

S00039 – Damien Hart

Hi there,

Firstly may I say thank you for consulting with us on these proposed changes and I appreciate being notified about it by email. As someone who has lived pretty much all of my life on the land I'm grateful for this opportunity to contribute. I'm a little disappointed about the kangaroo damage mitigation being excluded from this particular consultation, but hopefully you will follow up with that soon. I see this as one of the major pressures that landholders are under with unprecedented numbers of kangaroos and wallabies creating very significant grazing pressure (in a time of drought), but also creating enormous problems on the roads. It is actually now rare for me to take a trip in the morning or evening and not have to dodge a roo or wallaby somewhere, and we have had several near misses and also a number of damaged vehicles. I regularly see cars that have hit roos on the side of the road and I see countless dead animals along the sides of the roads in our area in SE NSW. The numbers are staggering.

That aside, I'd like to offer comment on the following sections:

4.2 Landholder's license to harm

- Agree that simply adding all nominated shooters to the landholders licence to harm should be adopted and would be much simpler
- Suggest that licenses to harm need to be easier and quicker to get. I have a neighbouring landholder friend who waited 7 weeks for tags for a kangaroo population in plague numbers and only got them then through repeated follow up!
- Suggest that the onerous and environmentally unfriendly practice of tagging harvested animals be removed. I do understand that the point of tagging is to not only help the OEH maintain statistics of the harvested numbers, but primarily also to ensure that the animals are actually dead and their joeys cleanly killed as well. I am a passionate advocate of ethical harvesting but I believe this risk can be addressed through the code of practice instead, and the statistics could be collected through an online form citing numbers culled to be submitted by shooters without having to leave paddocks littered with tags and cable ties or string
- Suggest that carcasses should be able to be used for dog meat and other practical purposes without fear of penalty. The current requirement to leave them where they are shot is impractical, messy and would rarely be followed
- If tags remain in place, suggest removing the requirement to return unused tags within a 7 day period
- Suggest permitting the use of suppressors on rifles to quieten the report of the rifles in what are now more densely populated areas. I think this would lower the concern from neighbours
- Suggest removing the impractical notification to neighbours, local police and NPWS 24 hours prior to shooting. This just isn't practical in the real world and I doubt it is ever acted on anyway

4.2.3 Other native animals

- I note that wombats are also in unprecedented numbers - at least in the region in which I live - damaging pastures and fences, and presenting a significant road hazard. Getting licences from the NPWS to harm wombats is reputedly extremely difficult as they are treated like some kind of sacred cow, and so most people don't even bother trying despite massive damage to their properties through the numbers wombats are now in. This results in their numbers being managed 'off the books' and I suggest that this is why the reported numbers of licences to harm are low, and not for any other reason. This only ensures that OEH do not have accurate figures on wombat populations which I think you would really benefit from. I suggest that wombats be treated the same way as kangaroos and wallabies, and that if some more practical changes be applied to licenses to harm roos that these also be applied to wombats. In my area, wombat numbers would be as high as some of the problem wallaby species and they do vastly more damage

4.3.2 Relocating possums

- Suggest that removing possums from problem areas not require a license or a fee. I am very surprised to hear this was the case and would doubt its effectiveness

5.3.2 Interstate import and export

- Support the view that lower risk species be exempted from licensing, such as species regulated by a code of practice

5.4.2 Taxidermy and preserved specimens

- Support the removal of licensing for taxidermists – to be replaced with a self-reporting online form if OEH are interested in recording numbers
- Support the exemption from licensing for persons and organisations holding preserved specimens. the numbers of these would presumably be so low as to have no impact on populations
- Suggest removal of the condition regarding sourcing of dead animals, or include the use of harvested animals such as described in section 4.2
- Suggest removal of the need to obtain a license to hold preserved specimens for persons seeking to have animals preserved – the numbers involved just wouldn't be worth the administrative effort

7.3 Proposed fee setting principles

- Support the proposed principles except for the licenses for taxidermy and holding preserved specimens

thanks for your time and very happy to follow up any questions you might have

kind regards

Damien Hart