

QUEENSLAND'S BIG GAME RIFLE COMPETITOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION

THE

February 2025
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REPORT

A NEW MAGAZINE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN SHOOTER AND
THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN OUTDOORS ENTHUSIAST

Dawn of a new era

Collector's Issue



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Our Story

Welcome to the first printed edition of *The Report*, a new magazine dedicated to the passion, culture, and community of firearms enthusiasts across Australia. Whether you’re a seasoned shooter, a collector, or someone just starting their shooting journey, our goal is to provide in-depth insights, expert reviews, and the latest news on firearms, accessories, and shooting sports. We aim to bring Australian shooters and great outdoors enthusiasts together, fostering a deeper understanding of the sport and promoting safe, responsible enjoyment of firearms.

Published under the SSAA Queensland wholly owned Australian Shooters Alliance (ASA), the magazine is proudly Queensland-based but will have a national reach. It will feature many a hunting and target sports story from this state but also have pieces from across Australia and even internationally. The magazine will be distributed throughout Australia and submitted to the National Library for history’s sake. Australian target shooting and hunting has a long and proud history in this land and we are proud to be a part of it.

The Report Team



A new magazine for the Australian Shooter and Great Australian Outdoors enthusiast

Volume 1.1

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Letters

Shooting for all ages

I have been a member for nearly 30 year and while my shooting has been sporadic, I have now retired and have more time to get to the range and go bush in the cooler months.

Unfortunately, I haven’t been able to dodge some of the physical ailments that come with getting older and am wondering if other members are experiencing the same change in shooting choices I am now faced with?

My eyesight with glasses is good but my reflexes are not what they were. I can walk 15 kilometres a day but do not have the same strength as I used to. I used to be a shotgunner mainly shooting clays and in my day, duck hunting and rabbits. I have always owned rifles, but shotgun was my first choice, as I liked the movement and marksmanship.

I am gravitating towards rifle target shooting, which requires good eyesight but a calmness and ability to control breathing. I have found the ranges near me also have rifle shooting practice and competitions quite often.

I have dabbled in reloading but now think it might go a long way in improving my accuracy and hip pocket. I am also wondering about joining the Farmer Assist program to mix up my usual hunting destinations now that I have more time. I am likely to be hunting for pest control reasons not meat anymore as I really don’t want to be carrying part of a deer carcass on my back.

Has anyone gone through the changes in shooting choices like I am now facing? Any tips?

Peter, Riverhills, Qld

Thanks for membership pin

I’d like to thank the office for sending me my 25-year SSAA Queensland membership pin. To be honest, I didn’t even know they were sent out. It means a lot to me, and I will wear it with pride on and off the range. I used to shoot at Brisbane but have lived in Townsville for many years now. Keep up the good work for us shooters.

Jack, Townsville, Qld

Hunting and juniors

I was talking to Weapons Licensing a month ago, asking about the law and if juniors can go hunting if they have a Minor’s licence. Its website states: ‘A Minor’s licence can only be issued to someone between the ages of 11 and 17 years. A Minor’s licence allows you to possess and use rifles, shotguns and pistols (Categories A, B, C and H only). Genuine reasons for a Minor’s licence include sports or target shooting, primary production or rural employee on rural land.’ So, there was no information about hunting. At first, I was told that a minor can’t get an RE1 or use hunting as a genuine reason to have a Minor’s licence, but as I explained I wanted to take my nephew hunting on a friend’s farm, it became clear that it was allowed if he was supervised by a licensed adult. The fellow from Weapons Licensing said it would be considered ‘training’ and in his opinion it was allowed.

So, I just wanted to make sure fellow members understand it is ok to take out minors to hunt and sometimes you have to be very specific about what you are asking to ensure there is no misunderstanding.

P.S. Blake got his first rabbit with a rimfire, and I think he has caught the bug.

Jeff Marion, Toowoomba, Qld

News

LET US KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS

We want to know your thoughts on shooting, hunting and the great Australian Outdoors so put pen to paper or hit the keyboard. Letters may appear in any of our electronic and printed media including our e-newsletter, websites and *The Report* magazine. Last names optional but please include your first name and town for publishing and SSAA Queensland membership number for verification purposes only.

Mail to: SSAA Queensland, Member Letters, PO Box 2443 North Ipswich, Qld 4305 or

Email: news@ssaaqld.org.au

Political statements stir the pot

We received many replies and comments in response to the October Special Election Issue E-newsletter. Phil Morris thanked us for the information regarding the various political parties’ stand on firearms and Roger Hill thought the parties’ statements were very interesting. Phil of Bundaberg left us in no doubt what he thought of the Labor Government’s response to licensed shooters during the Covid-19 pandemic while Kylie of Ipswich wanted to see the LNP’s Georgia Toft get up.

Political stories always initiate a strong response from members. Let us know your thoughts at news@ssaaqld.org.au

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SSAA disciplines

Old-school shooting and disappearing into a cloud of smoke.

A shot for everyone

By Sam Talbot

Throughout the years, I've been privileged to shoot every single SSAA discipline. Often, this was thanks to the generosity of other shooters supplying their expertise and equipment. So, thank you first and foremost to the shooting community for the opportunities I've had during these years.

Additionally to shooting over the years though, I've played field hockey, football, volleyball, tennis, golf, table tennis, netball and even recently ran a half marathon. I don't see a difference between any of these and the shooting sports. I think they share a lot more of the same qualities than non-shooters realise. They all involve varying degrees of skill, equipment, time and fitness. So, when I talk about the shooting sports or suggest a discipline for someone, this is the frame of reference I use. I view them as different 'games'.

One of the elements I believe makes a game great is that it's easy to learn, but hard to master. Shooting

encapsulates that idea. Beginners can often take up the sport within a few minutes and be shooting alongside veterans. I've seen time and time again beginners get the hang of shooting like a duck to water. Of course, they won't be the best but often there's something innate about shooting that human beings just understand.



Taking aim with the Air Rifle—another fantastic discipline I ran out of room to mention!



The licensing can be harder, but pistol shooting can be rewarding.

“I've seen time and time again beginners get the hang of shooting like a duck to water.”

Shooting is a straightforward idea - point at the thing you want to hit and pull the trigger. So easy anyone can do it, right? And that's where the SSAA disciplines make life interesting. What about when your target is:

- far away
- really small
- really small and really far away
- or so far away you have to factor in the curvature of the earth?

On the flipside, sometimes your target is moving. Sometimes you're the one moving, and sometimes you're moving and you're wearing a cowboy outfit!

I'm not sure how many different types of competitions are left to be invented; we seem to have just about everything covered and that's why I believe there's a shooting discipline for everyone. With that

in mind, I'm going to offer some advice about the disciplines and give some advice about what I would recommend to beginners or someone thinking about giving a different discipline a shot.

I've attempted to group the disciplines into some broad categories. There's a lot of overlap between the groups, but the following is what I think about the disciplines.

Talbot's doggedly grouped disciplines

Action-packed and dynamic

Personally, this is my favourite category, since I prefer short and fast shooting over patient precision. I started shooting at just 13, when I finally got to start clay target shooting with the rest of my family. Accordingly, I'm biased towards 5-Stand because you get the thrill of a wide range of moving targets, the challenge of keeping track of a variety of angles and using your reflexes. The quick pace of each target is only matched by how fast each round is, simply having to move to the next adjacent stand to face off against more clays. Plus, who doesn't like to see their target get smashed in the middle of the sky for all to see?

If that's not dynamic enough for you, I would suggest considering Precision Rifle or Single Action Shooting. While the targets in these disciplines may not be as dynamic as flying clays, you as the shooter definitely are. In Precision Rifle, you'll navigate through challenging courses with multiple targets at varying distances, requiring quick reflexes, strategic movement, and precision shooting skills. The thrill of racing against the clock while maintaining accuracy might be the most exhilarating experience in shooting sports.



How's the serenity at the range?



Taking 'shooting from the hip' to a whole new level—more like shooting from the ankle.

Similarly, Single Action Shooting transports you back to the Old West. Donning cowboy attire and using period-correct firearms, you'll move through themed stages, engaging targets with speed and style. It's not just about hitting the targets; it's about embracing the spirit of a bygone era and enjoying the camaraderie that comes with it. Both disciplines offer a unique blend of physical activity and shooting proficiency that can get your heart racing.

Get steady and stay calm

'But Talbot, shooting is about accuracy and precision, not running around as a cowboy!' I hear you and I see where you're coming from. Luckily, the majority of SSAA disciplines require you to keep your cool and be steady.



Shooting indoors is great in the colder months!

precision, the deciding factor often comes down to the type of firearm you prefer or have access to. Another consideration is how you handle the pressure of aiming for perfection. Personally, I sometimes find traditional bullseye targets with concentric rings a bit stressful—constantly striving to hit the innermost ring can be daunting. If you feel the same way, you might enjoy disciplines that use silhouette targets, where scoring is binary: hit or miss. This takes some pressure off, as your focus is simply on knocking down the target. Lever Action shooting is a great example of this and would be my recommendation if you're looking for precision without the added stress of scoring rings.

Historical and specialised

Many shooters are more interested in firearms themselves than in competition. That's not to say there aren't serious competitors in these disciplines, but they do lend themselves to a lot more chatting at the range instead of shooting - which is not a bad thing.

Muzzleloading involves using firearms from the 1800s and really makes you realise how much firearm technology has advanced. Loading a firearm today is

Perhaps the 'steadiest' of all SSAA disciplines is Benchrest shooting. In this discipline, shooters aim to achieve the smallest possible groupings by firing from a stable bench using rests to support the rifle. These shooters will do whatever it takes to maximise accuracy - even cleaning their barrels after each round to prevent any loss of precision. Meticulous handloading of ammunition is also a significant part of the sport, as even the slightest inconsistency can affect performance. Getting into a meditative state and shooting a grouping smaller than a coin is incredibly satisfying.

But, if you want precision with a bit more movement, I recommend Field Rifle or 3-Positional (3P) Shooting. These disciplines reward steadiness and accuracy, with the added challenge of shooting from different positions. You'll need to become comfortable and controlled in standing, sitting, kneeling, and prone positions to succeed. While time limits can be challenging for beginners focused on accuracy, with practice, you'll find your attention shifting back to precision rather than worrying about the clock.

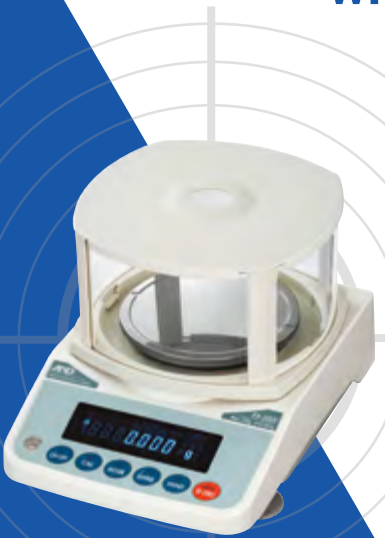
With many disciplines emphasising steadiness and

“With many disciplines emphasising steadiness and precision, the deciding factor often comes down to the type of firearm you prefer or have access to.”



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Targets are proof of a great day at the range.

“There’s a SSAA discipline for every shooter - and often there’s more than one.”

a breeze compared to back then. If you’re a history aficionado, you’ll get a real kick out of this discipline - and possibly a slightly singed forearm like I did if you aren’t careful!

Similarly, Combined Services focuses on original or faithful reproduction rifles, carbines, revolvers, and self-loading pistols. They say it’s the perfect excuse to use your ‘Dad’s old .303’. That is how I learned my dad paid \$50 for his Short Magazine Lee-Enfield many decades ago, which he now thinks may be worth as much as \$60!

Perhaps the most specialised and unique discipline barely involves a firearm at all. Working Gundogs captures a part of hunting and lets man’s best friend compete. It’s a fantastic way to keep your canine fit and get some exercise yourself. This discipline emphasises the teamwork between shooter and dog, requiring skills in training and cooperation.

Conclusion

There’s a SSAA discipline for every shooter - and often there’s more than one. Fitness is a factor to consider since some disciplines require more movement and, importantly, flexibility. Having torn my ACL, I don’t find kneeling particularly comfortable, and since I’m not the most flexible person, I’m pretty wobbly from the sitting position. That said, I still like 3P and Field Rifle - I’m just not very good at them!

Obviously, cost is also a significant factor when choosing between disciplines. For example, Benchrest is going to cost a lot more than other disciplines due to the specialised equipment. What gear you have or have access to will influence which disciplines you can try. But you might be surprised by how many disciplines are being shot around you and how easily you can at least give them a shot - even getting set up with second-hand gear can be quick and affordable.

As I’ve always said, trying out new disciplines is a fantastic way to learn something and keep your shooting experience exciting. You may even discover a new passion or hidden talent you never knew you had. 🎯



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Big Game Rifle

Australia's World Champion



By Jennifer Martens

Imagine taking a punch to your shoulder from Russian-Australian boxer Kotzuya Tszyu. Now multiply that by 100. The recoil from some of the firearms used in Big Game Rifle shooting competitions is comparable. So, it makes sense that we should give credence to those who shoot the event and even more so to those who can claim a world title – in this case Queensland's own Graeme Wright, who in August of 2024 claimed his second International Big Game Rifle World Championship, adding to his long list of shooting achievements.

The Big Game Rifle discipline became an international event in

2006 and was first held in Brisbane. Since then, Graeme has competed in each world championship. In fact, he believes he's the only shooter in the world to do so.

The 2024 International Big Game Rifle competition was a much anticipated and entertaining shoot – and one that was originally scheduled to be held in Darwin in 2020. Despite COVID restrictions causing a four-year delay, the event was a success, with 40 competitors from Australia, New Zealand, England and South Africa competing at the Northern Territory Big Game Rifle Club at the SSAA Mickett Creek Shooting Complex on 24-25 August 2024.

International Big Game Rifle competitions usually consist of 10 events, and Graeme says it would be ideal to use 10 different firearms – one best suited for each event. However, travel restrictions, especially by plane, often make that difficult for competitors. But since Graeme drove to the Darwin competition, he was able to bring a good selection of firearms.

Using a .375, .416 Rigby, .500 Jeffrey, .338-06 and a .450-.400 double rifle, he finished the weekend on top, making this his second Big Game Rifle World Championship title, with his first in the USA in 2008. Proving those wins were not just by chance, he's come second in 2006, 2010 and 2014, and has consistently stood on one level of the podium or another for the past 20 years. Nationally, he's arguably the best Big Game shooter Australia has produced – winning his seventh national title in Victoria in October 2024. His commitment to and love of the sport is evidenced by his impressive record.

Graeme was instrumental in setting up Australia's first Big Game Rifle club in 1983 in Melbourne, Victoria. A few years later, and after much discussion with his peers, it became a SSAA discipline and is now shot throughout the country. He was the Big Game Rifle National Discipline Chairman for 16 years and in October 2024 he took over the reins as Queensland's State Discipline Chairman from long-serving member Hazel Bozic. During his time in the role, Graeme hopes to see the discipline grow even more in Australia as well as overseas. His

success, influence and passion are sure to ignite interest.

A Big Game Rifle shooter of 41 years, he has competed and hunted all over the world, including eight safaris to Africa, where he's performed game management on elephants and hunted buffalo, lion and a variety of plains game. On home soil, he mainly hunts deer, pigs and buffalo.

With so many years of shooting big calibre firearms, it's fair to say he's been knocked around a bit, but he's fortunate and disciplined enough to only have a bit of a "twinge" in his right shoulder. "You don't become immune to the recoil," says Graeme, "but you do become conditioned to it." To prevent injury that could result from such repetitive recoil, he does exercises, stretching and weightlifting to keep his shoulder and chest muscles up to the task of sometimes shooting nearly 110 recoil-inducing rounds per national event.

International Big Game Rifle Championships are held every two years. The next will be in England in 2026. And, yes, Graeme will be

there – with bells on and with a mission to add a third world title to his belt. As a retired air force and commercial pilot, attending international competitions has been made a bit easier, as his decades in the air have earned him some well-deserved travel discounts.

Big Game Rifle is an entertaining event and one that is open to everyone. You don't have to be big and burly to shoot it; just ask Australian shooter Bianca Connor, the 2024 Overall Women's Champion. Despite her smaller stature, she wowed the crowd by shooting a .505 Gibbs with ease in the Nitro Stopper event.

Also, contrary to belief, you don't have to spend a lot on the firearms needed to shoot Big Game Rifle. While, of course, you can spend thousands on a rifle, such as for a Rigby 'Big Game' rifle, which would set you back nearly \$20,000, Graeme says the firearms can be entry level; they need not be any more expensive than normal hunting firearms. Generally, it is more the components and ammunition that hurt the hip pocket. Like almost all Big Game

Rifle shooters, Graeme reloads, to both save money and get the best from his firearms.

There are three groups of shooting in the discipline: Groups One through Three, with each group increasing in recoil. Each event also has both slow and rapid shooting elements to simulate conditions in the field. Slings and rests are not permitted. Scopes can be used but may incur point penalties.

Group One starts with the .330 calibre and goes up to .400. Group Two covers .400-.485 calibres and Group Three includes the 'heavy hitters' of the discipline: the .500 calibres and above, with a minimum bullet weight of 525 grains and a minimum muzzle energy of 5300 ft-lbs. "If you aren't prepared for these shots," says Graeme, "it's going to hurt."

The events in the three groups replicate typical big game hunting conditions and include:

- Black Powder Express – incorporating black powder cartridges ranging from .400 to .577 calibre
- Bore Guns and Rifles – showcasing the 'big-game stoppers' of their day
- Stalking and Stopping Double Rifles – witness both side-by-side and traditional over and under rifles at play
- Charging Animal and Special Snap – offering an exciting array of rapid-fire events.

The next time people question why shooters need such large calibre firearms, remind them that Queensland's own Graeme Wright is a two-time Big Game World Champion. 🏆



Andy Armstrong (SSAA Darwin President), Graeme Wright and Mick Connor (SSAA Darwin BGR Captain).

Lithgow theft

Thieves steal more than firearms

By Jennifer Martens

On August 25, 2024, three masked men smashed their way into the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, intent on leaving with firearms, which they did. However, they left with more than just firearms. Twenty-seven handguns were taken that night, but so were pieces of history, as some of the firearms are believed to be from the 1800s and come from across the world. They were irreplaceable because all but three were presentation, engraved or gold plated.

A P-38 Walther Luxus – used in WWII – and several revolvers from the 1800s were included. One of the handguns was a gift from the Sultan of Oman. The theft has been devastating to museum volunteers, who pride themselves on making Australia's and the world's history available to the public.

NSW Police believe the thieves stole the firearms to make them operable again for the black market; however, Museum Secretary Kerry Guerin said it would be “difficult to do”. He believes, rather, they were hoping to sell them to collectors. If the thieves simply wanted guns to sell to the black market, Kerry



wonders why they didn't touch a case of self-loading pistols. “They went for all the unique and highly recognisable firearms,” he said.

The thieves were arrested on September 6. In raids, the police recovered 13 of the stolen firearms, along with a shotgun and ammunition, a luxury car, seven NSW vehicle registration plates, \$3500 in cash, electronic devices, methamphetamine and cannabis.

According to Kerry, “The museum's security was above registry requirements. We just didn't slow them down enough – they were in and out within eight minutes.

“If we lose the museum, it would be a travesty. The factory's story dates to 1912.”

The museum's archives, back to 1890, are listed under UNESCO Australian Memory of the World, and are proof that the loss of this history to Australia and the world would be unthinkable.

The museum closed its doors on the 25th of August, and it is expected to remain closed indefinitely, but there are fears

it may never open again, as the museum has not yet been given permission from Thales Australia, the landlord, to do any repairs or upgrades. Re-opening comes down firstly to Thales' permission, secondly NSW Police approval of the security upgrades and then the necessary funding.

In a statement, a Thales representatives said the company supports the museum and understands its significance and has been supporting it for many years.

The Small Arms Factory site was registered on the National Heritage list, but that list was changed in 2004, and many sites did not get added back to the registry,



Stolen: An FN Browning Mod 35 Hi-Power in 9mm Para. Factory engraved, gold/silver plated, with white plastic grips. Once owned by Dubbo gunsmith C. Hatti.

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LITHGOW THEFT

including the SAF site. Kerry has been with the museum for nearly 13 years, and he says, “Our volunteers have been great during this terrible ordeal.”

Setbacks to re-opening

Currently, all firearms have been taken off display and can’t be reinstated until the required approvals come through and the security upgrades are completed. The break-in was horrific, “They smashed through three doors, smashed the glass on two cabinets and took 27 handguns.” To add injury to insult, one of the doors contained asbestos, presenting its own challenges and potential delays.

The museum has had to employ security guards every night, which is costing them about \$5000 per week, around \$30,000 so far, funds which could have been put to much better use.

While the museum was fully compliant with the security requirements of NSW Police, it agrees with, and will implement the improvements outlined in the police report compiled following the break-in.

The museum will require some sort of funding in the future; however, the museum’s committee is not comfortable accepting donations from many who have offered until re-opening plans are confirmed. “Some of the stolen firearms are one offs, prototypes and serial number ones, you can’t put a value on them, and we will never be able to replace them,” laments Kerry.

What is next?

The museum has received support from far and wide, including outside of Australia. In mid-October the museum gave an update via its Facebook page, saying it was still waiting for approval for the security upgrades required by NSW Police.

During the past seven years there was an understanding that the museum would purchase the

site for a nominal price. Despite there being a draft contract in 2022, there has been no progress, reasons for which the museum does not know.

The post continued to say:

“The heritage site is an integral part of the museum, which exists to conserve, honour and share the history of this unique place - the UNESCO listed archives, the employee stories that played out there, the buildings, machinery, and factory-made products and components. The retention of these artifacts in their original industrial buildings provides a living museum rather than merely a collection of historical objects. Given the delays and lack of communication impeding both the security upgrades and the necessary transfer of ownership of the Museum’s site, we’re not confident that the Museum can continue to operate under these conditions. But we’ll fight to bring it back for everyone who values our Australian heritage.”

History

The Commonwealth Small Arms Factory at Lithgow has been supplying Australia’s firearms since 1912, with the museum opening in 1996. Australia’s involvement in the Boer War and its vast distance from the British, made it clear Australia needed to produce its own firearms and munitions, with the then government vowing to ensure it wasn’t reliant on the British for the tools of war.

In June of 1912, the factory was opened. During its years of manufacturing, it collected firearms and other weapons of war, building up an impressive collection. In 1989 all manufacturing was put under the auspices of Australian Defence Industries (ADI). Managing the collection the factory had amassed was not part of their program and so the collection was gifted to the museum on behalf of the City of Lithgow in 1995, allowing the public to see the firearms collection and the factory’s history from 1996.



Hayes room before and after.



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Shooting shed

A family project on rural grounds

By Rachael Benson

The ultimate shooting shed has been a passion project for my newly retired father, and it's a thing of beauty.

His large rural property, with nary a neighbor for kilometers, has always been a place for hunting trips and somewhere for our family of shooters to sight in their target rifles. The only difference is, now this is done in comfort, and the strategic location of the setup allows us to hide in plain sight at sunset to spot a pest animal daring to nab some freshly germinated crops or grain from the paddock.

The setup itself has been a work in progress, starting as a basic shed built from scraps around the farmyard. It was initially built on bare earth, but when trialing reloading rounds, the dirt played havoc with collecting spent cases. This realisation then brought about a need for a floor, but its composition presented issues - from a sheet of plywood laid straight on the ground, which proved hard on the feet and gave a feeling of unsteadiness while shooting unsupported, to a floating floor that was creaky and loud, alerting nearby game to our presence.

Finally, a floor similar to a shearing shed, with gaps small enough to avoid losing cartridges to the ground below, has been the best option so far.

The shed itself was initially just a shelter with open sides, but my father's desire to shoot in all-weather conditions prompted a rethink. The open nature of the structure meant wind, rain, and dust presented issues while shooting and affected any equipment, such as rests or binoculars, left between visits.

Now, the shed is fully enclosed, with the front capable of raising upwards, creating a bench ledge to shoot from that was built at a custom height to suit benchrest shooting and seated sighting in.

In a move that my siblings and I call 'indulgent', my father decided the shooting shed needed power for lighting, a fan to ensure the 'comfort' of shooters, and



Rural range shed.

"While building this shooting shed, the array of targets on offer has also expanded..."

the option to plug in a fridge to keep food and drinks on site. A setup involving a fold-out solar panel and battery system is now in place. I must admit, I support this indulgence, while maintaining the same level of mockery at factoring in this level of comfort in the design.

Probably the final part of the design that has proven most useful to the entire project is the orientation and location of the shed relative to nearby landmarks. There's a tract of natural vegetation to the side of the shed, and we do most of our shooting up to 50 meters towards this vegetation, which covers the face and crest of a hill. This acts as a natural safety measure, as we know there won't be people or vehicle movement behind our targets, and we can use old tires as a backstop on the hill face.

This orientation is also conveniently north-facing, meaning we're not facing directly into the rising or setting sun.

Finally, adjacent to the open side of our shed, where we enter via a swinging door, there's a line of tall pines, creating a physical barrier of sight, sound, and movement to the main homestead if we need to sight rifles in beyond 50 meters.

While building this shooting shed, the array of targets on offer has also expanded - from swinging gongs to silhouettes for air rifles, rimfire, centrefire, and lever-action. We now have target frames for shooting at 20, 25, and 50 meters and proper stands for silhouettes at the appropriate distances for required disciplines.

Over time, this setup has increasingly become an important part of visiting the property. And while it looks self-serving, as my father benefits from the fruits of his labor, he's also ensuring he gets regular visits and time with his family doing what we all love. 🍷



Targets have been designed to suit the range of different disciplines and requirements to allow for practice and sighting in.



The shed has been designed for comfort and orientated to suit natural safety backdrops and sun movements.



The natural lay of the land allows for a safety backdrop to the home-built range. Safe shooting distances must be used if utilising tyres as back stops. In addition, some states may require sand bagging.

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National firearms database build begins

By Tim Bannister

A national firearms database construction has started requiring all states and territories to remediate or rebuild their databases. The federal government has said it will cost about \$160 million and take four years to achieve. Essentially, it will be a ninth database that is fed from the other eight and include an 'AFIN' – an Australian Firearm's Identification Number specific to the type of firearm. This is a separate identifier from the serial number of a firearm that is unique to each firearm.

The national database and the AFIN are two distinct projects, but it is envisaged they will be integrated to help authorities identify, trace and prevent 'leakage' of firearms, or in other words firearms disappearing off a state's database and its location becoming unknown.

The construction of the national database will be a mammoth task, as the lack of accuracy of the state and territories databases is obvious and a fact many firearm owners have experienced themselves. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission told SSAA Queensland there are 13 million firearms on the registers, but there are only three million firearms in the country. States and their police firearms units to date have been ignoring the fact that their databases

are imperfect and unreliable, but with the offer of millions of dollars of federal government money (our taxpayer dollars) they have finally agreed to attempt to rebuild their records. In the case of Tasmania, it has now been revealed they don't even have a computer-based firearms database; it is still a physical paper and metal filing cabinets records system.

We met with the Federal Attorney-General's Department and firearms policy Director Vanessa Paterson to ask for more detail on the national database build and the unique firearms identification number.

"We are expecting the national database to offer near real time data and follow the movement of the firearm throughout its lifespan," Mrs Paterson said. "It will be a stepped process with high-level business plans to change each state's database to align with exporting into the new database. There will be no adlibbing in entering details on a firearm. Instead, it will be drop-down fields.

"It is hoped the new database will identify any [illegal] diversion of the firearm."

The first question we pose as to whether we support any new legislation or monitoring of licensed firearms owners is, "Is there a public safety benefit that does

"History says it is a sure bet that it will cost more than the budgeted \$160 million."

not unjustly burden our members?" And given that new laws are often the knee-jerk reaction to a criminal incident such as the Wieambilla religiously motivated terrorist murders of two police officers and a neighbour, would they actually have stopped the incident from happening?

The answer to the first may rely on what, if any implications, it has to the licensed firearm owner.

Will a new and ninth database prevent crimes in the future? Given that it is incredibly rare that a crime is committed by a licensed firearms owner with a registered firearm, probably no. But it should, in theory, prevent firearm locations being lost or diverted, either by poor record keeping by the authorities or providing deliberately false information, as a now-gaoled rogue NSW firearms dealer was doing. He was illegally selling handguns to organised crime figures but said he had sold the firearms interstate. Authorities were none the wiser until a criminal left one of the handguns at a Sydney crime scene as an act of showing off and the firearm was traced back to the dealer.

It will be a long and expensive roll-out of the database. History says it is a sure bet that it will cost more than the budgeted \$160 million. Throughout the build we will continue to inform you of any developments and work to ensure you, our members, are not disadvantaged by the process and are treated appropriately. 📢

Croc avoids eviction

In September 2024, a freshwater crocodile escaped eviction from a popular lake in Hughenden, Queensland. Calls for its removal were made for several months prior, as it was found to be able to survive sub-zero winter temperatures. The lake is a popular spot for swimming, skiing, kayaking and boating.

Responding to requests to move the croc, Department of Environment, Science and Innovation staff found him to pose no danger to the community. In fact, the 'Houdini of Hughenden', as it is known, proved to be quite skittish around people, being seen and then disappearing for days.

Authorities are baffled about how the 'freshie' arrived at the site, with some suggesting he could have been released by a member of the public. Freshwater crocs typically move from areas dominated by larger crocs, such as lower tidal waters, so his arrival in Hughenden's Lake is unusual. After a short closure period, the lake re-opened to the small town. The Hughenden Council will continue to monitor the crocodile, ensuring the public's safety.

Freshwater crocodiles are found in WA, NT and Queensland. They can be up to 3m long, about 70kg and live for half a century. They mostly eat insects, fish, reptiles, amphibians and crustaceans.

Apart from humans, freshwater crocodiles have few predators, with only eggs and hatchlings being most vulnerable to lizards, turtles and birds. However, larger crocs have been known to eat smaller crocs.

Freshwater crocodiles are also being adversely affected by poisonous cane toads, as eating just one can kill them. The freshwater crocodile is just another on the long list of species affected by this introduced menace. 📢



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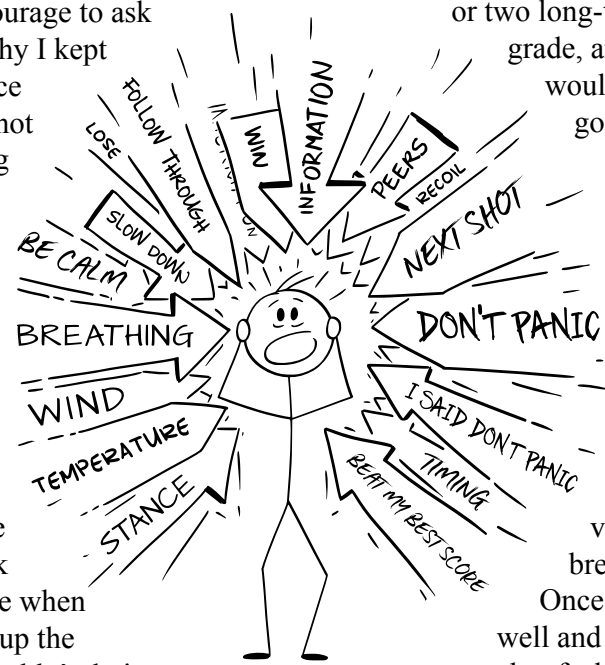
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The mental game of shooting

By Taylah Campbell May

When I first started shooting six years ago, I was constantly told to ‘not to get in my head’. This always left me so confused because I had no idea why everyone kept telling me the same thing and I didn’t know what it was I shouldn’t be getting in my head. Eventually, I worked up the courage to ask some of my fellow shooters why I kept getting the same piece of advice time and again. They told me not to think about how I was doing overall, be present and focus on what you are doing in that very moment, and that my only true competition was me. Of course, as a new shooter, I still didn’t quite grasp the importance of what I was told until I had more experience with competition shooting. Now, I finally realise that what was holding me back from scoring in my usual range when under pressure or progressing up the grades quicker wasn’t that I couldn’t do it physically, but that I couldn’t ‘get out of my head’ and allow myself to achieve better mentally. This is when I started to do more investigations into the mental game of shooting.

Before I could implement a better mental strategy, I had to understand the importance of it on my overall performance. After doing some research and asking many people about their experiences, I learned that mental strength helps with confidence and focus. These two things are very important for good performances and with rebounding after shooting a score that was below average. To perform consistently, I needed to silence the external sounds in my head so I could maintain strong focus on the task at hand.



Despite this being very difficult, I worked hard at disciplining myself to think less consciously about my shooting and trust myself more. Once I did this, I was able to see a clearer and more consistent improvement of my scores.

You, too, can harness the power of improved mental management. For me, the following techniques work best, but you will have to find what works for you, so a bit of trial and error and persistence will be vital.

My first steps to bettering my shooting were being curious and doing my own digging; through this I got other peoples’ perspectives, found articles, books, videos and full courses dedicated to help elite athletes improve. From there, I was then able to modify their strategies so they would work for me. I am the type of person who loves to write down their to-do lists and goals, so that is exactly what I did. I put in writing one or two long-term goals, such as moving up a grade, and multiple short-term goals that would help me reach my long-term goals.

I also worked heavily on getting my stance and technique right.

For me, this includes asking people to watch a specific action while training, like stance and getting them to tell me when they saw something different. Alternatively, I set up a camera and record myself practicing. I commonly use these videos to work on finer details like breath pattern and trigger control.

Once I had a technique that worked well and one I could easily replicate, I started to feel more confident with trusting my abilities rather than thinking about the process.

Once you have found something that works well for you, you can slowly integrate it into your training sessions. Whether you are training for an upcoming competition or simply just participating in your normal social shoot, if you want to actively work towards improving, you need to have an effective session. One ‘good’ session will take you a step closer to achieving your goals; one ‘okay’ session could put you three steps back. To make your sessions effective, you must have your head in the right place. Then you can work on trusting your gut with your shot. After some time, your body will be able to do all the essential actions almost as second nature. 🎯

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Red stag in the bag

A hunt for the memory books

By Nick Rositano

The rut is without a doubt a trophy hunter's favourite time of the year to chase trophy stags; hearing the stags roaring or croaking sends shivers down the spine. After a lot of reconnaissance, I was able to pick up a new property down south. After speaking to the farmer, I was told that he had seen both reds and fallow deer on his property over the years. Hearing that he had let

very few people on to this property was music to my ears. We all know how difficult it is these days to gain permission to hunt on any private property.

My first trip to his farm in early February was a great way for me to introduce myself to the farmer in person. After gaining a map of the property, I decided to do a bit of scouting around in the areas with the most feed and dense

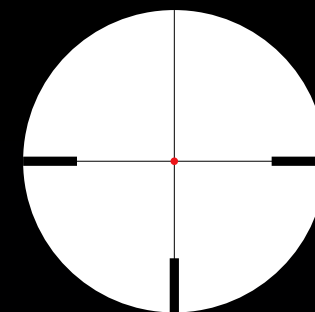
scrub. After only seeing old tracks, I decided to wait another three to four weeks until around early March, when the weather would be a little bit cooler to see if anything had come about.

I took a day trip to look for fresher sign or deer. It was a frosty morning, and I went to one of the areas I had noted as being a hotspot and set about on a morning stalk. In the paddock of lucerne I spotted



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“A memory of the red stag my late father and I had stumbled across many years before made me strive to land one myself to make him proud.”

a red hind with its fawn; this was a good sign, with only a matter of two to three weeks before the reds would be roaring.

Late March had me taking a week off work and scouring a couple of properties to potentially hunt between. I decided to check out the one property in particular first – the one I had seen a hind on just three weeks prior and I knew the stags wouldn’t be too far away. The first morning was extremely quiet, although it heated up very quickly, with the temperature set for the low 30s that day. A good mate of mine was meeting me down at the property later that afternoon and for the next couple of days, so I decided to head back to camp to relax before our afternoon hunt.

The next morning, we set out early and began walking slowly, with the wind in our faces. First-light was still 45 minutes away; we got ourselves up to a vantage point and waited. Just on daybreak we heard a couple of roars, which didn’t sound too far away - music to our ears! We immediately started walking quickly in their direction, while trying not to bump anything else we stumbled across. However,

the roars slowly stopped within half an hour of hearing them. We gathered they were probably only just starting to fire up to rut.

We picked another vantage point, which gave an awesome view of the property. My mate pulled out his red deer caller and gave a few roars; in less than a minute, through my binoculars, I could see six hinds had popped out with two red stags in a tree knob patch about 500 metres away. The wind was in our favour, and it looked like the satellite stag was being pushed back into the dense scrub not too far away, as the other older stag had taken throne of his six girls. About 20 metres from the fence line, I got myself into a comfortable position, ready to take a shot at the satellite stag; he was a definite shooter.

Through my binoculars, I counted 11 points on him. With a squeeze of the trigger, the .300 PRC sent a 212-grain Hornady ELDX straight through the engine room of the red stag, dropping him on the spot. As hunters these are the shots we strive for - a quick, humane kill. It was a bittersweet moment, as I have been chasing a nice free range red stag for years. A memory of the red stag my late father and I had stumbled across many years before made me strive to land one myself to make him proud. On further inspection of the red stag, it turned out to be a 13-point free range red! I was stoked, to say the least, and I couldn’t have gotten it done without my good mate. The stag now hangs in my house and will go down in the memory bank for many years. The large red also provided nice venison jerky, schnitzels and burger patties for the family. 🍖



The carry out, after capping the stag.



Mount: Nick’s long-awaited red stag mounted on the wall.

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Portable fridge competition heats up

By Tim Bannister

The fridges or dual zone fridge freezers can be set to as low as minus 22 or as high as 10 degrees. They can be run on 12 or 240 volts and suit either portable battery or fixed auxiliary vehicle batteries recharged preferably by both solar and the vehicle.

Keeping your food and drinks cold is not a luxury anymore for the modern camper, whether you are on a hunt, fishing, staying overnight at a shooting competition or just want to have *your* food and *your* drinks at your disposal when you are out and about.

The range of fridge and dual zone fridge freezers are increasing with major brands like Anaconda and Kings bringing in affordable, well, cheap, Chinese versions. They do the job usually but have a shorter warranty and are louder and less energy efficient.

At the other end there is Engel and Dometic, with Engel having a very high reputation among the serious campers, but with a serious price tag to match. Dometic have always been about a third cheaper and have a very broad customer base and high brand recognition in Australia.

With its new line of models, ranging from 25 to 95 litre capacities the CFX5 coolers are a new premium offering. As in its

earlier and still available CFX2 range they have compressor run boxes that are either fridge or freezer or have dual separated zones so it can be both a fridge and freezer at the same time.

The difference with the CFX5s are the cleverly branded ‘VIP’ or vacuum insulated panels of the box which Dometic say reduces weight and energy use. The other difference is arguably more important, a more powerful compressor, the VMSO 3.5. This is the heart of the fridge and challenges Engel for market share and durability and comes with a solid five-year warranty to back it up.

Dometic’s Josh Militello told *The Report* that, “We’re redefining the outdoor experience with a road ready rugged CFX5 with every detail considered, like an alert when the lid is left open.” It is a top end offering and they have raised the price to Engel-like heights, but with a bit of consumer smart tactics this can be greatly reduced. If you sign up to the Dometic website you can get a 10 per cent discount and it



also offers free shipping which is a bonus.

No matter what brand, outdoor fridges always work better with the extra layer of an insulated cover and for peace of mind when connecting to an auxiliary battery and with the movement of a vehicle it is best to switch the 12-volt power chord over to a screw in be it the Engel type chord or Dometic’s screw in two pin version. ⚙️

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Dometic CFX5 55	\$1,484.10
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Australian wild game

The use of game meat and skins in Australia has a long history and a bright future with many of the harvesters based in Queensland. We talked with the Australian Wild Game Industry Council to delve into its truly iconic place in our land.

For thousands of generations humans in Australia have harvested macropods (kangaroos and wallabies) for food, leather and materials for tools. More than just subsistence hunting, First Nations people incorporated macropod resources into their complex socio-economic trading systems along with other important resources.

More recently, kangaroo leather became a valuable commodity in the global economy. During the mid 1800s the expanding pastoral industry created the ideal conditions for macropods populations to thrive. So much so that the eastern states passed some of the earliest wildlife legislation in the country, specifically to decrease the number of macropods. Known as the Marsupial Destruction Acts, they regulated bounty systems designed to incentivise the killing of kangaroos for monetary reward. By the time of federation, approximately £1000000 (\$200,000,000 in today's value) was paid in bounties under these Acts. A commercial trade in kangaroo skins started around the same time. So valuable were the skins, around a million were exported every year by 1900 and bounties ceased being paid in 1906. This volume of trade in kangaroo

skins has continued for more than a century and a half, testament alone to the size of the kangaroo populations that can support this scale of harvest.

Kangaroo meat was always used throughout Australia but wasn't traded in any meaningful quantities until refrigerated field sites became possible in the 1950s. Since then, the practice of selling whole kangaroo carcasses to be used for their meat and skins has become commonplace. Today, kangaroo skins are a by-product of a thriving meat industry supplying protein for human consumption and pet food within Australia and around the world.

The legal status of macropods changed from declared pests to protected native species around the same period, as trading in whole kangaroo carcasses began in the middle of the twentieth century. The industry became regulated throughout Australia, with oversight for licencing and

paying royalties vested in the state governments. The scale of the harvest continued to exceed a million animals every year and this drew the attention of scientists and conservationists around the world. Concerns were raised that harvesting wildlife at this rate may cause the collapse of wild populations. Such was the level of interest that the 'Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia' was formed in 1970 to represent the industry at the Commonwealth House of Representatives 'Select Committee on Wildlife Conservation'.

Kangaroo harvesting was the principal concern of the Select Committee, who informed the Commonwealth Government of the day. While harvest data and some excellent science around the demographics (age structure and sex ratio) of wild populations indicated that the harvesting was indeed sustainable, the committee recommended greater



Kangaroos are free roaming, lean and plentiful. Photo by Tim Bannister.



Kangaroo leather is extremely strong, more so than cattle, sheep or goat.

certainty was needed. Although the state governments regulate the harvesting of wildlife, the federal government controls the export of products derived from the harvest. In 1973 the Commonwealth banned the export of macropod products until substantial population assessments could demonstrate the size of wild kangaroo populations.

The ban on exports was lifted in 1975 after aerial surveys conducted over the pastoral districts of Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland demonstrated that the four commercially harvested macropod species are indeed widespread and abundant. Aerial surveys have continued since this time, creating one of the longest running, continuous broad scale wildlife datasets in the world! The scientific basis for monitoring macropod populations is widely supported by the international scientific community. These annual surveys continue to be funded through the sale of harvest tags used to ensure harvested macropods can be traced.

The Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA) continued to represent the interests of the macropod harvesting industry ever since 1970, with some notable changes since that time.

Principally used for pet food when the organisation formed, kangaroo meat is now available for human consumption within Australia and around the world. The introduction of a National Code of Practice ensures that only macropods killed with a shot to the brain can enter the trade and directs the specifics of rifles and ammunition to be used.

Not surprisingly, the major processing works for kangaroo meat and leather around Australia also process other wild harvested game including wild boar, wild goats and increasingly wild deer. To better reflect and represent this growing industry, the KIAA evolved into the Australian Wild Game Industry Council (AWGIC) in 2023. AWGIC continues to address the challenges faced by the kangaroo industry but now works with a broader range of stakeholders actively managing wildlife across the country.

Kangaroo leather is incredibly strong and durable for its weight. Significantly stronger than cattle, sheep or goat of the same thickness, it is ideal for many applications such as footwear, gloves and clothing. Australians can rightly be proud every time they watch

a golf tournament, soccer match or motorcycle race. Regardless of who wins, chances are a kangaroo has helped with their success. Moreover, by making use of the kangaroo skin that would otherwise be discarded, it makes a valuable contribution to the circular economy.

Wild harvested meats are the ultimate free-range protein. In a society that places a premium price on free range due to the higher welfare outcomes, nothing beats meat sourced from the wild. Animals that enter the Australian wild game food supply industry must be taken by a shot to the brain, ensuring instantaneous loss of consciousness. Hygiene standards throughout the Australian wild game industry are some of the most stringent in the world. Controls and testing at every stage of the supply chain ensure the end products meet the highest quality standards. The industry only harvests widely abundant species that would otherwise be considered pests to agriculture and the environment. Low in fats and high in essential minerals, eating wild game meats makes good nutritional sense for you and your carnivorous pets. 🐾



The meat from Chital is excellent, being fine textured and quite mild.

Reflections of a hunter

By Ellen Freeman

Now at the age of 32, I often reflect on my life, from childhood through to adulthood. My childhood helped shaped who I am today. I grew up in a family that has always valued hunting, fishing and the outdoors; you could say we Freemans are real outdoorsmen and women. From humble beginnings, the Freeman family came to Tasmania as convicts, then becoming workers of the land, farming in the midlands of Tasmania. An important part of survival and financial income in those early days was the ability to hunt and gather for food. As my ‘Pop’ proudly says, I am a sixth generation Freeman hunter.

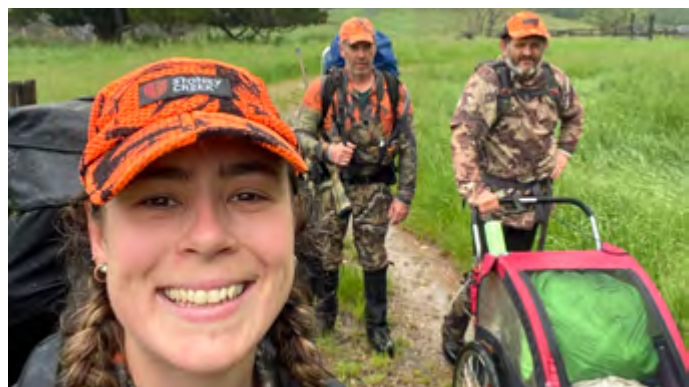
Growing up my Pop and Dad always gave me equal opportunity to go hunting with them. At that time in Tasmania, the legal age for a Minor’s firearms permit was 16, and luckily for me my birthday is before the beginning of the stag season in Tasmania. At the age of 16 I took my first deer, a small black stag, guided and alongside my dad. This hunt was the first of many to follow. While not the beginning of my passion for deer hunting and deer management, it definitely was a critical moment in my life.

Hunting not only teaches you to take the species you are hunting, which in turn provides meat for your family, it teaches you many important lessons, as it did me growing up in this environment. I learned from a young age the importance of responsibility; to be allowed to handle a firearm comes with a high level of responsibility in addition to attention to detail and awareness. The act of hunting and stalking for deer itself taught me to be focused, quiet and

patient. Shooting a deer taught me the importance of animal ethics and welfare. The processing of the deer following its harvest taught me practical butchering and cooking skills. The time spent with my Pop and Dad in the bush taught me the value of close relationships with your family. These skills are important in all aspects of life.

To me, hunting isn’t just about taking a deer or big stags – albeit, the feeling after taking a quality stag is phenomenal. It’s about being present. Being present with those close to you, for me this is my Pop, Dad, brother and close family friends. Being present with the environment in which you are in, in a way that is not often experienced. Being so present that I notice the ants on the leaf while I am sitting still being so quiet not to disturb even them, the smell of the eucalyptus trees in the air following a rain, the calls of various birds as the sunrises, the change in temperature as I walk from an open area to a forested area and, after the sun has risen, the wombat that walks out just a whisper in front of me, the white tips of a stags antlers in the distance through the thick vegetation, the calling of young fawns and stags grunting in the rut.

There is so much more to hunting than the hunting itself. Hunting teaches us how to be better people, how to grow our patience, appreciate the small things and builds responsibility. It brings you closer to those you hunt with and creates space to nurture our own health and wellbeing. For me, hunting is all of these things and more, it is a part of me, a part of my identity. For this I will forever be grateful for being a sixth generation Freeman hunter. ☺



Ellen, Dad and Pop.



Ellen in New Zealand.

Pistol 101

Getting your H licence in Queensland

By Zach Bianchi

Competitive handgun shooting is one of the fastest growing sports in Queensland. However, there can be some confusion around the process of becoming a licensed handgun owner. *The Report* has asked me to share my experience with this process after only acquiring my ‘Concealable Firearm Licence (Cat H) for Sport of Target Shooting’ a couple of short years ago.

To provide a little bit of background, I should mention that I have been a licensed Category A/B firearms owner for almost a decade and just recently joined the firearms industry as the Queensland/



Northern Territory representative for Spika, an Australian-owned and operated company specialising in all things hunting and shooting. With that declared, let’s get stuck in, shall we?

Joining a club

Selecting a club to join is important, as this is where you will inevitably be spending plenty of your valuable time and hard-earned money. Visit your local pistol clubs and get an understanding of the type of events they run; this will need to align with the type of

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pistol you wish to use, for example, Cowboy Action, Action Pistol, Steel Challenge, etc. Speak to club members and staff to find out more about the discipline and what is required. This is important, as the staff will be able to guide and assist you through this process.

If you do not already hold a category A/B firearms licence, then you must attain a Statement of Eligibility to join a pistol club. To do this, you will need to complete a form QP-515 Application for Statement of Eligibility. You can then submit this form online or drop into your local police station. They will then send a statement or notice to the address listed on your application. From here, you will need to supply character references from two non-family members who have known you personally for a minimum of two years. The next step is to submit your QP-515, along with your two character references to the pistol club you have chosen to join. Once the application has been accepted and the membership fees have been paid, you will receive a membership card/email and a QP-516 Shooter’s Participation Card.

6-Month probation period

This mandatory probation period is a great opportunity to familiarise yourself with your new club and get to know your fellow members and the team. During this time, you are required to participate in a minimum of three handgun shooting competitions, which can provide a lot of fun while you try out different events and different calibres/handguns. Keep in mind you must have competed in three competitions in the six-month period prior to submitting your Concealable Firearms Licence application. You should also complete your Category H Safety Course during this probation period.

Application for Concealable Firearms Licence QLD

With your three participation shoots, Cat H Safety Course completed and your six-month probation period elapsed, it is finally time to submit your application to the Queensland Police Service. To do this, you will now require a current declaration by the representative of your approved pistol club stating that you have met all of the club conditions and that you are a current financial member of the club. You will attach copies of your QLD Firearms Safety Course Statement of Attainment (Category H), your QP-516

Shooter’s Participation Card and your completed licence application form. This can be done online or submitted directly via your local police station.

The waiting game begins

At this point you will receive an email instructing you to attend an Australia Post outlet to verify your identity and have a passport-quality photo taken. At time of writing this article, the processing times for new licence applications are about 12 weeks. This is a great time to ensure you comply with safe storage requirements in your respective state. Here, in sunny Queensland, Category H firearms must be stored unloaded with the action open/broken in a solid steel lockable container, which is bolted to the frame or floor of a permanent building. There are plenty of options in the market, but keep in mind the better the quality of safe, the more secure your firearms will be. Hint: have a look at the Spika range. The market leader in Australia. I have had my premium SCH1 for a few years now and even though it weighs more than the 150kg minimum, I have chosen to bolt it down, allowing me to store my handguns in the internal storage compartment and my rifles and shotguns in the main compartment. I know what you’re thinking - shameless plug by the Spika rep, but I can honestly say I have used Spika safes for almost a decade and simply cannot fault the quality. If you don’t believe me, head into your local gun shop and see for yourself!

Licence approval

Once you have been approved for your Concealable Firearms Licence and have received your physical licence card, you can apply for your first Permit to Acquire. To apply for a PTA, you must get a club approval letter from the club representative, who will fill in all the details of your chosen firearm. There will be a 28-day mandatory waiting period for your first handgun regardless of being a category A/B licence holder, as the Concealable Firearms Licence is a completely separate licence.

Maintaining your licence

Category H firearms are divided into four classes: Class A – an air pistol; Class B – centrefire calibre less than .38 inch or a black powder pistol; Class C - centrefire calibre greater than .38 but not more than .45 inch and finally Class D – a rimfire pistol.



During the probationary period, have fun trying out the different handgun events on offer.



There are a variety of different handgun competitions utilising air, rimfire and centrefire handguns.

In Queensland you may only own one handgun in the first 12 months of being licensed. There is an exception to this rule if you choose to own a class D (Rimfire) and class A (Air pistol) handgun in your first 12 months. Personally, I opted to own a class B handgun (9mm), as I wanted to compete in action style competitions. To maintain your Concealable Firearm Licence, you must participate in a minimum number of club-organised shoots for each class in each financial year. If you have only one class of handgun then you must participate in at least six club shoots per financial year. If you own two or more classes of handgun, then you must participate in at least four club shoots for each class of handgun you own per financial year. This is very easy to accomplish, as there are generally club organised events every week at most clubs.



Disciplines: Working gundogs

By The Report Staff Writer

If you are a sporting shooter and a dog lover, SSAA Queensland's discipline of Field and Retrieving might be worth a look. This discipline simulates real hunting situations and tests a dog's retrieving skills over terrains like those found out in the field. Field and Retrieving offers members training, trials and competition options as well as being a fun outing for both handlers and dogs.

WGAA or Working Gundogs Association of Australia, is a discipline that sees artificial game, often resembling ducks, hidden throughout the countryside or cast into the air at a distance in sight of the dog. Before the dogs are instructed to retrieve the 'game', their handlers must keep their dogs under control, ensure they are quiet at all times and keep them walking at the heel. Once the game is retrieved, the dog must deliver it gently to its handler. In real hunting situations, a 'soft mouth' is important so that the dogs do not damage the game.

The SSAA Queensland website says that dogs are judged 'on their natural ability for memory, intelligence, attention, nose, courage, perseverance, style, and eagerness as well as their training abilities for marking, steadiness, obedience, controlled response to direction, presentation of delivery, steadiness to shot, and – importantly – not being gun-shy.'



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There are four categories of competition in the Field and Retrieving discipline:

- Retrieving – tests a dog's ability to work on command and retrieve fallen game
- Hunt, Point and Retrieve – tests the versatility of a gundog; dogs in this category can do it all
- Spaniel – focuses on the skills of the Spaniel breed; Spaniels are adept at flushing game
- Pointer and Setter – tests Pointers' and Setters' speed and style (in Australia this is often for stubby quail); the dogs find game and freeze and point so not to scare the game away.

Gundogs are very intelligent and obedient. They are eager to please, very friendly and loyal. Their instincts to hunt and retrieve are strong, so they require lots of exercise and stimulation each day to remain happy and healthy. Without enough 'work' they may become unruly.

While gundogs have very good hunting and retrieving instincts, a lot of work goes into creating a good gundog, with training usually starting while they are puppies. Because training is so intense and regular, the relationship between the dog and handler becomes very strong.

There are more than 30 gundog breeds from which to choose, with Retrievers, Pointers, Labradors,



Flat Coated Retriever returning with bird.

Weimaraners, Brittany's, Setters, and Spaniels being quite common.

Among the SSAA Queensland pool of disciplines, Working Gundogs is a challenging competition, where working in partnership with a living creature can provide an array of unforgettable and unforeseen outcomes. It is also a great spectator sport and worth putting the next event on your calendar. 🎯

Photos courtesy of Rad Miramon, Michelle Auld, Wendy Waller and Christine Robinson.



Chocolate Labrador retrieving.



The bond between handler and dog is unbreakable...and often produces winning results. Margaret Sullivan (Qld) and her Labrador Retriever, 'Tori' – RTCD RTCH (Vic), claim first in the 2024 'The Queensland Cup'.

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Range officers

What to know about an RO?

If you've visited a shooting range, you've seen one. If you've needed assistance at a range, you've probably talked to one. And if you've stood at the shooting line at a range, you've certainly been directed by one. We are talking about range officers – or ROs, as they are commonly known.

Being a Range Officer is a big responsibility, as well as a privilege. An RO is responsible for the safety of everyone at the range, including shooters and non-shooters. ROs are ambassadors of a club and the shooting sports. An RO's management, attitude and behaviour should be such that anyone visiting the range will want to return. Let's take a brief look at what is required to be an RO and what the role entails.

Who can become an RO?

Anyone applying to be an RO must have the appropriate firearms licence.

Applicants should apply to the local branch committee to start their training on the operation and rules of the local branch as well as the police approval conditions.

Some clubs have a minimum timeframe for new shooters before they can apply to start their training. This timeframe could be up to three years.

In Queensland you must have a minimum of ten hours of supervised RO duty for a variety of disciplines, both practice sessions and competition.

If you want to become a State Endorsed Branch RO for both long-arms and handguns you must have a minimum of ten hours of supervised duty in each classification per year.

As well as having the appropriate courses and qualifications, ROs should be:

- good leaders and communicators
- confident and courteous
- firm, but fair, patient and supportive
- informed of laws relating to firearms storage, carriage and use at ranges
- knowledgeable about basic work, health and safety issues
- well-versed in the range's management procedures, practices and policies.

Duties of an RO

ROs are required to supervise a shooting range safely and effectively, abiding by the range's rules. ROs must know the laws under the Weapons Act relating to their role, know the types of firearms and targets approved for their range, control the range using the appropriate SSAA Qld Range Commands, manage and resolve conflicts, employ risk management measures and understand emergency procedures.

Shooters at a range are under the strict control of the RO's commands. The standard range commands (or similar) from an RO include:

1. 'Shooters to the line.'
 2. 'Load and make ready.'
 3. 'Shooters are you ready?'
 4. 'In your own time, commence fire.'
- When shooting is meant to stop, the RO will say:
5. 'Cease fire.'
 6. 'Remove all magazines, open actions.'
 7. 'Stand clear of firearms.'
 8. 'Clear.' (After having checked all firearms are unloaded.)
 9. 'Range clear. You may proceed onto the range.'

Effective communication is important in all walks of life, including at the range. A trained RO will communicate politely but firmly, avoiding criticism, which can often lead to conflict.

As ROs are considered authority, they are frequently asked to assist with coaching; however, that is not their role. Safety is the number one priority and coaching may cause an RO to lose sight of his/her duties. Coaching should be left to other experienced shooters at the range.

Being a Range Officer is a commitment. The above is just a snapshot of what it entails. If this has raised your curiosity, and the shooting sports and safety are important to you, contact your local SSAA Queensland branch for additional information on how to become an RO. Let's always remember, a safe shooting range is an enjoyable one. 🎯

Range Officers rule. It's their way or the highway.



JUNIORS IN FOCUS

Spencer Peters

By Jennifer Martens



3P shooting requires shooters to compete in three positions. Here, Spencer is in the Seated position at the 3P Junior National Competition.

Spencer Peters' memories of being 'left behind' when his dad went hunting are nothing like the Hollywood movie 'Home Alone', but missing out on those hunting trips too many times was enough of a motivator to make him intent on getting his Minor's firearms licence. He says, "I got into shooting because when I was young, I would watch Dad leave to go on hunting trips and I always wanted to go." After his 11th birthday, Spencer eagerly applied for a Minor's firearms licence. When it finally arrived, shooting became his passion – and it seems there is no looking back.

He started his journey at the Brisbane Range and began practising with a Target .22. He and his dad were told about the Junior Shooting program there and he became determined to compete with the other juniors.

If they are not 'gaming', most 14-year-old boys can be found on a rugby oval, basketball court, or cricket pitch during the week. Spencer is happy to leave the video games and the sporting fields aside and spend his days at the shooting range. "I enjoy shooting, as I find it to be an extremely fulfilling sport, highly challenging and fun. I feel like the more I shoot, the

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“He does this as often as possible to cement technique and mental repetitiveness”

more I become addicted due to my desire to improve and keep beating my personal bests.” His friends share his interest in shooting, and they often compete together in inter-school shooting events.

Spencer shoots Rifle Metallic Silhouette, Field Rifle, 3 Position (both SSAA and NRA varieties) and the occasional Rimfire Benchrest Match. He chose these, as they were the disciplines he was exposed to when he first started shooting. Even after trying other disciplines, he says these are still his favourites, providing him with plenty of challenges and pride when he improves.

Chris Dale, a Range Officer with the Queensland Junior Challenge at Captains Mountain, has known Spencer for years and has mentored him and several other junior shooters. “Spencer is a real sponge. From a coaching and mentoring perspective, he’s a dream. He listens, doesn’t interrupt and he puts into practice what he learns,” he said.

Chris believes Spencer shows an aptitude for shooting that is very rare. “I can’t speak highly enough of him. He’s so focused and he’s been that way since the first time I met him.

“Whatever he does, he wants to do it well. He’s the type of kid

who thinks if you aren’t going to do something well, why do it? He really applies himself and his results are next level.”

Spencer will “give a lot of adults a run for their money, as he takes tips on board and you can see that immediately in his results,” Chris said proudly.

Even though Spencer is at an age when many sports lose kids to other interests and increasing schoolwork, Chris doesn’t see that happening with Spencer. “Shooting is his ‘out’, it gives him a mental break,” he said.

The disciplines Spencer has chosen see both women and men compete in the same competitions for both Juniors and Adults. “Due to the highly technical and mental requirements of the sport, neither gender is at an advantage, and it truly comes down to how much experience and practice you have under your belt,” said Spencer.

These days, Spencer practices at the Warwick SSAA Rifle Club, having moved to the area in 2023. He proudly explains how the club’s amazing shooting community is filled with many great shooters who are extremely knowledgeable and always keen to assist him.

Shooting is Spencer’s favourite activity, and as he has a few state and national championships he is training for, he heads to the range as often as his body and family commitments allow.

In addition to actual shooting at the range, Spencer has a competition preparation regime and commitment that are well beyond his 14 years. He prepares for large competitions by doing physical strengthening and stretching as well as both dry and live firing.



Spencer with SSAA Queensland State President Hellen Gill.

He does this “as often as possible to cement technique and mental repetitiveness” in each discipline he shoots. Taking his mental training to another level, before bed he also does neuro-visual training, which he explains “is the process of competing in a whole competition mentally in your head, allowing for visualisation and mental repeatability”.

Spencer has been fortunate to have had many coaches and mentors in his short shooting career, and clearly, they’ve made an impact on him and his shooting. “The shooting community is so willing to help anyone who shows passion and commitment to the sport and therefore It would be impossible to list everyone; however, some main people include Matthew Sharp, Chris Dale, Craig Oliver and Jon McCarthy,” he said.

With such support from the community and his family, Spencer has set some high goals for himself. Firstly, he’d like to score consistently over 25 in Smallbore Metallic Silhouette, to

shoot scores in Field Rifle over 370 and to shoot higher than 525s in 3 Position. His goals in future years are to qualify for the Australian Shooting Team and compete internationally. In ten years’ time, he hopes to be qualifying for the Australian Olympic Rifle team for the 3-Position discipline.

Most shooters have a favourite firearm. Some fit or shoot perfectly, and some have special history or meaning. Spencer’s include Rimfire Anschütz rifles. His very supportive parents recently purchased a Custom Anschütz 64 rifle for him to use. He’s yet to compete with it, but it will soon be fitted with a custom stock created by Allan Murray at Al’s Rifle Stocks. According to Spencer, “It will feature the best design for my chosen disciplines...”.

Having only been shooting for three years and achieving such success so young, other shooters would be wise to take on board his advice. Spencer believes in the importance of having mental control, saying, “Being mentally in control is personally one of the biggest aspects of competitive shooting and is what separates



Spencer in the Prone position at the 3P Queensland State Titles 2024.

the majority of shooters from the best in the world. Being in control while you are shooting allows you to forget about the previous shot and clear your mind, which puts all your focus on the present moment and helps in engaging your subconscious thought process.”

When not at the shooting range, the young shooting star enjoys being outdoors, either dirt bike riding, fishing, camping, playing guitar or hunting – all of which go hand in hand with the shooting sports. 🎯

Spencer’s top three achievements:

- 2024 Junior State Championship - Overall winner for Junior Under 18s & Under 15s State Championship and recipient of the Chris Crouch Memorial Cup
- 2024 National Junior Challenge - 3rd overall under 15s
- 374.4 in Rimfire Field Rifle (A Grade ranking system)
- 39/80 in Rimfire Silhouette 510.1 in NRA 3P

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Captains Mountain Shooting Complex

Captains Mountain accommodation.

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S SAA Queensland is fortunate to own seven state shooting complexes. We're taking a look at each one, starting with Captains Mountain.

Captains Mountain Shooting Complex sits about 230km southwest of Brisbane, just 20 minutes out of Millmerran. The terrain is tough, and according to locals, even the goannas carry a lunchbox. It is not suitable for agriculture or much else, but it makes an excellent location for a great shooting range.

SSAA Queensland purchased the 1,516-hectare property in 1989. Since then, it has morphed into a million-dollar facility, which includes 200m and 400m multi-purpose ranges with ricochet mounds, dedicated and colourful Rendezvous and Single Action sites, a 500m range, 1000m range, and a 5-Stand/Down the Line range with a new clay target thrower. A second 1500m range is also

“SSAA Queensland purchased the 1,516-hectare property in 1989. Since then, it has morphed into a million-dollar facility...”

planned for the site.

The complex has multiple accommodation options, capable of housing nearly 50 people in air-conditioned cabins, bunk houses, a cottage, and an office; it has 34 powered camping sites and, surrounding a picturesque dam, there are multiple unpowered camping spaces for use during events. There is a large shed suitable for hosting meetings, along with a commercial kitchen, and a clubhouse/bar flanked by a massive campfire.

While the site is approved for many different disciplines, it is most well-known for hosting Chisholm Trail, a Single Action Shooting competition, and Rendezvous events, first held in the area in 1993. There is even a teepee erected near Millmerran to commemorate the first event. Chisholm Trail is held every year, with Captains Mountain host to a few hundred shooters who compete with muzzleloaders and black powder and camp in situations replicating the period between 1500 to 1865, bringing much-needed tourism to Millmerran and surrounds. The next Chisholm Trail will be at Captains Mountain over the Kings Birthday in 2025.

While the complex is not open for shooting to individual members, there is rarely a weekend when Captains Mountain is not bustling with activity, as various SSAA branches, state delegates, police departments, fire services and even the Special Emergency Response



One of the Single Action Shooting stages, drawing hundreds of competitors each year.

Team (SERT) use it for training, meetings, competitions and events.

The size of the complex necessitates a fulltime, resident groundman, who maintains the ranges and complex and also facilitates range bookings.

In 2023, Captains Mountain was ravaged by bushfire. It took five helicopters and airplanes, which descended on the dams to fill water bombs, to get the fire under control. While most of the scrub

was burnt, thankfully only a small amount of the infrastructure was lost, including an old toilet block, a few Single Action stages and a couple of storage containers, which burned so hot that they kept smouldering inside for two weeks. A year on, the scrub growth is encouraging, and native fauna are returning, including a not-so-native but local peacock Perry.

SSAA Queensland's Captains Mountain is just one of the many



The range has two dams, which proved necessary when fire struck.



The large shed can accommodate many activities and is the hub of the complex.

“In 2023, Captains Mountain was ravaged by bushfire.”

ways sporting shooters are catered for by the Association and plans for further range development and accommodation options are in the pipeline. 🌐



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Tale of a .243

A story to tell

By Steve Marchant

Throughout the years I have purchased numerous firearms, some of which were quickly sold again, while others were used for decades. None of these guns failed to perform its expected role. One, however, took quite some time to do so.

In 2018 my mate Dan and I joined the SSAA QLD Conservation and Wildlife Management (CWM) branch, and during the proceeding months we set about gaining the necessary accreditations to participate in CWM feral control activities. The target species in our locality include feral pigs, goats and deer. All of these can be taken with my Ruger .30-06, but over penetration is a potential issue in relation to smaller animals, so I considered adding a medium game 'all-purpose' rifle to my arsenal.

Dan has hunted throughout North Queensland for many years and swears by his trusty old Alpine in .243 Winchester. Introduced by Winchester in 1955, the .243 is basically a .308 Winchester necked down to 6mm/.244". With its light recoil, long range accuracy, and superiority over the .22 calibres on medium game, the .243 is a versatile and dependable calibre. Rifles and ammunition for the .243 are produced by all major manufacturers and it has gained worldwide acceptance. Choosing the .243 for general hunting purposes was pretty easy, but not as easy as my choice of rifle.



Lithgow Arms LA102 in .243 Winchester.

I decided I'd have to have a Lithgow Arms LA102 when it was released in 2016. The LA102 is Australian made and it had received excellent reviews from local and international gun writers. Moreover, it came with a 10-year warranty and sub-MOA guarantee, so when it was chambered in .243, I headed to the gun shop to order one.

Upon my enquiry, the salesperson asked what barrel and stock I wanted. I replied, "Black barrel, plastic stock." The salesperson said, "Hang on a minute." He disappeared, and quickly returned with a black barrelled, polymer stocked LA102 in .243. Handing it to me, he said, "It's the last one we've got, and it might be a while until the next lot are available."

I shouldered the gun a couple of times to ensure it felt okay. It did, but the trigger pull was heavy. The salesperson said he'd have it adjusted to my desired 3½ lbs. Completely satisfied, I paid the deposit and completed the necessary paperwork. My next trip to the gun shop resulted in the addition of a 4-12 x 40 Bushnell scope to the bill. The final payment on the LA102 was made on September 15, 2018. I remember

the date, because it was the day my .243 was returned to the factory to be re-barrelled!

I was disappointed about the recall, but throughout the warranty process Lithgow Arms' service was exemplary. As promised, they emailed me when the gun arrived at the factory, and again when repairs were completed, and also when it was despatched for Townsville.

I remember that the gun shop phoned me on a Thursday to say I could collect the .243 whenever I was ready. The earliest opportunity to do so was the following Saturday February 2, 2019. But on that particular day, the LA102 was the last thing on my mind, as I was fully preoccupied moving household items from the ground floor of our house to the upstairs, in preparation for one of the largest floods ever to hit Townsville.

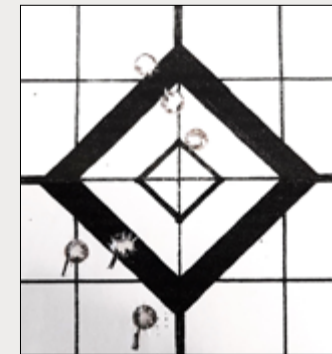
We were evacuated by the SES that night, just after 10pm, and while the ground floor was flooded, our losses were limited to the carpet and furniture pieces made from particle board. Our family dealt with the clean-up ourselves, which took a couple of weeks. Then, at last, the LA102 was collected, just over five months after I had become its owner.

The next weekend it was down to the range with some factory ammo for initial sighting in. The target was placed at 50 metres and the magnification on the scope set to 12x, but the clarity of the image through the scope was not as expected. I adjusted the magnification to a lower setting, which significantly improved the image quality.

As I settled down and looked through the scope, a voice in my



The first three shots at 50 metres are a little left and high of the point of aim.



Sub-MOA three shot groups with Winchester 80g factory loads.

head told me to investigate this matter more thoroughly. It was, however, the other voice telling me I had the range to myself and plenty of ammo to shoot that I took notice of, and so I let loose with the first three rounds. The result was a .82" group, just high and left of the point of aim, with two of the shots touching. A good start.

After only a couple more groups, the scope was adjusted to point of aim at 50 metres. I was having fun. A new target was clipped to the target frame, which was moved out to 100 metres. Time to get serious.

I settled down, grasped the pistol grip and looked through the scope at a target, which was so blurred I could not define the centre square that was 65mm wide! I tried the scope at all magnifications but could not get the image any clearer. A check of the scope rings and mounts for tightness revealed nothing untoward. With the first



Choosing the .243 was easy for Steve.

voice in my head now loudly admonishing me, I packed up and headed home.

During the next few days, internet searches uncovered several potential remedies for the blurred image, but none of these resolved the problem. The last remedy on my list was returning the gun and scope to the gun shop, but before doing that, I opted to 'phone a friend'. Dan had more experience with rifles and scopes than I, so I hoped he might have encountered the problem. Unfortunately, Dan had nothing to add to the internet resolutions, but he once had an ocular lens cap come loose. So, I had a closer look at the scope.

The ocular lens cap was tight, but when I tried to turn the objective lens cap it moved. It tightened by less than half a turn, but when I peered through the scope at a

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A loose objective lens cap blurred the target image at 100 metres.

swallow sitting on a powerline around 100 metres away, I could see him as clearly as if he was 10 metres away. The LA102 and I were back in business.

Over the next few months, I fired more than 200 rounds of factory ammo and handloads through my .243 without an issue. Indeed, if I did my part, the LA102 fulfilled its sub-MOA guarantee with everything I put through it. So, after all my trials and tribulations,

a happy ending at last?

Not quite. In May 2019 I injured my right shoulder while unloading a shipping container. A full shoulder reconstruction was carried out in January 2020. I was not permitted to shoot for six months after the operation and couldn't fire a centrefire rifle for a year. COVID then came and went, but lockdowns and reloading component shortages reduced shooting opportunities for quite a while for most of us. In 2021 my family relocated to a quieter location in an outer suburb of Townsville. Then I was retrenched.

The .243 has subsequently languished in my gun safe for nearly four years, but this hiatus is now hopefully over. Having successfully completed the necessary shooting accreditations

for CWM activities with the LA102 (at the first attempt), I am good to go hunting when the next opportunity arises. What's more, I've just tweaked my handloads for an upcoming range session with the LA102. Sub-MOA has been readily accomplished with all the ammo I've fired through it, so I reckon I can get a sub half MOA group with the right loads. What more could I ask of my all-purpose rifle? 🍷



L to R: Winchester 80g, Winchester 100g, ADI 87g factory rounds; 85g handloaded round, Barnes 85g TTX projectile.

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It's best for all

By Dr Ben Allen



Hunters are often criticised for killing animals, on the grounds that it is cruel. But is it really cruel?

And 'cruel' compared to what? All living things must die, and all animals only ever die from one of five general ecological processes – predation, competition, disease, senescence or accident. Hunting is a form of predation, as is livestock production, aquaculture or fishing, because we are directly killing animals whenever we do these things.

But with the exception of the relatively rare, accidental deaths that might not be associated with any harm, like being hit on the head and killed instantly by a falling rock, in many or perhaps most cases animals suffer much less harm when they are killed by a human than they do when they are killed by other ecological processes.

Being torn apart by a guard dog causes far more harm to a dingo than being poisoned with toxins like potassium cyanide, sodium fluoroacetate (1080), or para-aminopropiophenone (PAPP).

Being shot from a helicopter causes far less harm to feral horses than dying of starvation. Being euthanised via captive bolt causes far less harm to a domestic pig than contracting African Swine Fever and haemorrhaging throughout the lungs, heart, liver, kidney and bladder. And as for senescence, just ask anyone who remembers the moon landing how long it takes and much it hurts to grow old.

For free-living wildlife animals dying out in the bush from natural causes, predation hurts a lot, starving hurts a lot, disease hurts a lot, and the ailments that accompany old age can hurt a lot too. In stark contrast, a well-placed shot in the head doesn't hurt at all and is undeniably the best way to go.

I once read a letter from a kangaroo shooter that described the way he killed kangaroos, pointing out that in one moment the kangaroo was blissfully eating grass in complete ignorance of the hunter's presence, then in the next moment the kangaroo was dead, entirely ignorant of his death. It's hard to see how that might be labelled 'cruel' on animal welfare

grounds. People might express ethical opposition to it, but animal ethics and animal welfare are two very different things, and the welfare of that kangaroo was not compromised in any way by the shooter.

To be fair, humans sometimes kill animals in extremely harmful ways, and not every shot is a perfect one. But of the billions of animals killed by humans each year, such harmful ways are the exceptions and not the rule.

The vast majority of animals killed by humans are killed in ways much less harmful than natural ecological processes. So, if people are genuinely concerned about the welfare of animals, and particularly about the way hunters kill them, then why would we not permit practices that produce a less-harmful death?

Mother Nature is a cruel mistress and understanding that wild animal lives are lived in 'continual fear, and danger of violent death' (State of Nature – Thomas Hobbes) helps one realise that a well-placed shot from a hunter is actually the least-cruel way for them to end. 🍷

Crafting tools for the hunt...

by Rod Hoare

Jay Cross, the craftsman behind JC Bladeworks, along with his supportive wife Chon, is a renowned name in the Aussie knifemaking, hunting and outdoor community. Based in Brisbane, Queensland, Jay turned his passion for blades into a full-time career in October 2020, quickly earning a solid reputation as a maker of reliable, high-performance knives perfect for hunters, fishermen, and outdoor enthusiasts across Australia.

Jay's journey into knifemaking was sparked by a personal desire to create tools that could withstand the rigours of outdoor life. Using the stock-removal method of knifemaking, which allows the use of high-performance knife steels not suitable for forging, he crafts blades with precision and care, ensuring they can handle everything from field dressing game to survival tasks in the wild. Though self-taught, his dedication and skill are evident in every blade he produces.

For hunters, the functional quality of a knife is paramount, and this is where JC Bladeworks excels. Jay prioritises blade geometry and edge durability, designing knives that perform reliably in the field. His expertise in grinding bevels—a process requiring precision and a keen eye for detail—ensures that each blade is not just sharp, but optimised for each application, whether it be a flat, hollow, convex, scandi, sabre, asymmetrical or compound grind, you can be sure it's a fit-for-purpose blade. Combine this with an extensive range of handle materials from Aussie hardwoods and Micarta through to synthetics such as G10. Plus, each knife is accompanied by a sheath made from Kydex or leather, depending on the customer's preference and purpose; you are sure to find a functional, yet visually appealing package.

Jay's love for hunting and fishing fuels his passion for knifemaking, having been a member of SSAA



Roebuck model performing its designed duties in the field.

Knife images displayed from top to bottom.

The Scrub Butcher is built more toward the heavier field tasks while still being able to field dress when needed. This one has a Damascus clad SG2 blade, carbon fibre bolster and Elforyn Super Tusk (faux ivory) handle.

The Roebuck is a great utility knife, this one featuring a stonewashed Nitro-V blade complimented by a G10/Ringed Gidgee handle.

The All'rounder is a hunter/semi skinner in the one package; this one featuring a Damascus clad SG2 blade, G10 guard and Redwood burl handle.

Queensland for more than 10 years. He often tests his designs in real-world conditions, refining them based on firsthand experience and feedback from his loyal customer base. This direct feedback loop ensures his knives are practical and effective, whether for skinning a deer, processing a roo, or preparing camp meals, you can be sure they are up to the task. Jay actively participates in knife shows across Australia, including his home Queensland Knife Show. These events allow him to connect with hunters and outdoor enthusiasts, showcase his work, and receive valuable feedback from users who rely on his knives in the field. Seeing hunters return for additional knives or hearing stories of his tools being put to hard use in the field is the ultimate validation of his craft. He takes pride in upholding the high standards of Australian-made knives and contributing to the country's respected knifemaking tradition. He is a proud member of the Australian Knifemakers Guild and Australian Knife Art Association.

From apprentice carpenter to knifemaker, Jay Cross has channelled a lifetime of hands-on experience into creating tools that hunters and outdoors people can rely on. Through JC Bladeworks, he continues to craft knives that are as dependable in the field as they are a testament to his passion and skill. You can contact Jay through Facebook or Instagram as JC Bladeworks on both platforms. Email: jcbladeworks1@gmail.com or 0407 219 933. 📞



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Eat WILD: K-ROO SAN CHOY BOW

Prep: 10 min Time: 5 min Serves: 4



- Ingredients**
- 500g K-ROO kangaroo mince
 - 1 tbs olive oil
 - 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 - 2 tbs ginger, grated
 - 1 small red chilli, finely chopped (optional)
 - 1/2 cup mushrooms, diced
 - 2 tbs oyster sauce
 - 1 tbs soy sauce
 - 3 spring onions, sliced
 - 1 cup coriander, roughly chopped
 - ½ cup Thai basil, roughly chopped
 - Lettuce cups and lime to serve.

Method

Splash one tablespoon of olive oil into a hot wok, add kangaroo mince and fry until browned. Add garlic, ginger, chilli and mushrooms, stir fry for 1 minute. Stir through oyster sauce and soy sauce. Turn heat off and sprinkle through 2/3 of the spring onions, coriander and Thai basil. Serve in fresh, crisp iceberg lettuce cups and garnish with remaining herbs and a squeeze of fresh lime.

Editor’s note: Match with an ice-cold beer or ginger beer

Recipe courtesy of K-ROO, www.k-roo.com.au

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