

Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Inc

fact sheet

released February 12, 2013



SSAA launches 2013 Year of the Hunter



In 2013, the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia is celebrating the hard work our hunters do behind the scenes by telling their story through the SSAA's 2013 Year of the Hunter. Hunters play a valuable role in maintaining Australia's natural balanced ecosystem, but this can be overlooked by those who do not necessarily understand hunting.

Hunting fast facts

- Four types of hunting are practised in Australia: wildlife management, trophy hunting, recreational and food
- 80% of the SSAA's members hunt on a regular basis
- Invasive animals cost the Australian economy more than \$740 million per year in industry impacts and control efforts
- Hunting is proven to have the lowest overall animal welfare impact when compared to other pest animal management tools

Hunting laws

In Australia, hunting is regulated by each state and territory government. This has led to the creation of a number of different regulations, laws, fees, charges and licence requirements across the country.

Hunting for wildlife management

According to the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Council, the effects of invasive animals in Australia totals more than \$740 million annually. These effects include losses in agriculture, including horticulture, and other expenditures such as research, administration and management.

The SSAA has about 150,000 members across the country, with around 80 per cent of these responsible and licensed firearm owners participating in voluntary hunting activities on a regular basis.

The SSAA believes that there are many tools that can be used to manage Australia's introduced and native wildlife issues. This includes hunting, trapping, relocation and

poisoning. SSAA hunters work every day in wildlife management, providing a valuable role and being part of the solution to Australia's invasive animal problems.

The SSAA believes the role of hunters is so vital that it is now helping to link hunters and landowners through its Farmer Assist program to allow for hunting to occur in an organised and targeted manner beginning at the property level.

Hunting as a recreational pastime

In addition to wildlife management, hunting is also a healthy recreational pastime, similar to that of fishing. It connects people to the environment and provides an active and, in many cases, sociable outdoor pursuit.

Hunting for the table

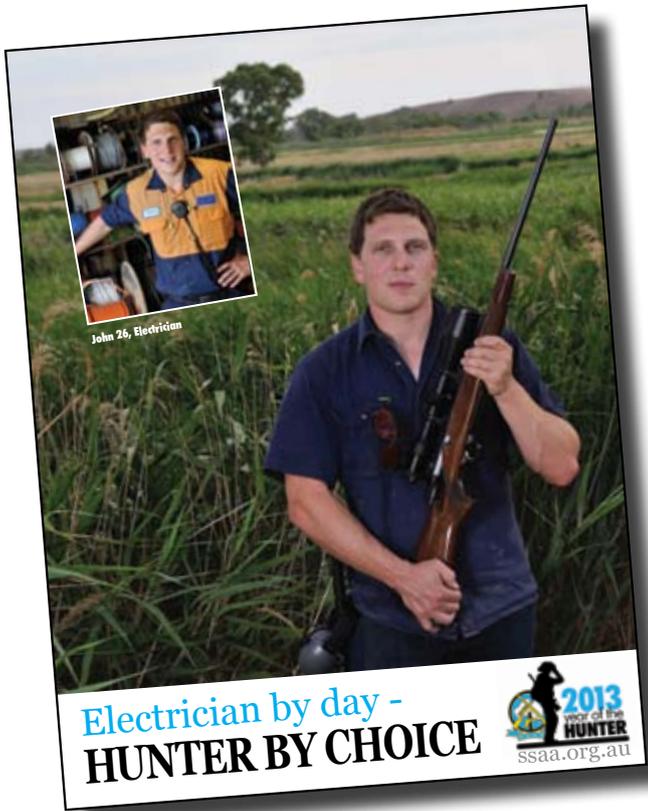
Many hunters choose to hunt for food, and as the popularity of game meat continues to increase, so does the realisation that harvesting tasty, organic, free-range food is a sustainable behaviour. The practice also has deep cultural roots within our history.

The SSAA is helping to educate its hunters and the wider non-hunting community of the pleasures and benefits of eating game meat through its award-winning cookbook, *Field to Fork - The Australian Game Cookbook*.



Trophy hunting in Australia

Another form of hunting that exists in Australia is trophy hunting. This practice is the selective hunting of specific species, usually older animals, to allow natural evolution. The practice often results in taxidermy, dioramas and photography that may be kept in homes, museums and other historical collections, which is a way of showing the past and current narrative of nature and wildlife.



Trophy hunting involves the displaying of photographs, antlers, feathers and skins from a variety of game species. The meat of the animal can also be used for consumption, which obviously requires harvesting of the whole animal. This type of hunting was practised by our indigenous Australians (as well as other indigenous cultures) and cultural practices need to be respected. The displaying of animals is part of a cultural group's representation of their relationship and their respect of animals.

Hunting ethics

While hunting may seem controversial in today's society to some people, this decision is usually something that is reached without the necessary information.

Hunting is sometimes loosely referred to as a 'sport', but it is better explained as an activity, pastime, hobby or recreation. Just like some forms of fishing, hunting can be physically and mentally challenging, as well as rewarding, and it is these components that make the activity feel 'sports-like' for many people.

The SSAA always encourages safety and a healthy respect for game. The SSAA's hunters also agree to abide by codes of ethics and etiquette when hunting in the field.

A final point usually made in opposition to hunting refers to 'animal welfare'. The SSAA is committed to providing hunter education and promoting ethical hunting practices. There is a reality that pest control must be performed in Australia and an academically created model for assessing the relative humaneness developed in conjunction with the RSPCA highlights shooting to have the lowest overall welfare impact when compared to other pest animal management tools, including trapping or poisoning. ●

Useful resources

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia: www.ssaa.org.au

SSAA's 2013 Year of the Hunter: www.ssaa.org.au/yearofthehunter

SSAA Hunting: www.ssaa.org.au/hunting

Be Part of the Solution campaign: www.ssaa.org.au/hunting/be-part-of-the-solution-campaign.html

Field to Fork - The Australian Game Cookbook: www.fieldtoforkcooking.com.au

Hunting Educational Resources: www.ssaa.org.au/hunting-resources

SSAA's Farmer Assist: www.ssaa.org.au/farmer-assist-pilot

A Model for Assessing the Relative Humaneness of Pest Animal Control Methods:

www.ssaa.org.au/research/2008/2008_assessing-relative-humaneness-pest-animal-control-methods.pdf

The Economic Impacts of Vertebrate Pests in Australia:

www.ssaa.org.au/research/2009/2009-08-19_the-economic-impacts-vertebrate-pests-australia.pdf

University of Queensland Australian Hunter Survey 2012:

www.ssaa.org.au/hunting/educational-resources/2012-08_summary-university-of-queensland-hunter-survey.pdf

For further comment, please contact SSAA National spokesperson Tim Bannister on 0412 671 266, Special Project Officer in Hunting Matthew Godson on 0448 887 079 or Media Officer Rachael Andrews on 0429 011 282