



### President's Message

Earlier this month we held our Association's annual general meeting at the Captains Mountain complex, hosting more than 70 branch delegates from across the state. During the weekend the management committee, made up of the branch delegates and executive, discussed our history, the events of the past 12 months and where they would like to see SSAA Queensland in the future.

The delegates voted overwhelmingly to continue to build our own identity and explore additional member benefits in areas such as media, be it a revitalised website, newsletters and enewsletters like this one and to be self-reliant in political and industry lobbying. There are areas that are specific to the state of Queensland, and we want to manage it to the best of our ability. Our self-management further professionalises and commercially strengthens the Association.

It was heartening to see such enthusiasm and support from the management committee and I can report that the executive committee and I, as president, were returned to our positions for another 12 months.

Recently, we have been fortunate enough to secure a new property in the Upper Coomera area and we will be discussing the future development of this rural land with state and local governments. We would like to thank SSAA Life Member Les Pratten for bringing the property to our attention. The development of our 10,000-acre property in southern Queensland is still in discussion stages with the local regional council.

We are expanding our properties across the state for the benefit of all members to protect us and our recreation into the future.

On a final note, I can advise that we have introduced BPAY to assist members renew their membership.

Until next month, safe shooting.

**Hellen Gill**

SSAA Queensland President



**SEEKING SANCTUARY:** More than 100,000 trees have been planted at the Stewartdale range to support local koala populations, proving target shooting and conservation go hand in glove.  
Photo: Tim Bannister

## Stewartdale – a range and refuge

By Jennifer Martens

When non-shooters ask what SSAA Queensland does, aside from offering shooting activities of course, you should point out its conservation efforts. The Association has spent thousands of hours and dollars ensuring the future of Australia's beloved flora and fauna, including our iconic koalas.




The largest state-funded koala habitat restoration project in history sits on a SSAA Queensland land reserve and shooting complex in South Ripley, Southeast Queensland. The Stewartdale Nature Refuge is a multi-purpose 1200-hectare property that boasts native grasses and vegetation areas, the Ipswich shooting range, and Daly's Lagoon, which is home to more than 130 bird species. But it is its koala sanctuary that has captured the attention and support of the Queensland State Government. Together, SSAA Queensland and the government have restored 211 hectares of dry sclerophyll. Since 2005, more than 113,000 trees, including native eucalypts, have been planted to support local koala populations. SSAA Queensland also supplies eucalyptus leaves from the refuge to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection so it can feed sick injured koalas at the Moggill Koala Hospital.

The Refuge links with the Flinders Karawatha Corridor, which is Southeast Queensland's largest remaining stretch of eucalypt forest – an important natural asset amid urban development.

Stewartdale's refuge success means there is scope for it to be used as a sanctuary for koalas relocated from other areas affected by habitat loss.

Prior to undertaking this impressive project, SSAA Queensland had been managing pest animals, specifically wild dogs, on the property and ensuring areas of native vegetation remained untouched by any developments – and it continues to do so today. SSAA members see themselves as true conservationists; they spend a great deal of time on the land and understand and care for it.

SSAA Queensland's General Manager Bob Green said, "Lessons learned at Stewartdale will enable us to apply our conservation vision and principles across other properties we own and will own in the future."

The Stewartdale Nature Refuge serves as a good template for conservation partnership between the state government and the shooting community and it is one all SSAA Qld members can be proud of. 


## Meet Stewie the koala

To celebrate the success of the koala habitat restoration work at the Stewartdale refuge and shooting complex, SSAA Queensland 'adopted' Stewie the Koala as its official mascot in 2017.

Stewie is presented as a gift to various SSAA Queensland supporters and serves as a reminder to all that SSAA Queensland places a high priority on conservation and the preservation of Australia's native wildlife as well as feral pest management.



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# New record for Target Pistol champs




Open State champion Michael Angel and Target Pistol champion Michael Trussler, who set a new record, were presented with the shields by Target Pistol State Discipline Chairman Susan Summers. Lachlan secured the junior's shield.

On the first weekend of August, SSAA Oakey welcomed 17 competitors, including three competing in the Junior category, four in Veterans and the remainder competing in the Open category.

Target Pistol State Discipline Chairman and now National Chairman Susan Summers provided details on this event, saying, "it included a wide range of experienced shooters, from previous National team members to competitors who were participating in the matches for the first time. Eight shooters shot every event to contest the Perpetual Shields for the three categories."

One shooter was skilled enough on the day to break a record: Michael Trussler now holds the Veteran Any .22 record with a score of 784.12. The previous record had stood since 2014.

The Queensland Team who contested at the Teams Match at the National Precision Target Pistol Championships recently at Port Bouvard Pistol and Smallbore Club in Western Australia included Michael Angel, David Colvin and Kendall Summers. Perpetual Shield winners from the Championships were Michael Angel (Open), Michael Trussler (Veteran) and Lachlan (Junior).

Susan said, "SSAA Oakey is to be congratulated on hosting a successful championship, with all competitors having a great weekend." 



Sunny Townsville hosted a strong field of competitors of all ages. Insert: On target!

## Gallery Rifle a junior drawcard

SSAA Townsville Range was host to this year's Gallery Rifle State Championships. The Sunshine State delivered, as it so frequently does, cracking weather for the more than 20 competitors, including half a dozen juniors, who came from across the state vying to claim a state title. Dave Mitchell, Townsville Shoot Captain, said in terms of junior competitions, it was "one of the best in recent years". Juniors competed in both the open and junior categories: 11-15 and 15-18 years of age.

Most of the competitors and their families took advantage of the range's camping facilities, making for a very social weekend.

Competitors put on their very best, but Dave said it was Brett Prasser from Townsville who made quite a name for himself. While not the overall Grand Aggregate winner, Brett did come in second place to Michael Angel from Clermont. Brett's finish was notable, as he only began shooting Gallery Rifle three months prior to the event. Such a respectable performance so early in his shooting career means he will certainly be on everyone's radar. Coming in a very respectable third place was Lloyd Marteene, also from Clermont.

Gallery Rifle includes short- and medium-distance shooting events for rifles chambered for pistol-calibre cartridges. Matches require shooters to load and shoot very quickly either at stationary paper or reactive steel targets. 🎯



**COULD IT WORK HERE?** New Zealand held a competition offering cash prizes for culling feral cats. In Australia each feral cat is estimated to kill 449 mammals, birds and reptiles, mainly native, per year according to the University of Queensland.

## **Across the ditch - feral cats culled for competition**

An annual competition in New Zealand boldly combines competitive shooting with conservation and wildlife management. The North Canterbury fundraising event, which is led by a group of farming families from the South Island, sees both adults and juniors targeting introduced species including deer, pigs, ducks possums, rabbits, and, for the second time, feral cats - all of which threaten native wildlife and landowners' livelihoods. This year's event focussed on feral cats and took place in June, with more than 1500 participants. The competition offered \$500 to the competitor culling the most cats, this year's winner bagging 65, and \$1000 to the one shooter bringing the largest cat, which weighed a mighty 6.7kg.

As the rural area in NZ's South Island is under constant pressure from the feral pests, this competition is a popular event and is a great way to help local farmers and property owners deal with the scourge of introduction species. Not only does the event help remove unwanted pests, but the funds raised are given back to the community. This year, nearly \$60,000 was divided between a local school and the funds to build a community pool.

Feral cats have the potential to wreak irreparable damage to native wildlife in just one night. Multiply that damage throughout a year and it could lead to extinction of some of our most endangered native animals. Despite conservation efforts, nearly 4,000 of New Zealand's native species are under risk of extinction.

Introduced species, including cats, are so problematic in New Zealand that in 2015, the-then Prime Minister John Key unveiled one of the world's most radical pest eradication schemes – Predator Free 2050, the goal of which is exactly as its name states.

Events such as the North Canterbury shooting competition could assist New Zealand in achieving this goal. Unfortunately, animal activists have proven to be obstacles, disrupting events, arguing their cruelty, and protesting conservation legislation.

Organisers of the shoot ensure that domestic cats are not targeted. Cats are trapped in cages and checked for collars/identification. The feral cats are then taken to an area at least 10km from communities. According to organiser Matt Bailey, it is not difficult to tell a feral cat from a domesticated cat, with the ferals displaying aggressive behaviours more akin to a ferocious tiger than a pet tabby cat. Ferals, once properly identified and moved, are then humanely killed using a .22 rifle.

Cat ownership in New Zealand is extremely high. Bailey, and his fellow shooters, would like to see owners required to desex and micro-chip their pets. As cats are apex predators, meaning no natural predators of their own, it is up to humans to help control them, whether as pet owners through sterilisation or microchipping, or as conservationist via shooting or baiting ferals. The native wildlife in New Zealand and Australia depends on it.

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