

WILLIAM IRVINE

Submission ID: 204937

Organisation: *Sporting Shooters Association of Australia - Goulburn Branch*

Location: *New South Wales*

Supporting materials uploaded: *N/A*

Submission date: 10/13/2024 3:55:55 PM

Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values

It is a core value from tens of thousands of years of human history that human kind of all ethnicities has hunted in forests. As membership of a registered hunting club is necessary for obtaining a R-License, SSAA Goulburn & Districts Branch has several hundred members who hunt on a regular basis, many in state forests. Through their role they remove pest and introduced species who prey on native species and destroy native habitats, and they continue the culture that their European and First Nations ancestors celebrated. For these reasons cultural conservation hunting in State Forests via the DPI's R-Licence system is a critical cultural and environmental asset to forest management.

Topic 5. The role of State Forests in maximising the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes and options for diverse management, including Aboriginal forest management models

Many State Forests currently benefit from the activities of licenced, accredited ethical hunters to assist in controlling feral and pest species which have an adverse effect on native species and their habitat.

In reviewing the Forestry Industry Action Plan, it is important to be aware of these benefits, and ensure that the Plan encourages the continuation of this valuable contribution.

As our towns and cities grow larger there is more and more need for humans to reconnect with nature. In a paper in 2022 Dr Simone Webber addressed the Japanese of 'Shirin-yoku' or 'Forest bathing.' As she describes 'it involves immersing your senses in the sights, sounds, scents and feel of woodlands' and draws on the concept of biophilia, encouraging humans to preserve ecosystems. Hunting, as done by our branch members, specifically involves shrugging of the stresses of everyday life and focusing on the forest around them, through walking, spotting, tracking and identifying different aspects of fauna and flora in the pursuit of game. It is, in it's most primal form, forest bathing. In this way the management of pest and introduced species has a massive contribution to wellness, mindfulness and resilience of the community past the obvious advantages of environmental preservation, native species protection and meat harvesting.

Economically, hunters who travel to state forests to hunt inject money into the local economy in terms of fuel, groceries, accommodation and meals. Through their access of more remote parts of the forest they keep tracks clear and are able to observe and react to the behaviour of pest species in a way that government departments are unable to, both in terms of cost and time. Through the hard work of hunters who spend 365 days a year in Bondi State Forest, South of Bombala, the Loo-Footed Potoroo, a species never before seen in NSW, was sighted in late 2023 living comfortably in that particular forest. Bondi is hunted continually and has both soft wood and native hardwood harvested from it.

It should be no surprise that threatened species occur in State Forests, as well as National Parks. Continued access to State Forests for hunters will make a contribution to the suppression of feral

Public submission

and pest species, unlike National Parks which usually don't have the resources to carry out effective management, and which hunters cannot access.

It was the knowledge that they would be able to contribute to conservation of native species and habitat that led many hunters to invest in an R-License. It is important to maintain their important role in the preservation of these native environments and species.