters were counted also.)</b>	

The Tama cost \$5400 to establish, no stock had been on it and it was a write-off, while the 9 hectares improved were eaten out.

DSE is discussed in the appendix to Data Collection but with the Unit's contentious 0.9, 107 animals represented 96 DSE, and a more realistic 1.8 made 192.

The latter figure suggests that Kingston could be losing the capacity to carry that number of sheep since the deer were living and feeding untroubled, a loss of \$40 per animal for wool alone. At this point the GMSU says, ".....but deer are transient...." which should be remembered when some claim to have their herds under control.

Simon Cameron calculates an annual loss of 10-20% of farm income to feed in paddocks or on the bush runs and to fences. Another employee is needed and could be paid from that loss.

Kingston was denied Crop Protection Permits for 8 months while the sowing was ruined and this raises another issue, that of the GMSU's identification with the deer interest. In 2008 during drought the last remaining feed was being eaten out in daylight by a mob of 60 deer. CPPs were refused on the grounds that the deer season was near and disturbance would spoil things for hunters.

Kingston has 2000 acres of remnant native grassland under covenant, the largest area surviving, home to at least 13 rare or endangered species and cited by DPIPW and other experts as of serious significance. Arguments for open permission to defend it as the Covenant requires were rejected. A ring-fence round deer issues has been mentioned and though many DPIPW ecologists and botanists deplore the deer presence, none speak.

**The cost to farmers is huge and the flow-on to the State is lost. This time they must speak. Our friends among the non-Governmental conservation bodies certainly will.**

#### **Ecological Impacts.**

There can be no better summary of these issues than the following section from a Key Threatening Process Nomination Form to The Environment Protection and Diversity Conservation Act 1999, entitled 'A note about the evidence.' The following is condensed from it.

"Information about the environmental impacts of feral deer in Australia is inadequate. The lack of peer-reviewed research is highlighted by Forsyth (2009) Till 1960 there were two papers; and from 1960 until the 2000s there were no papers published in peer-reviewed science journals. The fact of deer as large exotic ungulates introduced into a country that previously had no ungulates, the weight of evidence from overseas about damaging deer impacts, and the steadily growing accumulation of threats documented by biologists in Australia as deer populations increase lead to the conclusion that *to delay more concerted action on feral deer is to guarantee biodiversity losses and environmental degradation.*

Moriarty (2009) rightly says that 'if deer population trends in Australia continue to increase at their current rate, deer species are likely to rival both feral pigs and feral goats in distribution, abundance and impacts in the near future.'

Deer are among the best-studied species globally and evidence from multiple countries demonstrates the damage they cause (Cote et al 2004). Evidence comes from regions where deer are indigenous but have increased in numbers (Europe and N. America) and from where they have been introduced, New Zealand in particular. Deer are causing problems in much of their native range because predation rates are inadequate to limit their numbers, which also applies to Australia."

Kingston's remnant native grassland and deer have been mentioned but there are wider implications. Representatives of conservation bodies gifted huge acreages and few funds have told of extensive damage. 'Browsing' has been mentioned and in their context means damage to the under-storey, the layer of shrubs and smaller plants beneath trees as well as the stripping of foliage to the height of a deer's reach, on its back legs. It means in a different ecosystem selective grazing of species, trampling, rutting holes, tree-rubbing and always expansion of the range. Systems reach an apparent equilibrium over millennia but competition among species continues at its own rate while an introduction disrupts.

After a lifetime with English Nature, Richard Williamson, also a writer and journalist, tells of woods stripped of understorey so you can see through them, just bare poles, a sub-system and entire populations of the ground and low-level nesting birds, mainly insectivores, and butterfly populations gone.

Extensive research by scientists from the Universities of Ottawa and Carlton, Ottawa, on the impact of 'over-abundant deer on songbird populations' revealed impacts on plant diversity and subsequently to the bird populations similar to those mentioned in the previous paragraph.

#### **Deer Shooters.**

This section is not a condemnation of all deer-shooters. The landowner values shooters who recognise their obligations and who do not impose. Kingston has two such men who come and go without fuss, men of the land themselves, friends of the property who kill deer and would kill more if they were not hampered by pointless regulations. Kingston has also had the trophy obsessives and the schemers, types which would be recognised by most farmers and managers, though if any of them will speak to the Inquiry is another question. When Kingston initiated a correspondence in 'Tas Country' the then editor was directed by shooters to a property whose owner would tell him how well they performed. He presented himself with a photographer to the surprised owner who gave a full and frank opinion of shooters. The editor offered to print *his* view and the farmer backed down. (pers. comm. to LP from then editor)

If the farmer has the second sort of hunter he can be subjected to constant nuisance and phone-calls at any time. One farmer has handed over a hut far from his house, told the group not to contact him at all and if they have paper-work forget it. The loser is the farmer but to do otherwise is to be made miserable. A neighbour inherited a rough gang and eventually finished them. In return they drove through gates to wreck them and shot away the locks on others and still hang about.

The controlling element, the purists, are reluctant to shoot, wanting more and more deer and dreaming of one with a head like an Irish elk. A conservation body was gulled into taking on some of them who undertook to reduce deer numbers; seventeen of them killed ten over a year.

The burden on the farmer to see that rules and policies are upheld is heavy and the soft option beckons. A well-regarded manager of a flagship property retired recently and early, saying that his work had been soured by responsibility for shooters and he described the frustrations cited previously.

These tales may seem unlikely but dealing with shooters is difficult and the current system leaves farmers vulnerable. **If conditions are altered farmers and shooters will have to work together but the farmers must control.**

#### **Interim conclusions.**

The Game Management Services Unit identifies with the shooting interest and is, with its friends, mainly responsible for the current mess. It has failed to 'manage' deer and shooters and the Wildlife Management Branch has failed to manage the Unit. The cost to farmers and ultimately to the State has to be considered.



**Most farmers are underwriting recreational shooting at a heavy cost to themselves and ultimately to the State if the lost revenue is traced.**

**Decision- making has been taken from those farmers.**

**The deer-population is out of control, irreversibly.**

**Trespass and illicit firearm use is stimulated by the population growth.**

**Conservation interests are constrained by the wrong priorities.**

#### **Reduction of the deer population and alteration of their status.**

The Australian Government Department of Sustainability has given 45% as an annual herd increase and an annual 34% cull necessary to counter it. The 'guesstimate' of 100,000 would require an immediate cull of 34,000, 80,000 would need 27,200 to prevent the problem becoming greater as options are considered. This illustrates the scale of the problem and unless drastic measures are taken the problem will grow, as demonstrated by Professor Lefroy.

The cull percentages will have been derived from complex study but the figures used at their simplest, 10 years for a herd of 100, do work.

**Though deer are lovely animals there has to be a major cull, unsentimental and unselective with pregnant does and does and fawns killed and the 'Bambi syndrome' disregarded.**

**Poisoning** would probably be discounted because of possible damage to carnivores scavenging carcasses but 'Tas. Country, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2016, reports an increased use of 1080 for possums and wallabies over the previous year. Carcasses of those species would not all be recoverable so danger to other species has been ignored in those circumstances. There are poisons which kill immediately and would make the most difference. However, things will have to get worse before they get better and if recognition of the problem emerges from a preliminary enquiry there will be time for ideas to take hold.

#### **Aerial Culling.**

Dr Carol Booth of the Invasive Species Council cites the use of a professional aerial hunter on an infested reserve in S.A. who killed 182 deer (90% of estimated population) in 4 hours after 65 recreational hunters undertaking a cull took 44 in 4 days, less than the annual increase. Similar tactics of helicopter round-ups are used in N.Z. but there and in the earlier example the operations may have taken place over open ground. The method could perhaps be used where densities are high as in some examples given. Goat culls were done this way but numbers were low and the shooting was done by Departmental enthusiasts. Booth is talking of professionals, and control by hunters she describes as '*ineffective and risky amateur efforts*'. All men consider themselves good drivers and in the same way all shooters think they are good shots.

The organised hunters, the 'trophy-seekers,' will seek to reassure the committee that problems are exaggerated and they have things in hand.

#### **Pest Status.**

Pest status would give deer the rank of rabbits and foxes and would put power firmly with the landholder to kill and give permissions to others to kill. However, complete "open slather" is a move too far with deer. There are too many firearms and the excitement around deer-shooting needs some restraints so for that reason the next option is more attractive.

### **Partially Protected status altered.**

At present deer are Partially Protected so potential pest status is recognised but not rated at the highest level. This should change so their status would be similar to that of wallabies and possums, that is to have no restriction on numbers taken on a permit held by the landholder and those he authorises to shoot, and unlimited spotlighting allowed as that is the only way to kill numbers. That would rid us of the absurdities of 'tagging' and uselessly detailed returns and it is unselective, which is the point of a cull. 'Meat-eaters' will welcome spotlighting and they far outnumber the 'hunters' but have no representation and no voice.

### **An elegant remedy in Victoria.**

15.7.13. <http://seedstockcentral.com.au>. Victorian hunters have welcomed regulation changes making it easier to manage deer on private land. VVF Land Management Chair Gerald Leach said the government had heeded calls to remove the wildlife (game) protection of deer on private land. *"The costs on private landowners that deer impose, including consuming pastures, damaging fences, and damaging private land under conservation management is immense."* Mr Leach said. Until now deer causing damage on private property could only be destroyed if landowners applied for and received an Authority to Control Wildlife(ATCW), or if they engaged licensed deer hunters. Only landowners and their employees or agents are able to destroy deer on their land under the change. Anyone else seeking to hunt deer on private land will need written permission from the landowner. (Licenced deer-hunters are professionals/commercials with markets for their deer.) 'The Examiner' on 5.7.13 reported the NSW Game Council scrapped because the premier said 'there was an inherent conflict in its dual role of representing the interests of hunters and shooters.'

### **Commercialisation necessary.**

The cull must be intense and the strongest incentive is a market. At present wild venison comes here from S.A. but there is widespread demand for it for human consumption and commercial shooters have been approached with potentially large orders. At the other end there will be a use for inferior meat for small-goods or animal feed. A commercial shooter has a vested interest and must do the work necessary, and that obligation, night after night in all weathers and with the subsequent butchery, is real work and not play, and they meet licencing, health and safety requirements. Amateurs shooting for fun cannot kill the numbers required though they will still have shooting as the reduction of the deer population becomes purposeful, but they will have to work for their kills and the real hunters will show.

A further incentive for the commercial shooter would be an attempt to sell venison and roo meat overseas. Lyndel Poole on a recent visit to China was told of increasing interest in meat ----- 'If it has legs and it's not a table, and if it has wings and it's not an aeroplane, we eat it.' One commercial shooter, Charlie Davis, has been approached to supply roo meat to China.

Landowners should be wary of 'harvesting,' where a commercial shooter takes only sufficient to maintain the numbers *he* needs. Such a shooter arranges access to a large number of properties which he shoots at intervals as numbers become sufficient for him. That would be for the landowner to solve by getting a different commercial shooter.

### **Other commercialisation.**

A degree of commercialisation exists, as people pay to shoot. With alteration of status a landowner could continue to charge shooters but his neighbour would be entitled to consider whether he is subsidising a business next door. 'Hunters' *will* pay and numbers go to the mainland or New Zealand, while the Victorians coming here each year must pay someone.

As opportunities decrease fees could increase though charging for shooting must be legalised. "Hunters" even pay to kill deer in enclosures for their trophy heads.

In the first section the cultural problem is noted. Firearms and hunting are a part of Tasmanian culture, but it is ingrained and any acceptance of change will be gradual. The writer has heard of 'show and tell sessions' in infant classes with little boys producing cartridge cases and 'My dad shot - ----' An influential shooter, owning no land but secure in the little empire he has created, forecast that youngsters will have nowhere to shoot unless they are 'born to it' which perhaps illustrates the confidence and complacency of the lobby. Changes in attitudes will be gradual, any proposed change will be resisted and feared as with change to firearm ownership laws. There can be no easy answer and amended legislation cannot effect an overnight change so the minor fiddles will go on and there will still be kerb-crawling, poaching, back-door sales to butchers, dodgy deals and shooters' intrigues, and if the tangle of regulations and improvisations is removed the people who spun them will survive, but a **massive cull of deer is the priority.**

### **Final Submission.**

May I please submit:

That the problem of an out-of-control deer population be acknowledged and publicised.

That the status of deer be altered to be similar to that of Bennett's Wallabies and Pademelons.

That deer seasons be abolished and landowners be issued with a token permit for one year or longer allowing them to take, or authorise shooters to take deer, irrespective of age or sex, by day or at night with spotlights, at any time of year.

That properly licenced commercial shooters be allowed to make agreements with landowners to shoot and sell deer.

That a landowner be required to submit one return only, at the expiry of his permit.

## Allison Waddington

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**From:** Saralco Partnership <saralcopartnership@inet.net.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2016 12:33 PM  
**To:** DEER  
**Subject:** Submission for the Inquiry into Fallow deer  
**Attachments:** Submission for the Legislative Council Government Administration Committee A - MJB  
27June2016.pdf

Dear Mrs Mannering,

Please find attached submission for the inquiry into Fallow deer.

Which is sent electronically on behalf of Michael Bennett.

Thanks.  
Lyndel Poole  
"Kingston"  
Conara, 7211