

CHANGES AHEAD AS SSAA QUEENSLAND TAKES CONTROL OF ITS FUTURE!

THE

# REPORT

August 2025

\$6.95 incl. GST AUS & NZ

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

**THREAT  
LOOMS**  
FOR AUSTRALIA  
Pigs potential  
super spreaders

**HUNTING WITH  
SIGHTHOUNDS**  
Like falconry on four legs

An inside look  
at the **Lithgow**  
**Arms Factory**  
An Australian institution



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# Welcome to the new SSAA Queensland Website!

## Your hub for all things shooting!

We're excited to announce the launch of the all-new [ssaaqld.org.au](http://ssaaqld.org.au)!

Our refreshed website offers a sleek, user-friendly experience, making it easier than ever to manage your membership, stay updated on news, and explore all things shooting.



Check it out!

[www.ssaaqld.org.au](http://www.ssaaqld.org.au)

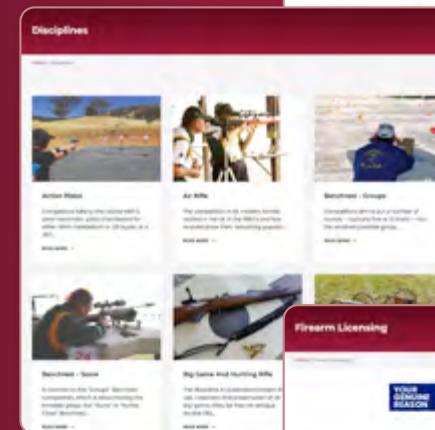
## EVERYTHING YOU NEED, RIGHT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Our updated website is packed with features to make your shooting journey smooth:



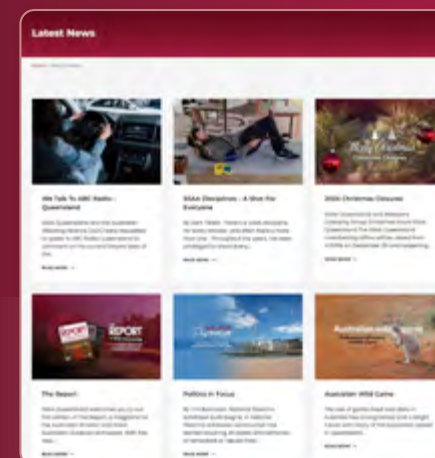
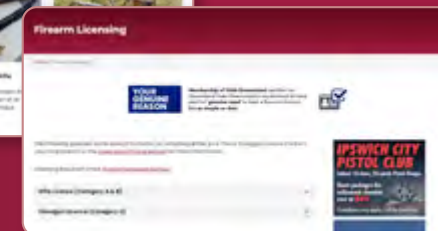
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Disciplines

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Discover various shooting disciplines and find out how you can get involved.
- **Firearm Licensing**  
Access key information about firearm licensing requirements and processes.
- **Latest News & Publications**  
Stay informed with the latest industry updates, safety tips, and SSAA Queensland news.

At SSAA Queensland, we're committed to keeping you informed, safe, and part of a thriving community.

Visit [ssaaqld.org.au](http://ssaaqld.org.au) today to see it all for yourself!

**ASA**  
Australian Shooters Alliance

**SSAA Queensland**

Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Qld.) Inc.

6	<b>Letters &amp; News</b>
8	<b>An inside look at the Lithgow Arms Factory</b> An Australian institution
12	<b>SSAA Queensland</b> Taking control of our future
15	<b>ClayCopter hand-held thrower</b> Caldwell spins up a new shotgun target
16	<b>Hunting with sighthounds</b> Like falconry on four legs
20	<b>Foot and mouth disease</b> What if it gets feral?
23	<b>Conservation update</b> SSAA volunteers hard at work
24	<b>A basic guide to deer hunting in Australia</b>
30	<b>SSAA Thuringowa</b> A Townsville hidden gem
32	<b>Townsville’s ladies ‘Come and Try’ Shooting hits the target</b>
34	<b>Ipswich City Pistol Club launches new website</b>
36	<b>Big bangs, big smiles at Mackay Family Open Day</b>
38	<b>Hawke Frontier 30 FFP 5-25</b> Take your shot with confidence
42	<b>Hall’s Firearms</b> Supplying NQ shooters for more than 60 years

44	<b>Career paths for juniors</b> Where will your passion for shooting lead you?
46	<b>DIY shooting sticks</b> <i>A recipe</i> for hunting success
49	<b>Queensland Arms Fairs</b> Full swing in 2025
50	<b>Hunting at home</b> Doing our part in the backyard
52	<b>Rules for the range</b> Safety first
53	<b>Politics in Focus Minister says</b> Trust is a must
54	<b>Tradition in the palm of your hand</b> The Craft of Tristram Oliver-Skuse
56	<b>Queensland’s Cutting Edge</b>
58	<b>Classic Cartridges</b> The 12 Gauge Shotgun
60	<b>National sharp-shooting titles at stake at Captains Mountain</b>
62	<b>50 years of magnificent Australian muzzleloading!</b>
64	<b>Adidas dropkicks kangaroo leather use</b>
65	<b>Shoot Off! Quiz</b>
66	<b>Eat WILD</b> Wild boar sausages with roasted garlic and cheddar cheese mash



16



20



67

There is a world of choice in firearms made in Italy, United States, Germany, Russia, and Turkey, just to name a few, but only a select few where firearms are sporterised, improved or manufactured at home.

Lithgow Arms stands tall in Australian manufacturing and we were privileged to visit the factory where military and civilian firearms have been manufactured since 1910. Thanks to Lithgow Arms distributor’s, TSA Outdoors, our media team saw firsthand the processes involved in turning raw steel into a sleek, high-end rifle made for the Australian shooter.

It takes three months for the whole manufacture and Lithgow’s setup is rare in that absolutely nothing is outsourced. Even the tools used to make the guns are made on-site in the factory’s tool room, as Sam Talbot explains in the pages of this month’s *The Report* magazine.

“Lithgow Arms has a proud and rich history of manufacturing in Australia, and while other industries have downsized or offshored, Lithgow Arms continues their proud tradition of making Australian firearms,” Sam said.

The factory employs more than 150 men and women, including a minimum of 15 apprentices, at any one time. That is ensuring that gunsmithing remains a viable occupation in this country and something we should all support as recreational shooters.

So, if your gun safe space allows it, consider what Lithgow Arms Chris Burton told Sam: “You’d be doing yourself a favour by getting one.” If there is no spare room in your safe, then it might be time to get a bigger gun safe.

Finally, it was a pleasure in meeting SSAA Queensland’s first magazine editor Gordon Nelis, recently. Gordon edited our Association’s first magazine back in the early 1960s. He talked of how even back then it was important to inform the members of state issues, particularly the state’s firearm laws and hunting topics specific to Queensland. Gordon helped create a legacy that we eagerly run with the baton today, in publishing *The Report* magazine, by the Queensland SSAA for the Queensland members. But, if other shooters want to read it too, that is OK with us! We have had feedback that the magazine has been spotted in gun shops as far south as Tasmania and even in Western Australia.

Tim Bannister  
Co-Managing Editor

A new magazine for the Australian Shooter and Great Australian Outdoors enthusiast  
Volume 1.5

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Letters

Hopping mad... me, too

Dear SSAA Qld,  
Just wanted to give some clarification about the editorial by Dr Mike Redwood on ‘Hopping Mad Over Kangaroo Leather’ featured in *The Report*.

First thing to note is that he is absolutely correct on saying anti leather is anti-scientific. Plastic is not an option.

I would make the point that the Queensland kangaroo industry it is not a cull; it is a harvest. As such, is sustainable and subject to strict quotas and other requirements. Annihilation is not the purpose. There is a PDF document provided by the Queensland Department Of Environment and Science giving the details:

([qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/520306/mm-rp-quota-submission-2025.pdf](http://qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/520306/mm-rp-quota-submission-2025.pdf))

Interesting to see on that document that the quotas are often set at around 15% or 20% or so of the actual surveyed wild population. Also, there is a ‘trigger point’, below which population no harvesting is allowed. But it is not a blanket number for the whole state. The state is divided into six zones. Quotas vary by zone and species. The document also states numbers for not only the quotas but the actual harvest ‘take’ numbers. Actual take numbers are always well below the allowed quotas and rarely exceed 5% of total population.

Whenever I explain the actual take situation to any amateur ‘conservationist’ they always blink and squirm due to total ignorance of the reality.

Cheers,  
Geoff, via email

Firearms in vehicles

Can you explain the rules about storing firearms in a vehicle? I want to make sure I’m doing the right thing when transporting my firearms.

Mel, Townsville, Qld

**From the Editors:**  
*Thanks, Mel. Firearms are often transported from one location to another, be it for hunting, club competition, repair or sale. The first and best option is to store it in your lockable boot, if you have one. If not, then ensure:*

- *the firearm is locked in a metal container fixed to the vehicle or it’s in a securely closed container out of sight in the vehicle*
- *the metal container, and anything on or attached to it, doesn’t suggest it contains a firearm.*

*Also, the person in control of the firearm (owner or not) must ensure it is not left in an unlocked vehicle if that vehicle is not being attended by someone licensed to possess it. Ammunition should be stored separately from the firearms. Commonsense should apply. Don’t make unnecessary stops.*

Change to licensing details

Hi guys,  
I am wondering if I need to change any of my licensing details if I change my shooting club?

At the moment I am member of both the Queensland Military Rifle Club (QMRC) at Belmont and the SSAA at Rippley range. But my QMRC membership will expire at and of June, and I would like to continue my life under just the flag of SSAA. Could you please give me any guidance if I need to do something?

Kind regards,  
Tamas, Queensland

Hi Tamas,  
*This will only be an issue if your ‘genuine reason’ has changed since your licence was last issued/renewed or if further information is requested by Weapons Licensing. But of course, the SSAA can continue to be your genuine reason as ‘Sport of Target Shooting’, since we are an approved body prescribed under the law.*

If you need any more help reach out on 07 3281 3447 or email us at [licensing@ssaaqld.org.au](mailto:licensing@ssaaqld.org.au)

The Report Editors

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](mailto:news@ssaaqld.org.au)

Want to sign up a family member?

Individuals may join as an Additional Family Member, for a reduced fee, if they are over the age of 18 and reside at the same residence as a full fee paying Adult Member. Simply:

1. Go to [ssaaqld.org.au](http://ssaaqld.org.au)
2. Click on **Membership**
3. In the dropdown menu, click on **Join SSAA Queensland**
4. Choose **Join SSAA Queensland Online** and choose **Additional Family Member**
5. Create an **Account** and follow the prompts.

Alternatively, you can phone 07 3492 9237.



**Lithgow  
arms®**



**Accurate, Reliable, Australian Made!**

3.4KG



**HUNTER**

- COLD HAMMER FORGED FLUTED 20" BARREL
- LIGHTWEIGHT AND WELL BALANCED
- TWO PIECE PICATINNY RAIL MOUNTS
- SNIPER GREY CERAKOTE
- THREADED BARREL

4.1KG



**VARMINT**

- COLD HAMMER FORGED 24" THREADED BARREL
- 10 ROUND GRIZZLY ALUMINUM MAGAZINE
- ONE PIECE PICATINNY RAIL MOUNT
- WALNUT STOCK

4.2KG



**OUTBACK**

- COLD HAMMER FORGED 18" THREADED BARREL
- ONE PIECE PICATINNY RAIL MOUNT
- BLACK/SNIPER GREY CERAKOTE
- AICS 10 RD MAGAZINE
- SCSA TSP-X CHASSIS



**204Rgr, 223Rem, 243Win, 6.5cm, 308Win**

**TSM OUTDOORS**

**SIFA** Shooting Industry Foundation Australia



# An inside look at the Lithgow Arms Factory

An Australian institution

By Sam Talbot



*“It’s not just that Lithgow Arms makes rifles. It’s that they do it all there in one spot without any outsourcing.”*

Where a lot of the magic happens. Note the extra tall windows.

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE LITHGOW ARMS FACTORY



The steel starts shorter and fatter and is slowly but surely crushed and drawn out. Here Sam lines up a future barrel.



One of the hardest parts of production is to drill the perfectly straight hole that will become a barrel, which is exactly what this machine does.

*“One of the trickiest parts of the process is creating a perfectly straight hole down the centre of a barrel.”*

Tucked away in the tiny town of Lithgow is a facility unlike any other in the country, and unique even in the world. It’s not just that Lithgow Arms makes rifles. It’s that they do it all there in one spot without any outsourcing. From raw steel to proof-tested firearms, all within one facility. It’s a level of ‘vertical integration’ even the big global brands rarely match.

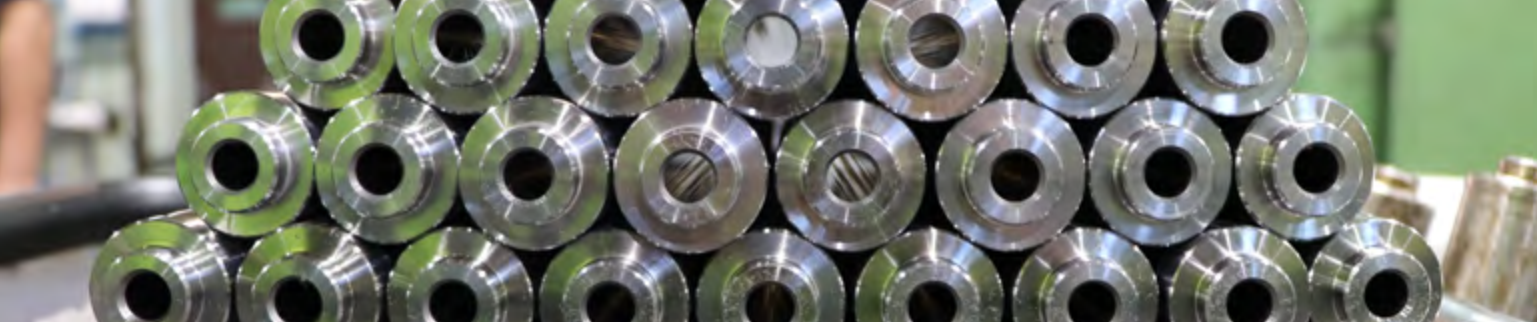
I was lucky enough to tour the factory recently, which started with a short history lesson. Lithgow began turning steel in 1910, with full-scale military firearm production kicking off in 1912. Just next door to the facility is an outdoor range, which was surprisingly established even earlier. It’s not every day you see a 900-yard range nestled right next to suburban streets, but that’s all part of the legacy in Lithgow.

Inside the facility, the buildings are also part of that history. The first structure we entered featured rows of tall windows. Designed during wartime, the idea was that if the building was attacked, the glass would blow out, sparing the walls from collapse.

Meanwhile, inside the manufacturing area of the facility, the floors are 80 years old and hold more than 70 machines, each with a specific purpose. That’s fewer than in decades past, thanks to modernisation, but it still takes a wide variety of tools to turn raw steel into a finished firearm. It starts with thick steel cylinders, stacked on pallets. These are gradually reshaped, drawn out, drilled, heat-treated and measured until every part meets specifications.

One of the trickiest parts of the process is creating a perfectly straight hole down the centre of a barrel.





Barrels with mirroring.

This hole needs to be perfectly straight with a precision down to just a few microns. Lithgow Arms can maintain a high standard of production by having parts checked and measured repeatedly, including after critical steps like heat treatment. In some cases, tolerances are verified to within just three microns – which is significantly less than the width of a human hair.

It takes about three months to take raw steel and turn it into a firearm that can be used. Throughout that time, there may only be a few hands-on hours spent working directly on a single firearm, but the full production timeline stretches to about three months. That’s because each component needs to be built, inspected and timed perfectly with the other parts and components. The entire process is coordinated to ensure everything comes together at just the right time, where one part may take five minutes to make, but another takes two months.

Lithgow’s setup is rare in that absolutely nothing is outsourced. Even the tools used to make the guns are made on-site in the factory’s own tool room. There’s also an electroplating area, which we were told is the highest standard of its kind in the country. The purpose of it is to add a protective coating to key components like firing pins, receivers and military barrels.

The part of the manufacturing process I would say is the least ‘sexy’, but Matt Duquemin, Director, Integrated Weapons and Sensors at Thales, explained to us is arguably the most important part, was the ‘degreaser’. After all, the parts need to be clean.

There’s well over 150 employees working at the facility and, surprisingly, about 15 to 20 apprentices at any one time. An experienced worker can manage up to four machines at once, but as you can imagine, it takes a diverse mix of skilled workers to keep the place running.

The last step in making the final product is proofing, essentially test-firing to ensure the firearm meets international performance and safety standards. This is done at the factory’s on-site range, which includes multiple setups for different models and testing types.

Lithgow Arms makes rifles for both military and civilians. Matt said most of their business is military, but those contracts come and go. “We rely on the civilian business to keep us going between the bigger rounds of military contracts – we need both,” he said.

Maybe the most amazing thing about Lithgow Arms is that their civilian rifles are made to the same standard as the military rifles. There are some different methods between the two, but ultimately, a civilian firearm is made to the same standards as a military firearm.

*“It’s a civilian rifle made to the same standard as the military. You’d be doing yourself a favour by getting one.”*

This was a point Chris Burton, Product Line Manager at Lithgow Arms, wanted to drive home.

“Every Australian should have at least one Lithgow rifle,” he said. “It’s a civilian rifle made to the same standard as the military. You’d be doing yourself a favour by getting one.”



After three months of hard work, the end product can turn into something like the LA105 Woomera.



## AMPLUS 6

The Amplus 6 instils Leica’s proven DNA in a versatile riflescope with 6x zoom for everyday hunting. Suits all hunting conditions and calibres from rabbits up to your largest big game.

1-6 x 24 mm

3-18 x 44 mm

2.5-15 x 50 mm

2.5-15 x 56 mm

- 6x zoom for flexible use in several hunting situation
- 39 m field of view at 100 m
- Large exit pupil up to 12 mm
- High magnification range 3x - 18x
- New L-Ballistic reticle with hold over and windage marks for quick bullet drop correction. 2nd focal plane.
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- 90 MoA elevation adjustment - 23 mrad total adjustment range
- +90% light transmission. AquaDura hydrophobic lens coating.

- Illuminated with 10 levels of adjustment. LED diode 0.9 mm at 100 m.
- Extremely rugged - all parts from high performance metal, waterproof and shock-resistant to 1500 Gs
- Huge 90 mm eye relief
- 30 mm tube
- Extremely compact length of scope: 30 cm/670 g (3-18x44 model)
- Ballistic Turret with Zero Stop Elevation on 3-18, 2.5-15 and 2.5-56 mm models (MoA models available on 50 and 56 mm scopes)

## NEW GEOVID PRO SE 10x42 and GEOVID R SE 10x42



## CRF PRO



- Delivery scope: Carrying cord, battery, Cordura case
- Interface: Bluetooth; links to Kestrel BT, and Applied Ballistics app (Applied Ballistics Elite), GeoMap Tracking System with manual application for wind values.
- Range: Up to 2,800 yds / 2,500m
- Magnification: 7x

- Front lens diameter: 24 mm
- Exit pupil: 3.4 mm
- Field of view at 1,000yds / 1,000m: 347ft / 115 m
- Dimensions (W x H x D): 113 x 75 x 34mm
- Weight approx. 6.7 oz / 189 g incl. battery



# SSAA QUEENSLAND TAKING CONTROL OF OUR FUTURE

By SSAA Queensland media team

SSAA Queensland is proud to announce a major shift in how we serve our members, finalising a transition that brings magazine publishing, media, lobbying and membership services back home to Queensland.

In 1962, the first publication to be more than a simple shooting newsletter was created – the *Sporting Shooters Association Queensland Magazine*, with Gordon Nelis.

Eventually the publication became the *Australian Shooters Journal* and production shifted to Adelaide under the continued editorship of Gordon, where it thrived. Beginning from 1999, the media department expanded to publish multiple offshoots, including

*Australian Hunter*, *Australian and New Zealand Handgun Magazine*, *Australian Women's Shooter*, *The Australian Junior Shooter* and *Great Australian Outdoors*. Those publications were created and

produced largely by the current SSAA Queensland media team, who collectively have more than 70 years of shooting publication experience and now bring you *The Report* along with web and social media content.

Since firearm laws differ

from state to state though, it has always been a challenge to inform members about legislation, news and politics relevant to their own jurisdiction, particularly after the introduction of the National Firearms Agreement in the late

90s. That's one reason why SSAA Queensland decided, like in 1962, to once again produce its own magazine (*The Report*) for Queensland members.

As noted in July, we have elevated *The Report* to a monthly publication. It is a showcase of all things SSAA Queensland but also with national stories and reach Australia-wide. Members will no longer receive the generalised *Australian Shooter* as part of their membership.

We believe this decision better serves our members - financially, informatively, and better ensures the future of the shooting sports. We are a lean and effective team, and we are strategically positioning SSAA Queensland to best support our members, as well as shooting, now and in the future.

The fact that a Queensland publication has now come full circle, from Gordon Nelis's watchful eye, is a testament to our state's strength and our deep appreciation of the shooting sports.



A copy of the original SSAA Queensland magazine from 1962. It was known as the 'yellow' magazine.




SSAA Queensland's writer, editor and hunter Gordon Nelis with Queensland's new magazine *The Report*. Gordon was really excited by the magazine returning home to Queensland.

Because of our 80,000 members, SSAA Queensland has never been in a better position to look after ourselves, which is why we believe it is in our best interests to service Queensland members at our own cost. Your money belongs to you, and we will use it for your benefit – to lobby government, support hunters, build ranges, host

competitions, aid conservation and pest management, and publish content about these issues, specifically in your new magazine, *The Report*.

In the past, about half of your membership fees were pooled across Australian states and territories through SSAA Inc. As the largest state association, SSAA





SSAA QUEENSLAND

Branches Disciplines Hunting Firearm Licensing Deporte Mutual Membership News & Media

Find Your Local Branch

Looking for a SSAA branch near you? Use our branch locator to connect with your local shooting community today.


FIND NOW

Explore Disciplines


Whether you're into rifle, pistol, or shotgun shooting, SSAA offers a wide variety of disciplines for all skill levels. Explore and find your passion.

EXPLORE NOW


Latest News




Ipswich City Pistol Club Launches New Website




Scope In Focus: Schmidt & Bender 3-18x42 Meta



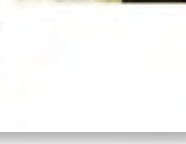
Battling Feral Cats: The Tiwi Islands' Conservation



REPORT



MPR



CAT B LICENCE

President's Message

I am thrilled to announce that The Report magazine is now Queensland and, as of July, will be produced 11 times a year all Queensland members need distributed throughout the state. This marks a homecoming of magazine production for us, magazine being printed in 1982, before a national journal, the Australian Shooter and then the Australian Shooters Jo Tim and the same key team colleagues that produced the Queensland and turned their experience to publishing the same high-quality stories and reviews on the shooting sport. Shooting and hunting laws and regulations have always been long and multiple regulations in different ways. It became Australia. This was a key factor in SSAA Queensland's decision to make this move. While a Queensland-based magazine will overcome those appeal to readers country wide. I'd also like to make mention of the behind-the-scenes who Ipswich HQ. They are the ones ensuring your membership services you receive with your SSAA Queensland membership, branch committee members and volunteers. As we now have communications, their workload has of course increased, the challenges. It's an exciting time for SSAA Queensland. Safe shooting. Helen Gill SSAA Queensland President

2025 SSAA Queensland State, National, Open and Postal Shoot calendar

State Championships in Queensland

- Action Pistol: SSAA Bundaberg, July 5-6
- Fly: SSAA Innisfail, 5-6 July
- Big Game Rifle: SSAA Ipswich, August 30-31
- Canon: SSAA Ipswich at Captains Mountain, July 5
- Lever Action Silhouette: SSAA Bundaberg, September 6-7
- Field Rifle 40VSP: SSAA Fraser Coast, August 15-17
- Joins: SSAA Tin Can Bay, July 5-6
- Lever Action: SSAA Sunshine Coast, September 6-7
- Long Range Precision: SSAA Luna at Captains Mountain, May 23-25
- Muzzleloading: SSAA Bundaberg, October 3-6
- Rifle Silhouette: SSAA Bundaberg, August 2-3
- Target Pistol: SSAA Bundaberg, August 2-3
- United Rifle and Reloading SE: Qld: September 27-28

Nationals in Queensland

- Action Match: SSAA Bundaberg, September 19-21
- Air Rifle: SSAA Tin Can Bay, September 26-28
- Fly Shoot: SSAA Brisbane, August 20 - September 1
- Long Range Precision: SSAA Luna at Captains Mountain, August 29-31
- Revolver BR: SSAA Springsure at Captains Mountain, June 20-25
- Single Action: Chisholm Trail at Captains Mountain, September 28 - October 5

Open Shoots in Queensland

- Rendezvous: Captains Mountain, July

Postal Shoots

- Muzzleloading: July 1 - December 31
- Muzzleloading: Pacific Zone Postal Shoot, July 1 - September 3

The SSAA Queensland website has been rebuilt ground up. Members now receive a monthly and on-demand e-newsletter from our head office.

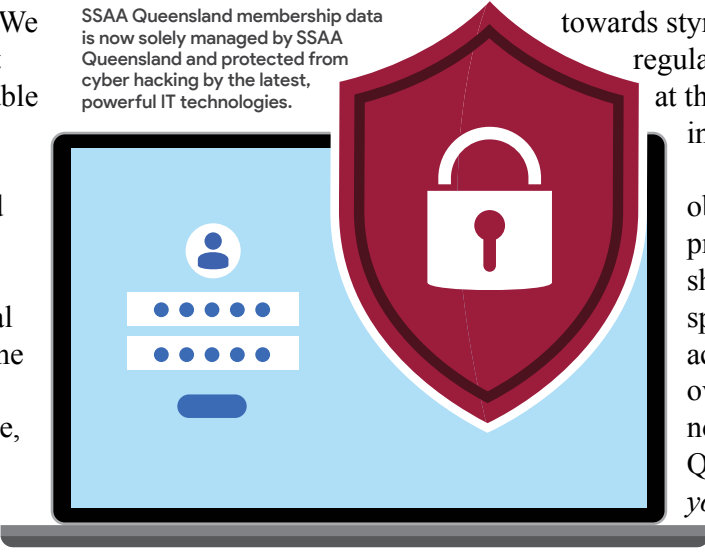
Queensland was naturally the main provider of funds for the rest of the SSAA. While that charitable model worked in years gone by, we now believe we are best placed to support our 80,000 members directly.

In addition, with the increasing regulatory requirements in ensuring our membership details are kept safe and protected from cyber hacking, we initiated the relocation of our database into our sole possession. Our trained and committed staff in Queensland process and manage members' data rather than it being outsourced to SSAA Inc as it was in the past. We now have employed the highest information technologies available to protect your data.

SSAA Queensland remains committed to staying connected with the rest of the SSAA, but with our own membership office, media team, and financial protection/assurance services, the time is right to make this move. We have also rebuilt our website, launched a monthly and on-demand e-newsletter to quickly communicate with members

*“SSAA Queensland remains committed to staying connected with the rest of the SSAA, but with our own membership office, media team, and financial protection/assurance services, the time is right to make this move”*

SSAA Queensland membership data is now solely managed by SSAA Queensland and protected from cyber hacking by the latest, powerful IT technologies.



and continue to investigate new media opportunities.

In recent times we have established the Australian Shooters Alliance (ASA) - a national organisation that allows us to lobby federally and, as the largest shooting organisation in the Southern Hemisphere, be suitably recognised as a key stakeholder. We have also laid the foundations for our own research and political activist body - the Australian Institute of Legislative Action (AILA). The AILA will meet with like-minded organisations across the world and work towards stymying bad legislation, regulations and treaties at the state, federal and international levels.

As shooters, our main objective remains: to promote all forms of shooting in our great sport, within Queensland, across Australia, and overseas. The change now is that SSAA Queensland will be using *your* membership fees for *your* benefit. ☺



# ClayCopter

## hand-held thrower

Caldwell spins up a new shotgun target

Spinning vertically makes the targets easy to spot but they can move unpredictably.

By Sam Talbot

Recently, I wrote extensively in *The Report* about every type of target used in shotgun shooting over the years. I painstakingly went through over 150 years of history, starting with live pigeons, then glass balls, and then finally the development of the modern ‘clay’ pigeon. Well, imagine my surprise when I was suddenly introduced to the ‘ClayCopter’ - a very new and unique form of shotgun target.

The ClayCopter is a hand-held device, roughly the size of a large, bulky power drill. It uses its own special targets that are disc-shaped, with the same orange colour and width as a clay pigeon, but instead of being solid, it has slightly angled and twisted spokes. When placed in the ClayCopter launcher, the targets are spun up to 15,000 RPM before being launched out and into the air.

The target then flies off spinning vertically in arc, with a slight and unpredictable wobble. That wobble



The compact launcher and sturdiness of the targets make this great for a casual shoot you can setup quickly and easily.

adds a level of challenge that should keep shooters on their toes. Since the target flies vertically rather than horizontally, like a traditional clay pigeon, shooters get more surface to aim at, and visibility should never be an issue. That said, targets can travel

up to 100 metres and I’m told under the right conditions (tailwind) they can reach 200 metres. Additionally, the subtle rise and upward trajectory of the target may also catch some shooters off guard, plus if things are too easy, you can load two targets at once and shoot simultaneous pairs.

The launcher has a removable and rechargeable battery, with a single charge launching about 300 targets. Like some modern clays, the targets are biodegradable, but surprisingly, they are also durable enough to survive hitting the ground and can be reused. I bounced one off concrete like a basketball and even travelled with one in my backpack, and it was completely fine.

While the handheld device may not be ideal for competitions, it could be a better choice for casual shoots when compared to older-style traps. All things considered, the ClayCopter is probably safer and far easier than a piece of string attached to a rusty trap that threatens to come out of the ground each time you pull it.

One criticism might be that it’s just too easy for some shooters. It’s not safe for the launcher to be used in front of the line, unlike a remote trap, so that removes a layer of versatility that other clay launchers have. While it’s a great novelty and a lot of fun, it’s not a replacement for the traditional shotgun disciplines.

At the time of writing, the Caldwell ClayCopter is starting to become more easily available in Australia, so it may become more commonplace quite soon. The ClayCopter costs around the \$450 mark and a pack of 50 targets is about \$40. ☺



# HUNTING WITH SIGHTHOUNDS

## Like falconry on four legs

By Liz Rymill

As dawn breaks over dense alpine bushland, the sight of hunter Michelle Suthern and her Whippet, Speedie, on the trail of high-country deer are an anomaly. But Speedie, an eight-year-old blue sighthound, is so highly trained to

pick up the scent of deer that she's become Michelle's main hunting companion. According to her owner, Speedie even out-performs the German wirehaired pointer owned by Michelle's partner, Bradley Stolz.

"At first, I didn't even know Whippets could be trained to track a scent," Michelle explains. "My father had Whippets when I was a kid, so I knew how effective they were on rabbits and how their instinct was to sight and chase their prey."

After owning a lot of dog breeds throughout her life, Michelle bought Speedie as a pup in 2017 with a view to using her on game only. "I was impressed straight away with how intelligent she was; she wanted to be with me all the time and would



All in a day's work for Michelle and Speedie.



The author's whippet, Bertie, loves the thrill of the chase.

*"I never knew Whippets could be deer hunters, but it really does show how versatile they are,"*

pick up cues effortlessly. So, when Bradley was training his pointer to track deer, I thought why not try my Whippet at the same time!"

Michelle says teaching Speedie to control her instinct to chase has been the most challenging part of the process. "I still let her use that instinct, but at the designated time and place – like on rabbits," she explains. Using the Deer Dog Training Blueprint method from Big Game Indicating Dogs, Michelle says Speedie has learned to track deer "using her eyes and nose differently."

"I've found she has a higher drive for hunting than the pointer, picks up scents quicker and tracks more accurately. I never knew Whippets could be deer hunters, but it really does show how versatile they are," Michelle says.

HUNTING WITH SIGHTHOUNDS



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HUNTING WITH SIGHTHOUNDS

Hunting with sighthounds: like falconry with four legs

Sighthounds, or gazehounds, are a breed of dog characterised by their exceptional vision and ability to sight even the slightest prey movement, often at great distances. Coupled with their superior vision is a race-car-like chassis.

Long, lean, and fast – with great acceleration to top speed (greyhounds can reach around 72kmph, whereas Whippets have been recorded at 56kmph) – sighthounds are not only able to spot their prey at distance, but can mobilise, capture, and retrieve with superior efficiency.

Evolution of a master hunter

Sighthounds are believed to be among the first domesticated dogs worldwide, with paintings of greyhound-type canines identified in Egyptian tombs, as well as ancient African and Asian artefacts. Over the centuries, the hounds gained in popularity across Europe where they were employed by aristocratic society in coursing and hunting sports.

Today, most countries have passed legislation prohibiting the use of live lures in coursing competitions; however, a modified form of coursing continues to grow in popularity, including in Australia, and sighthounds are still used in dog racing events and control of pest species (especially rabbits) by landowners and dog handlers.

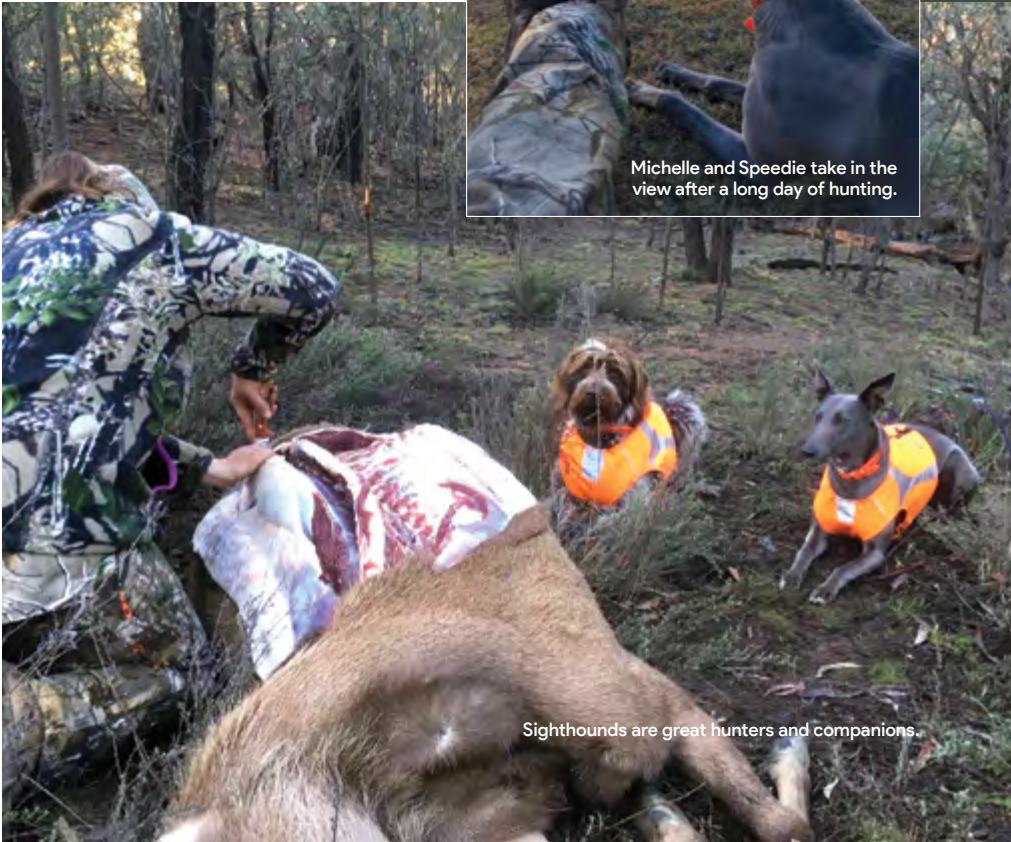
Par for the coursing

According to Dogs Australia, the Afghan Hound, Azawakh, Borzoi, Greyhound, Ibizan Hound, Irish Wolfhound, Pharaoh Hound,

Saluki, Deerhound, Sloughi, Whippet, and Italian Greyhound make up the list of recognised sighthound breeds, with Basenjis and Rhodesian Ridgebacks also able to compete in the Sighthound Stream of lure coursing competitions.

Coursing was introduced into South Australia in 1860, where breeds including greyhounds, whippets and kangaroo-dogs sighted, chased and caught wallabies. As rabbit numbers spread in the colony in the latter part of that century, hare coursing emerged and grew in popularity, but was banned in 1985 on animal welfare grounds. Lure coursing emerged in the USA in the 1970s and has gained popularity among sighthound owners in Australia following the ban on live coursing.

By following an artificial lure, sighthounds can demonstrate their natural ability to work using their sight and chase instincts.



Michelle and Speedie take in the view after a long day of hunting.

Sighthounds are great hunters and companions.

Versatile, adaptable hunting companions

“I think the thing I notice with sighthounds compared to other breeds,” says Michelle, “is their willingness to please their owner... they’re a family companion, but a one-owner type of dog who can be easily trained in so many areas.”

“On rabbits, sighthounds have excellent natural instincts but require consistent training for recall, tracking and general obedience,” she explains.

Each state and territory prescribe specific regulations regarding hunting pest species with dogs. 🐾



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## THREAT LOOMS

# FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

## WHAT IF IT GETS FERAL?

By Sam Talbot

If foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) ever arrived in Australia, the impact would be devastating. One estimate puts the economic cost of a large, multi-state outbreak at approximately \$80 billion over ten years. Livestock movements would be halted, exports would stop, and entire regions might be forced into lockdown. A similar catastrophe could also play out with African swine fever (ASF), forcing many emergency plans into action. On top of that, any outbreak of this sort would be exacerbated by a currently uncontrolled factor – feral pigs.

*“These highly mobile, destructive animals now inhabit around 45 per cent of the country’s landmass.”*

Australia is home to one of the world’s largest feral pig populations. These highly mobile, destructive animals now inhabit around 45 per cent of the country’s landmass. They damage crops, infrastructure, and native ecosystems. Plus, in the event of an exotic disease outbreak, they could also play a role in the spread of FMD.



Water holes are a common place to find feral pigs.



In addition to FMD and ASF, Japanese encephalitis virus is a major biosecurity concern.



Dr Heather Channon, the National Feral Pig Management Coordinator.

*“We can’t completely dismiss the risk,” says Dr Heather Channon, the National Feral Pig Management Coordinator. “Feral pigs may not be the main player, but they are part of the equation and the more pigs there are, the bigger the risk becomes.”*

FMD is one of the most contagious livestock diseases in the world. While an outbreak is usually associated with domesticated animals, feral pigs could still contribute to an outbreak by moving across properties, encountering infected materials, or acting as a secondary host. According to the national AUSVETPLAN, in a worst-case scenario, authorities would need to quickly assess whether feral pigs were contributing to transmission. To do that, they would need local data on pig populations, their density, distribution, movements, interactions with domestic animals, and much more. All the sort of information we are currently, for the most part, missing.

## FERAL PIG FAST FACTS

Coverage of Australia’s landmass: **45%**

Population: **At least 3.2 million**

Annual cost to farmers: **At least \$156 million conservatively**

Potential Outbreak Cost: **\$10 billion over 10 years**

Cull needed to suppress growth: **At least 70% of the population removed annually**



A mother and piglets. Courtesy of National Feral Pig Action Plan.

## A KNOWN UNKNOWN

Despite years of effort, the true scale of Australia’s feral pig problem remains difficult to quantify. In 2020, national estimates put the population at 3.2 million, with an annual cost to farmers of \$156 million. But those figures are conservative, Dr Channon says, and probably well out of date. “Favourable weather in recent years has led to ideal conditions for pig populations to grow,” she explains. “In many areas, they’ve exploded.”

What makes feral pigs especially dangerous in a biosecurity context is how hard they are to monitor and control. They move across private and public land, often avoiding detection. Their intelligence and adaptability make them difficult to trap or bait, and if they become wary of certain methods, they can become nearly impossible to manage.

For example, if during a poisoning attempt the population of pigs is underestimated, a lethal dose may not be reached, this would only make the pigs temporarily sick, and they will become much more wary of any similar attempts in the future. Plus, keep in mind at least 70 per cent of a feral pig population needs to be removed annually to suppress their growth potential and prevent rapid population recovery - sufficient to say, the work is extremely challenging.



# ALL THE OTHER DAMAGE

Beyond the threat of exotic diseases, feral pigs are of course causing widespread damage. They uproot crops, destroy wetlands, prey on native species, and erode soil. In northern Australia, they've been known to dig up turtle nests (see the July issue of *The Report*), and in sheep country, they've been blamed for killing lambs. Feral pigs cause many current and possible future problems.

During the past few years though, Australia has made some progress in getting landholders to work together on coordinated feral pig control. The National Feral Pig Action Plan (NFPAP), which Dr Channon coordinates, supports knowledge-sharing and collaboration across different regions and land tenures. Teamwork is of course crucial for tackling such a widespread problem.

Some of the most successful programs have had dedicated local coordinators who help neighbours plan joint efforts, access funding, and stay motivated. But many challenges remain - funding at the top of the list.

"Most programs are only funded for one to three years," Dr Channon says. "That's not enough. When the money runs out, the group effort often falls apart." So often the rotational nature of government plays itself out in the funding of even extremely important work like this.

Dr Channon also warns against relying on single-method approaches. "We need to apply the right combination of tools, in the right order, at the right time. That's hard to do without local knowledge and long-term coordination."

\*Ground shooting, including recreational hunting, has a place, particularly after other methods like aerial shooting, trapping, or baiting have already reduced the population according to Dr Channon.

*"Teamwork is of course crucial for tackling such a widespread problem."*

## THE ROLE OF CONSERVATIONISTS

But as a standalone solution, it's not enough. "You simply can't reach the necessary knockdown rates using ground shooting alone," Dr Channon says. "It's best used as a follow-up measure."

The same principle applies in a disease outbreak. If feral pigs were helping to sustain the spread of FMD, even in a small way, eradication efforts would need to include them, but only as part of a broader, data-informed strategy using every tool at our disposal.

Dr Channon says the key to preparing for disease threats like FMD or ASF is getting feral pig management right now, before

a crisis hits. That means collecting better local data, and building trust between stakeholders, ensuring that communities are supported to work together. Obviously, this data would also go a long way towards helping control feral pigs for all the other problems they cause as well.

"There's growing momentum," she says. "More landholders are understanding the value of coordinated action. But we still have a long way to go."

For now, the hope is that FMD stays offshore. But in a country with millions of pigs on the loose, hope is not the best strategy. 🐷



Leaving behind a wake of destruction. Courtesy of National Feral Pig Action Plan.

## Conservation update SSAA volunteers hard at work

By Ted Springs

The battle against Australia's feral species is ongoing, and SSAA volunteer conservationists continue to be hard at work. Pigs, cats, and many other pest species are making it hard, and they need to be controlled so that native species have a chance of survival.

Conservation work comes in many forms and is performed by many people, but one effort has been ongoing for many years just south of Emerald in a patch of brigalow and lancewood scrub – a preferred habitat of the endangered bridled nail-tail wallaby (BNT).

The land is managed by a variety of stakeholders and SSAA volunteers work with them to perform pest management and other duties.

On the property there is a predator-proof fence where captured pregnant BNTs are left to give them and their babies the best head start possible and where they are more likely to survive. The SSAA volunteers, in addition to pest management, have been helping with feeding and caring for the captive BNTs.

Feral cats and pigs are the leading problems, but feral dogs and other species also pose issues. The pigs

A bridled nail-tail wallaby waiting for food.

can usually be found by staking out a damn, but finding cats is a bit trickier. Trapping is commonly used for cats, but thermals are becoming more prevalent in ground-shooting and with good success.

A senior SSAA conservationist said that he finds this work particularly rewarding. "As long as we're making a difference, then I'm happy," he said.

It is estimated that since SSAA volunteers began working on this project, the BNTs have increased from about 200 pairs to approximately 1600 pairs. And while that is a great result, the fight against invasive species continues.

The work done by SSAA volunteers and other collaborators will no doubt require sustained commitment and adaption. Feral cats remain a significant, but steady problem, unlike wild pigs, which have exploded in numbers across Queensland and are rapidly becoming more of a concern. A range of tools will no doubt be used, with ground shooting among them, especially since modern technology, such as thermal scopes and infrared cameras, has improved shooting success, allowing camouflaged pests to be detected in the dark.

We are always grateful to our SSAA conservationists and their tireless work maintaining our ecosystem. 🐷



A blue tongue lizard is always a welcome sight.

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# A BASIC GUIDE TO DEER HUNTING IN AUSTRALIA

By Nick Rositano

Obtaining access to properties is one of the hardest things we as hunters face and it is one of the most important. Many farmers are reluctant to let anybody on to their land due to insurance reasons or if they've had bad experiences in the past. There are other reasons too, of course. If we are fortunate enough to score a property, it is usually after a lot of hard work and perseverance. One thing to always be mindful of is to treat every hunt on the property as a privilege not a right.

The wild deer in Australia vary between regions. One thing I can encourage all hunters to do is spend time on the block and work out areas where the most traffic is, such as game trails that lead from thick scrub to paddocks of feed. Make sure to keep track of these areas by waypoints, either with a GPS or apps that feature offline maps if you find yourself out of telephone coverage. Make a habit to check fences, as this is a good indicator that deer are crossing back and forth; this is generally their 'highway' to get where they want to go. Like humans, deer can become routine if not disturbed.

There are a few items which I cannot recommend enough to other fellow hunters, including trail cameras. They are excellent investments and when put out in high traffic areas, you will tend to gain a bit of an insight to the habits of the deer on a property, which can make your hunt more successful.



Red stag print in comparisons to size US11 boot. If you look closely, you'll notice the dew claw at the back of the hoof.

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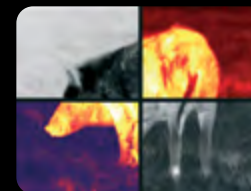


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There are a few different cycles for deer. Red deer and fallow deer follow roughly the same calendar as follows (please note this is a general guide; there could be exceptions).

**Fallow deer breeding season**

- Fallow deer will rut normally early April; this will usually last between two to three weeks (note that timing could vary in different areas, lasting maybe one to two weeks earlier or later).
- July/August - Bucks separate from does to form bachelor mobs.
- September/October - Bucks cast antlers.
- November/December - Bucks begin growing antlers in velvet.
- December - Fawns are generally born.
- February - Antler growth is normally complete, rubbing and scraping begin.

**Red deer breeding season**

- The red deer rut, or mating season, will normally begin sometime from late March through early to mid-April (note that timing could vary in different areas, lasting maybe one to two weeks earlier or later). This is the period when the red deer roar to show their dominance among other stags and to take their harem.

- The gestation period for red deer is about 233 days (eight to nine months); hinds typically give birth to a single calf, though sometimes two. This generally happens between late November early December.
- July/August - Stags separate from hinds to form bachelor mobs.
- September/October - Stags cast their antlers and growth begins almost immediately.
- Late January/February - Stag antler growth is complete, rubbing or stripping of velvet prior to the rutting period.
- Stags will then identify their home range by a series of rubs and scrapes.



'Cull' red stag taken. As you can see, he is missing his Bey Tines. I have seen another stag with similar genetics but unfortunately haven't had the opportunity to cull it.

Binoculars are one of the most important items to carry religiously while chasing deer. They give exceptional detail, especially at longer distances which our eyes cannot see. I think of binoculars as an investment, so I urge anybody, budget permitting, to spend the maximum they possibly can while sacrificing in other areas that are not as important. My go-to binoculars are a pair of Swarovski 10x42, which I have owned for the past five years. European glass is exceptional in lowlight conditions, especially at dawn and dusk.

Depending on which deer species you plan to hunt, I would recommend a .243 Win or larger while hunting fallow deer, and a .270 Win and above when hunting reds. Projectiles play a crucial role and must be taken into consideration to provide an ethical kill.

The rut would have to be without a doubt the most exciting time of the year for any trophy deer hunter. Hearing the mighty roar from a red stag gives instant shivers down the spine, and the beautiful sound of a fallow deer croaking is music to the ears! However, many of us know the stressors which surround us sometimes, from aerial culling to heavy hunting



Fallow deer 'tree bash' used to mark their scent and to strip their velvet.

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Red deer stag caught on a trail camera. Notice it is missing the left side of his antler, which could be due to an injury while in velvet.



pressure, making it difficult to land a once-in-a-lifetime trophy stag. Heavy hunting pressure can change deer’s habits, even turning them into nocturnal grazers, which has happened on a particular property I hunt on. The deer became elusive at dawn and dusk due to enormous amounts of hunting pressure.

Water and feed are massive contributors as to where deer will be. During the past couple of years, I have been fortunate to hunt a couple different properties where I found the deer rutted on one year but not the other. Stags will move through certain properties; you may find them on a particular property post rut but not during the rut. However, properties with low hunting pressure will increase the chances of the stags turning up during the rut. If hinds and does inhabit a particular property in the lead up to the rut, you can be confident something else will show up!

Deer can be eaten all year; however, there are times of the year when they will carry a high degree of fat and are the best eating, in my opinion. This is generally from October through to February (pre rut) when they are in their best condition. During the rut, fallow bucks become ‘ranky’; this is due to high levels of testosterone/hormones and the bucks urinating on themselves. During this time, red deer, especially stags, aren’t as malodorous as fallow deer and, in my opinion, taste better. Both fallow deer and red deer lose their condition during the rut, substantially.

Hopefully, armed with the right deer hunting basics, you’ll have a successful season that will see you fill your fridge, enjoying free-range venison in one of many ways, from schnitzels through to small goods such as salami or jerky and even be lucky enough to put a trophy on the wall! 🍷



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# SSAA Thuringowa

## A Townsville hidden gem

By Jennifer Martens

It seems the people of Townsville and its surrounds love their shooting sports, which is evidenced by the fact there are six nearby shooting clubs, two of which are SSAA Queensland Branches, that cater to the nearly 190,000 Townsville residents.

The Barringha Shooting Complex in Woodstock is one of SSAA Queensland’s state-owned properties and it is home to the SSAA Thuringowa Q68 Branch. The Branch has about 500 active members, with 30-40 juniors, about 130 women and more than 60 qualified Range Officers to keep all shoots safe and compliant. Craig Skinner has been the Branch President for the past five years. Member Paul Evans works at Hall’s Firearms, which is a major sponsor/supporter of SSAA Queensland and the Thuringowa Branch.

Q68 currently has four ranges that sit on 100 acres of Freehold Land. Adjacent is 100 acres of Leased land.

The Branch has future plans to put additional ranges on the Freehold block and conduct works on the leased property. Existing ranges include:

- Range 1 = 50m range for Practical Pistol/IPSC, Shotgun and Rifle.
- Range 2 = 50m range catering for rimfire, pistol and, if needed, centrefire shooting.
- Range 3 = 200m range for rifle shooting and for Rifle Silhouette, Lever Action and sighting in firearms. It can also be used at 100m for .22 shoots.
- Range 4 = Standard 50m and 100m pistol and rifle range, dedicated to pistol calibres.
- Around the back of Range 4 is a well-groomed and equipped shotgun range, which is suited for Down the Line and 5 Stand. The Branch is looking at also making it appropriate for Sporting Clays and Field Shotgun shooting in the near future.



The shooting range, which is used for Down the Line and 5 Stand.



One of the two amenities blocks on the range.

The Branch, which has been a respite for shooters for at least 35 years, attempts to hold one major event per year, with this year’s being the two-day Accurate Target Gear NQ Tropical Clash – a Spectrum Rifle .22 Open Event from July 4-6, sponsored by Accurate Target Gear. In addition to that, regular club shoots take place weekly. One event that is extremely popular is the Young Guns Shoot, which is, as the name suggests, for juniors and newcomers. For this event, the Branch pays for all of the ammunition and, if needed, supplies firearms for juniors free of charge and for adults for a small donation. Juniors can



compete in pistol, rifle and shotgun shoots. It draws anywhere up to 20 juniors and their families and is a very social and popular gathering.

From Townsville, it takes about 40 minutes to get to the range. When close, you are welcomed by beautiful hills in the Bowling Green Bay National Park that form the perfect backdrop to the range. The range is completely off-grid, with solar panels running 12v batteries to run lights for evening shoots and keep the two toilet/shower blocks working.

The Branch owns a large tractor, pulling a commercial-grade mower, to keep the range looking its best and reduce hiding places for snakes. And the site features an outdoor kitchen and numerous storage containers to house the Branch’s property. There are three camping areas, which can host about 70 shooters and their families.

Thuringowa opens its firing lines to a number of different groups throughout the year, including Army squads and RSL shooters, juniors and veteran groups. In 2024, it was the site for a Company 6th Battalion Association Reunion Club Shoot, members of which feature in the Australian Vietnam War song ‘I Was Only 19’ by Redgum (2006). Veterans came from as far as the USA and the United Kingdom to take part in the reunion. The event was a huge success, and the battalion presented Q68 with a memorial plaque, which the Branch hopes to feature in a new clubhouse one day. It was a very special and emotional day for all who attended.

Despite the regular crack of firearms at the range, Thuringowa’s atmosphere, including the beautiful backdrop, lush vegetation and the resident kangaroos who frequently bounce across the range, is relaxing, welcoming and ‘home’ to its passionate members. For more information, email [thuringowa@ssaaqld.org.au](mailto:thuringowa@ssaaqld.org.au) or phone 0416 203 621. ☺



Thuringowa hosted a reunion of the Vietnam veterans of the Sixth Battalion.



# Townsville's ladies 'COME AND TRY' SHOOTING HITS THE TARGET



By Jennifer Martens

The shotgun stations proved the most challenging on the day, which made hit clays all the more reason for celebrations.



Melissa Crawford, who attended the event with her mother, trying her hand at a pistol shoot.

Girls just want to have fun'... and that's just what about 50 women and girls did in May at the SSAA Hervey Range Shooting Complex, hosted by SSAA Townsville Q22 branch. The branch's 'Women and Girls in Sport Come & Try Day' marked the largest female-focused event in its history.

The shoot, initially planned for March, was rescheduled due to flooding rain. The schedule change may have reduced predicted numbers slightly, but it didn't prevent those in attendance from trying their hand at .22 rimfire rifles and pistols and 12-gauge shotguns and thoroughly enjoying

and challenging themselves. The fact that it was Mother's Day saw numerous mother-daughter duos create treasured memories sure to last a lifetime.

By all accounts, and the many smiles and high-fives witnessed across the range, the day was a success, with SSAA Townsville President Jamie Mayne expressing his satisfaction, saying, "The purpose of the event was to introduce women and girls to our sport because they are the demographic that we normally miss for a lot of reasons...so being able to have them out here just with the girls, there is no pressure... they can just come out and enjoy the day."

The success of the event is proof that when you create the right environment, people are curious and excited to learn.

The nearly 20 volunteers on hand ensured the participants enjoyed their taste of the sport in a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment. Females of all ages (as young as 11) had the opportunity to try a variety of firearms and disciplines under the guidance of qualified Range Officers and experienced club members.

The shoot kicked off with the blast of a canon, setting the scene for an action-packed day and bolstering the shooters' excitement.

Mel Olsen attended the event on her own, saying, "My Uncle Max used to shoot here. While at his funeral, I was invited to the shoot. I'd actually like to join...I'm doing a bit of a scout." In fact, she is hoping her entire family will want to join the club along with her.

Amanda Drilling heard about the shoot from a family friend and SSAA Townsville member. As a veterinarian, she was looking at adding darting to her skillset and thought the Come and Try event would help her improve her accuracy. Knocking down all five targets at the pistol range on her first go certainly gave her confidence a boost.

Three of the youngest shooters who attended the event included 17-year-old Emily McInerney, 13-year-old Jessica Stephens and 11-year-old Indie Burling. Emily shoots regularly at the range and is planning on getting her firearms licence when she turns 18; Jessica had never shot a firearm before, while Indie had experience shooting air rifles with her dad, who is a SSAA Townsville member. All three girls said they had a great time, with Jessica adding, "I was very nervous at first, but I thoroughly enjoyed it!"

Maree Bonell and daughter Darcy thought trying something completely new on Mother's Day would be fun. Darcy, who had never held a firearm, hit a clay target under the watchful eye of SSAA Townsville Vice President Michael Norris. After the event, both mother

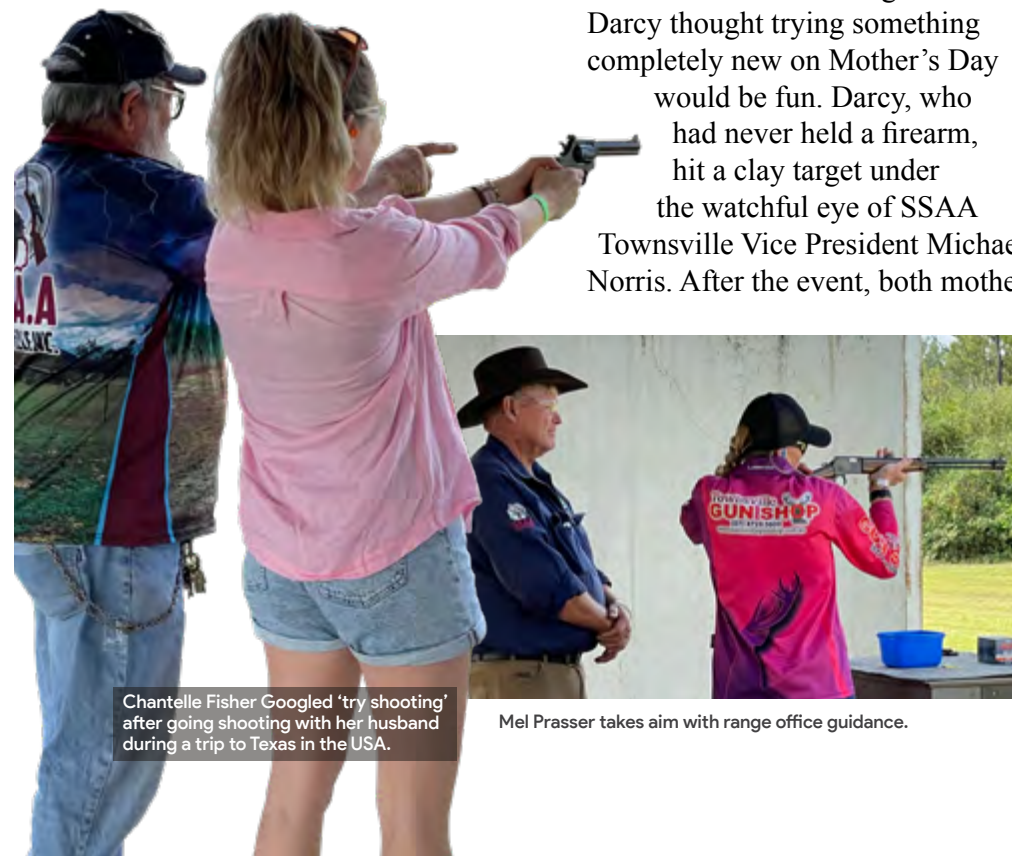
*"I was very nervous at first, but I thoroughly enjoyed it!"*

and daughter, along with family friend Linda Winning, said they wanted to come back, with Darcy even expressing interest in entering an upcoming shotgun competition.

Michael, who ran one of the two shotgun stations, said, "I found introducing the women and girls to Sporting Clays very rewarding. To see them initially timid with a shotgun only to be completely overcome with joy, forgetting there was any recoil, when a clay exploded was priceless. Some participants have indicated they will be back, and I look forward to seeing them again."

Of the many attendees, there was a mix of those who had never held a firearm before, those who had tried the sport in years past and those who were partners of current SSAA members.

The branch advertised the event via Facebook, flyers hung at gun shops and advertisements placed on 4TTT radio, selling out tickets in just three weeks.



Chantelle Fisher Googled 'try shooting' after going shooting with her husband during a trip to Texas in the USA.

Mel Prasser takes aim with range office guidance.



Mel Olsen attended the event for 'reconnaissance' purposes, as she was thinking about joining the club.





Emily McInerney and mum Cheryl celebrate Mother's Day at the range.

Debbie Breen is known to her friends for being outgoing and eager to try “lots of different things”. So, when she heard about the Women's and Girls Come and Try event, she was ‘all in’. She invited friends Kat Martin and Alina Fogarty to join her. The trio had a great time and were often seen filming each other's shots, overcoming their nerves and congratulating their successes. Debbie said she enjoyed shotgun the best, mainly because she hit a clay target! Kat was impressed by the range officers, saying they were “super informative and

welcoming”. She also thought their directions were “very easy to follow”, which is an important issue when nerves are involved. Alina had only praise for them, adding, “All the instructors have been very patient and encouraging and they were very professional regarding safety.”

All participants received safety briefings, personalised coaching, and the chance to try different shooting disciplines. After the shooting was done, lunch was served in the clubhouse, giving the attendees a chance to share their experiences.

## TOWNSVILLE'S LADIES 'COME AND TRY' SHOOTING HITS THE TARGET

Organisers said the strong turnout reflected growing interest among women in recreational shooting, hunting, and competition-level marksmanship.

“Overall, I believe this was a successful event and achieved what the branch set out to accomplish – attracting ladies to our game,” said Michael.

The event was part of a broader push by SSAA Queensland and shooting clubs around the state to grow female participation in the shooting sports. It was made possible in part due to a substantial grant from the Queensland Government via its Active Women and Girls Program.

Thanks must also be given to SSAA Townsville's volunteers,

who shared their Mother's Day to ensure these women had positive experiences with the shooting sports.

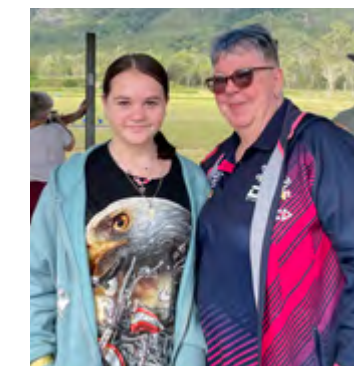
SSAA Townsville plans to host more women-focused events in the future and encourages anyone interested to reach out through the club's website or social media channels: [ssaatownsville.org.au](http://ssaatownsville.org.au) or [@ssaaTownsville](https://www.instagram.com/ssaaTownsville)



MJ Lenton, Mia Rubio, Jaz Gourley and Cassie Holland – just a few of the gals having fun on the day.



Kat Martin, Alina Fogarty and Debbie Breen – a trio keen to try something new.



Jessica Stephens with grandmother, Kathy. Jessica started out very nervous but left all smiles.



Linda Winning with friend Maree Bonell and daughter Darcy, who enjoyed her success at the shotgun stage so much, she planned to attend an upcoming competition.

## Ipswich City Pistol Club launches new website

By Sam Talbot



The Ipswich City Pistol Club (ICPC) has launched its new and rejuvenated website, and it's already turning heads. With a sleek new design and a layout that's easy to navigate, the site is built to welcome both new and experienced shooters looking to get involved in the sport.

SSAA Queensland's indoor 9-lane, 20 metre pistol range is a vibrant and inclusive club with a strong focus on safety and skill development. Whether you're a seasoned competitor or a beginner, the club offers support, training and competitions in a friendly environment.

The new website makes it easier than ever for shooters to get involved. Forms are available online to begin the licensing process and enrol in safety courses.

With hundreds of visitors per day and quickly increasing, the new site is proving how interest in the shooting sports is growing. It's a great sign for the future of the sport and a reflection of the club's reputation in the community.

Have a look for yourself, head to [icpc.ssaqld.org.au](http://icpc.ssaqld.org.au) now, and while you're there check out the gallery or maybe book yourself in for a shot at a competitive price.

### Offer for unlicensed shooters:

Packages for unlicensed shooters to try shooting start at \$45 with rimfire, centrefire revolver and semi-autos on offer, but bookings are essential. In addition to that, newcomers will need photo ID, enclosed footwear and sensible clothing. All other details are available at [icpc.ssaqld.org.au](http://icpc.ssaqld.org.au).



Come and have a shot at ICPC!

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# Big bangs, big smiles

## at Mackay Family Open Day



The flyer that was sent to local community organisations including the RSL and various Facebook pages.

Cannon at Mackay family open day - How the day got started - with a bang!

It's fair to say SSAA Mackay pulled out all the stops for its annual Family Open Day, and the only thing louder than the cannon blast used to mark the beginning of the event was the response from the local community.

Held at the Brightly Shooting Complex, this year's event saw a record turnout with over 250 people signing in and at least 235 completing a Form 33, meaning they got hands-on with a firearm under careful supervision.

"We still had people turning up at 2pm," said branch secretary Jim Snee, who helped coordinate and run the open day along with the club's committee and shoot captains. The event had originally been scheduled for March but was postponed due to severe weather and flooding in the region.

Of course, a big open day deserves a big opening, and in Mackay, that came courtesy of a 57mm black powder cannon, the firing of which officially marked the start of the day.

Open Days at Mackay have been a tradition since 2015, originally run as 'Youth Development Days' focused solely on under-18s. But after a few years, it became clear that parents were just as eager to try their hand at the sport. Since then, the event has been opened to all ages and become a highlight on the club's calendar.

With support from countless volunteers, guests had the opportunity to sample a range of shooting disciplines, in the form of simplified versions of the branch's regular events. This included:

- A pistol shoot based on I-Core using .22LR revolvers
- ISSF-style centrefire pistol shooting with semi-autos
- A shotgun shoot using both .410 and 12-gauge
- Lever-action and bolt-action rifle shoots
- Indoor air rifle and air pistol ranges.

All up, attendees fired off at least 8,000 rounds of .22LR and a hefty supply of shotgun shells – and that was a conservative estimate.

In addition to the shooting, even more parts of the community were involved, with sponsors like Barcam Electrical and Mackay Gunshop helping out, as well as the local Pioneer Valley Men's Shed stepping in to run the BBQ.

"The majority of attendees were either first-timers or people who hadn't shot in some time," Jim said. "We always hope to translate that interest into new members, and in the past, around 10 per cent of attendees have come back and joined the club."

If this year's turnout is anything to go by, the Mackay Branch is hitting the mark in its community outreach. And with so many happy first-timers walking away with stories - and maybe future SSAA memberships - it's safe to say the day was a booming success. 🎯

SSAA Qld Brightly Mackay Complex 7.



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# Hawke Frontier 30 FFP 5-25

## Take your shot with confidence

By Neil Schultz

Hawke Optics have a long-standing reputation for producing premium-quality rifle scopes most popular with serious air rifle enthusiasts in the UK and USA. Their scopes are not, however, limited to the air-gunner market and include a comprehensive selection of top shelf units designed for centrefire rifles. At the upper end of that selection is their Frontier range.

Tested for *The Report* was the Frontier 30 FFP 5-25x56 SF model.

As the model designation suggests, the 5-25 is built around a 30mm mono-tube chassis tapering out to house a large 56mm diameter objective lens. The ocular lens is 38mm in diameter and allows 100mm of eye relief, ideal for those heavy recoiling magnum rifles. Base magnification of 5x gives a wide enough field of view for running shots at close quarters in the bush. Zoomed out to 25x allows pinpoint aiming at both small targets and those way off in the distance.

First Focal Plane scopes are popular and practical for hunting applications, as the reticle-to-image ratio remains constant throughout the entire magnification range. This allows the reticle to be used for range estimation as well as accurate hold-over for long shots. The Frontier 30 FFP sports a Mil Pro reticle, with hash marks etched every 1/2 Mil, numbered every 2. Hash marks allow 10 Mil hold over via the reticle. The turrets allow for a maximum of 19 Mil elevation to be dialled in. That is enough for even the least efficient long-range cartridge. Zero stop turrets are prerequisite for long-range shooters, with those on the Frontier giving 1/4 Mil adjustment per click. The clicks are audible and positive to the feel when dialling in either



Wound up to 25x magnification after scanning a distant herd of deer, ready for a shot on an older animal.

elevation or windage on the fly. Illumination of the reticle is via a dial on the left of the scope, with six brightness levels in red and an off position between each setting; a very user-friendly set up.

Parallax adjustment is via a side wheel and functions perfectly, eliminating parallax error completely while focusing the image crisply at distances from 14 metres to the horizon. Image clarity is superb throughout the zoom range with no noticeable aberration around the edges. That generous 56mm objective lens gathers every last lux of available light during the magical dawn and dusk hunting hours, allowing hunters to shoot right up until last light. The lenses are manufactured from low dispersion Crown glass and multi-coated with 21 layers to provide that excellent light transmission and image clarity.

The 5-25 Frontier measures 365mm overall and adds just 698 grams to the weight of the rifle. I carried my .26-06 Improved rifle around the New England ranges on a recent deer hunt and found the 5-25 Frontier unobtrusive despite its large front lens and high magnification capabilities. In practice the scope was easily zeroed. Measuring the point of impact with the reticle and counting the clicks to adjust proved quite accurate. The large powder charge of the .25-06AI pushes the rifle back somewhat but even after

several dozen rounds downrange and, in the mountains, the scope held zero perfectly. Selecting a cull buck from a group of fallow deer ambling through the scrub was enabled due to the crisp, bright image of the Frontier 30 FFP. Knowledge that the point of impact was going to be spot on allowed the shot to be taken with confidence. If you are a hunter looking for a scope that stands out from the herd, this is a very worthy candidate. Long-range target shooting is the Frontier 30 FFP's forte, a task at which it excels. ☺

This old battle-scarred cull buck was easily identified at long range due to the clarity of the glass of the Hawke Frontier 30 FFP.



The Hawke Frontier 30 FFP 5-25 in its natural habitat, showing the large objective lens and the well-marked elevation turret.

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- ✓ SSAA Queensland represents the interests of firearms owners, shooters and hunters.
- ✓ Keep in touch with the latest Australian shooting news and industry developments through the monthly *The Report* magazine and our updated website: [ssaaqld.org.au](http://ssaaqld.org.au)
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# HALL'S FIREARMS

Supplying NQ shooters for more than 60 years

By Jennifer Martens

Sitting pride of place on Charters Tower Road in Townsville is the well-known and loved Hall's Firearms, Australia's largest regional gun shop and an institution going back 60 years. When driving past, it would be impolite if you didn't stop in to say hi and check out its latest offerings.

The shop first opened as Hall's Firearms in the early 1970s

Part of the welcome committee at Hall's Firearms.

by the Halls family. It was purchased by the current owners in 2006. Sister stores can be found in Rockhampton (Hall's Rockhampton) and Melbourne (O'Reilly's Firearms).

Inside the Townsville shop is a full range of firearms, ammunition, cleaning supplies, knives and sharpening tools, gun bags and safes, clothing and accessories and, new entrants on the shelves, Pilla shooting glasses and Sanlida Archery gear. If you don't see what you want or need instore, just ask. Hall's is connected to all of Australia's major suppliers, with Store Manager Paul Evans attending Nioa's major trade event this past May to get a rundown on the latest offerings. Paul told *The Report* that customers should keep

an eye out for the Springfield 9mm Double Stack Optic Ready Prodigy and the Springfield Operator 1911 Optic, which will be in store soon, as well as Barrett Rifles, one of which is currently on display in the shop.

Hall's knowledgeable team of 10 pride themselves on providing top-notch customer service. Paul said, "If you ask us to do something, we will do it; we won't stop until customers have what they need." While the entire team knows its stuff, Hall's ensures it employs people who are active in clubs and specific disciplines, meaning they are proficient in areas such as pistol shooting, shotgunning, centrefires and more. Hall's Firearms specialise in bulk ammunition, catering to farmers and contractors, and best sellers include its large range of firearms.

Hall's is active in the shooting community, sponsoring shotgunners, female and handicapped shooters and national shooting events. It is also quite involved with the SSAA Thuringowa Branch, of which Paul is Vice President.

The shop offers customers instore benefits such as a resident gunsmith and special guest speakers. In May, it invited Kaytie and Dan Hardy

from Hardy Firearms NZ to the store, allowing customers to come and "bend their ears". Soon Hall's will be featuring Hik Micro Thermal demos in store.

Whatever your shooting, hunting or outdoor needs might be and you're in North Queensland, make Hall's Firearms your first – and last – stop. Remember, the staff won't quit until you get what you need. ☺



No shortage of ammunition at Hall's. In fact, they specialise in bulk purchases.



## BOOK REVIEW

Review by Ted Springs



Self-portrait: The illustrator of the book, Mel, who appears in one of the hunter profiles.

### Hunter in Training...

a kids introduction to conservation through hunting in Australia

By Daniel Kuhl and Mel Gray  
ISBN: 978-0-646-89171-2  
RRP: \$29.95 AUD  
Available at: [eurekatactical.com](http://eurekatactical.com)

This activity book is a first step for introducing younger Australians to the basics of conservation in this country. Beginning with invasive species, the workbook also covers firearm basics and hunting generally.

To help get their point across and keep the youngsters entertained, there are activities littered throughout the 40 pages, ranging from simple colouring and matching, to more complex questions of hunting and conservation philosophy.

The 'Why We Hunt' section is a highlight, featuring several

real hunting and conservation personalities with their reasons for hunting. These profiles are complete with charming artwork, which is also featured throughout the rest of the book. The layout is generously spaced, leaving lots of room for creative doodles as well.

While the content leans more introductory than instructional, it provides a gentle entry point for families interested in discussing the role of hunting in environmental management. Its mix of activities and information offers enough variety to hold the attention of young readers and start broader conversations around nature, ethics and responsible firearm use. ☺



If driving past, be sure to support a business that supports your chosen pastime.



Pilla shooting glasses are new to Hall's offerings and already a hit.

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# CAREER PATHS FOR JUNIORS

Where will your passion for shooting lead you?

By Samantha Warren

Choosing a career path is often a stressful endeavour for students in high school. Pressure to commit starts as early as year nine, with students told to select sciences and mathematics courses or an art's pathway to ensure doors remain open to certain university or trade school options.

Not everyone will be a doctor, lawyer, teacher or tradie, so what are options for kids who enjoy the outdoors and the shooting sports? What less-traditional jobs are out there? And what can we, as parents, do to help?

Direct your kids to jobs that align with their interests. And, as sporting shooters, we should talk to them about jobs that support the philosophies of our chosen pastime, including roles that include love of the outdoors, conservation, hunting and competition. After all, as the saying goes, do what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life.

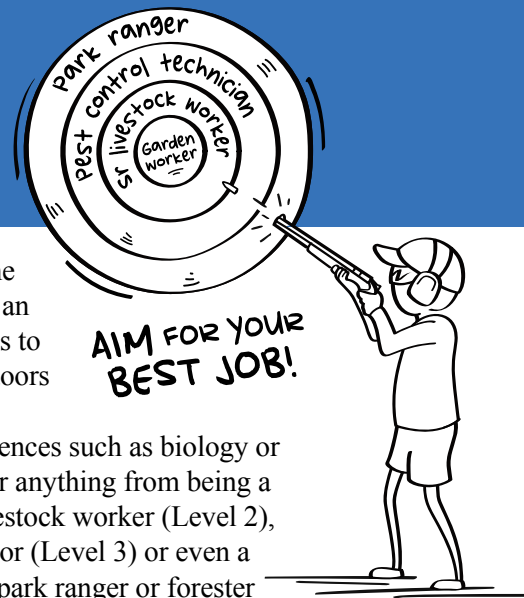
The days of staying in one job or career for a lifetime are gone. Several changes in jobs and even careers are the new normal.

Helping our youth understand what they choose after year 12 is not set in stone is important, as is helping them understand their career paths should be guided by their passions...not just by their school counsellors.

The Australian Government has various resources to help students navigate this area, including one with options most people are not aware of. Its website, [myfuture.edu.au](http://myfuture.edu.au), allows students to choose an area of interest, and then 'aim' for a job in a 'Career bullseye'. Potential careers in the 'target' range from levels one to four, with one requiring skills equivalent to

finishing year 10 and four requiring the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. It's an enjoyable exercise for parents and kids to do together and one that might open doors to new career paths and lifestyles.

Junior shooters who are adept in sciences such as biology or environmental sciences could consider anything from being a farm worker (Level 1), forestry or livestock worker (Level 2), a Primary Products Assurance Inspector (Level 3) or even a veterinarian, environmental scientist, park ranger or forester (Level 4). There are options that most students probably don't know much about. And there are many more that include the arts, economics, international studies, health and trades. 🎯



## As a sporting shooter, almost any career could be aligned with SSAA Queensland's goals and philosophies. Consider:

- **Art** – Use your creative streak to bring the shooting sports or hunting to light, like artist and sporting shooter Pro Hart did (Google 'Pro Hart sporting shooter' to see some examples).
- **Biodiversity** – Australia is home to nearly 700,000 native species and SSAA Queensland is keen to enjoy and protect them all.
- **Communications/journalism** – If you are a wordsmith, use that talent to help inform the public about the benefits of the shooting sports and hunting. And consider writing an article for this magazine (email: [news@ssaaqld.org.au](mailto:news@ssaaqld.org.au) with an idea).
- **Criminology/law** – Sporting shooters are some of our country's most law-abiding citizens; put a law degree to work to reinforce that and help keep firearms off the black market or promote animal care and protection laws.
- **Ecology** – Assist shooters to better co-exist with and manage the environment.
- **Game management** – Support wildlife protection and healthy populations.
- **Park and land management** – Work in the outdoors while you ensure it is fit for purpose for all outdoor activities and groups.
- **Physiology or psychology** – Tailor your career to assist shooters finetune either physical or mental capabilities.
- **Publishing** – Increase the prevalence of accurate and informative shooting publications.
- **Sport management** – Create pathways for sporting shooters who aspire to be elite competitors.
- **Statistics** – Research and collate correct facts and figures about firearms.
- **Veterinary science** – Care for and teach others regarding animal health.

As a young sporting shooter, consider using your passions to lead you to a career where you can help our sport grow, improve public perceptions and positively influence lawmakers. To secure the future of our sport shooting, we need supporters in all walks of life. *Where will your passion for shooting lead you?*

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# DIY SHOOTING STICKS

*A recipe for hunting success*

## A QUICK & CHEAP DIY PROJECT

### TO IMPROVE YOUR SHOTS IN THE FIELD

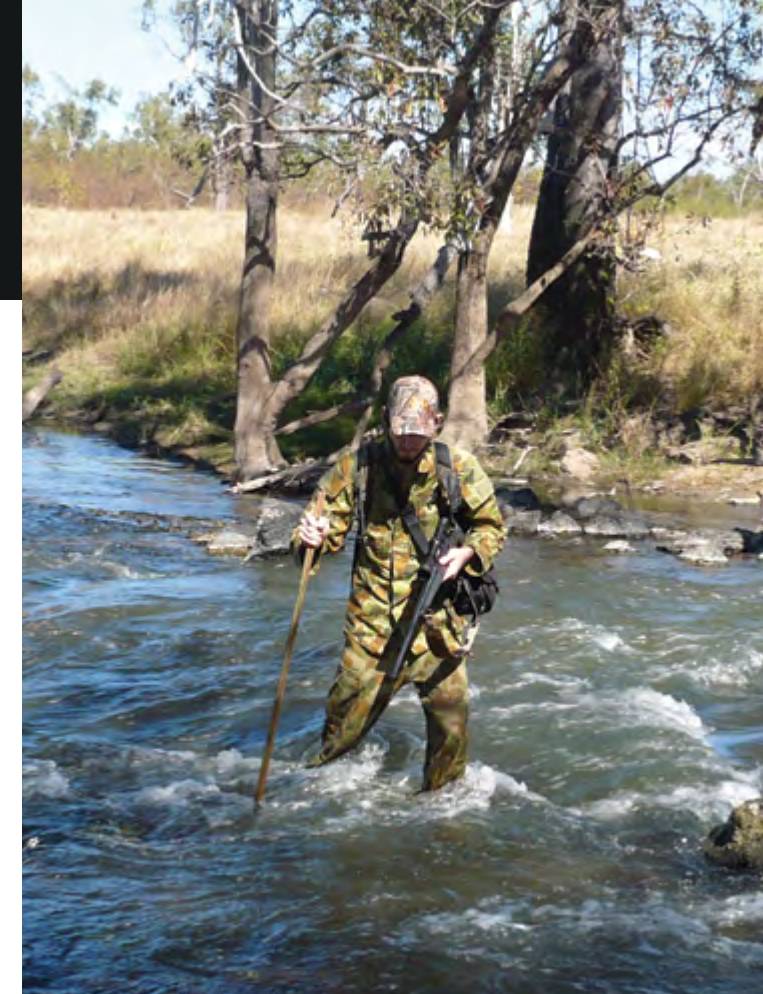
*By Brendan Jones*

A quick Google will reveal a lot of information and advice on how to make a wide gamut of 'shooting sticks'. From simple, bipod style, right through to large standing safari sticks with fold-out rear rests. They range in complexity, material cost, time and effort to both build and carry around in the bush. Your hunting style and personal preference will dictate what would be best for you.

Regardless of which style you make, they will be significantly cheaper than commercially available shooting rests. While DIY options don't take the place of those, they can be a good stop gap while you save up. Additionally, they can work as a 'try before you buy' to determine what size and style of support you want or need to help inform your purchasing decisions.

Considering that, here is a 'recipe' for a simple set of tripod sticks. They have served this author well and were used to bag his first boar and chital deer, among others. While they might not be as Instagram worthy as a hog saddle on a carbon fiber tripod, they still hold a place among his collection of purchased shooting rests. When deployed, they provide a support for sitting, kneeling and high kneeling, and can even be used as a monopod of sorts in a stooped standing position or seated on something raised like a log.

Additional to shooting stability, they are handy when wading a stream, holding up speakers for game calling and flicking away snakes. Being that they are almost incomparably cheap relative to some commercial options, they won't make you weep when you inadvertently leave them lying somewhere in the bush, forgotten after a successful hunt's photo and butchery session.



Author using the DIY shooting sticks to aid in crossing a fast-flowing creek.



The author with his first ever pig. This nice toothy Basalt region boar was taken at about 100m from a kneeling position using the DIY shooting sticks.

Kneeling with the sticks, and additional elbow support from a knee, can provide a surprising amount of stability for three bits of dowel, some string and an innertube.



## SHOOTING STICKS RECIPE

Serves: One 190cm shooter

Cost per serve: \$15-\$20

Time to prepare: 5 to 15min

## INGREDIENTS:

- 3 dowels: 12.5mm diameter, 1.2m long (choose Tassie oak, grandis, etc - not flimsy pine)
- 20cm of para/hootchie/venetian blind cord
- An old, flat bicycle innertube (can substitute for new if fresh out of punctured)



A few basic 'ingredients' required for this simple project: three dowels, some cordage and an innertube.

## DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Bunch dowels together and lash 15-20cm from one end with a constrictor knot, or any suitable knot you know (or can make up). Repeat this step if 'stiffer to open' sticks are preferred.
- 2 Trim excess cord and melt ends with a lighter.
- 3 Cut with scissors across the innertube to make a pair of fat rubber bands, double over and position above and below cord lashing point.
- 4 Cut across innertube to create a section about 50mm wide and slide over to cover up cord and previous innertube bands.

**If shorter in stature:**

- 5 With sticks bundled, use a saw to trim off length from the bottom end of the sticks. Trim incrementally, testing between each cut to find your optimal length.

**Optional:**

- 6 Trim one of the dowels 5mm above the hinge point so there is a "V" rest instead of three.
- 7 Use the dregs of some spray paint tins with leaves and grass from the garden to spray a camo pattern that will fool even the most discerning ungulate's eye.
- 8 Use some elastic and Velcro to create a fastener to hold sticks together when not in use. 🌀



## QUEENSLAND ARMS FAIRS FULL SWING IN 2025!

By Neil Schultz

Antique handguns and long arms available for the keen collector.



Need a replica for the man-cave or RSL? They've got those, too.



Plenty of historical equipment and arms on display.



An Australian SAS vehicle on display (no you can't buy it) beside a rack of surplus uniforms for sale.

**Queensland Arms and Collectible Fairs are in full swing again in 2025, keeping the tradition alive and well. These fairs provide a market-style experience for firearms and militaria enthusiasts and everyday mum and dad firearms owners.**

The 2025 calendar of events included seven fairs distributed across four locations in southern Queensland. Venues in order of schedule are Beenleigh Distillery Road Market, Maryborough Showgrounds, Toowoomba Showgrounds and Gympie Showgrounds. Each of those venues, with the exception of Gympie, host two events during the year.

First cab off the rank this year was Beenleigh, conveniently located for visitors from the Gold Coast, Brisbane city, Ipswich and Lockyer districts. This was an impressive event, with 200 tables filled with eye-catching items.

There were also static displays of historic military equipment and vehicles that drew the attention of curious visitors, young and old.

The Queensland Arms Fairs are not just about firearms. They cater for collectibles and antiques (not just firearms related) as well as modern equipment and firearms. What I found most impressive was the extensive selection of *genuine* army surplus clothing and kit on sale. Uniforms of all three Australian services, including our famed and instantly recognisable slouch hats, could be had for very reasonable prices. International armed forces gear was also available, and I spotted helmets of at least a dozen European nations up for sale.

Modern firearms from individual sellers were in good supply at bargain prices. Wandering around the fair continued to yield interesting and sometimes unexpected treasures. Replica firearms, including some stunning military models, were a source

of great fascination to visitors. Antique pistols and swords along with genuine vintage pickelhaube helmets could be had if your budget allowed for those valued items. In the modern selections there was an extensive range of reloading dies, brass cases and ammunition for hard-to-find cartridges. I haven't seen so much .303/25 ammunition on display since it was being manufactured in Australia in the 1970s.

There were tables stacked with old homewares, kerosine lamps, number plates, tin signs, boots, webbing, rucksacks, even a cool selection of novelty MAGA gear that was quite popular. If you are in the market for any army surplus kit, rare reloading supplies or just a bargain hunter in general, the Queensland Arms Fairs are the place to be. Do yourself a favour and head along to one of the upcoming events.

[queenslandarmsfair.com](http://queenslandarmsfair.com) 🌀



# HUNTING AT HOME

## Doing our part in the backyard *By Ken Payne*



A homemade birdfeeder designed to keep the Indian myna bird away.

*“Mynas were listed among 100 of the world’s worst invasive species by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 2000.”*

Even when we are confined to our yards waiting on our next hunting trip, we can still help the environment by removing unwanted pests. I have always loved having a variety of birds visiting our backyard and to help them along I put together a bird bath using a flowerpot base sitting in an old barbeque. I also made a seed feeder, which I upgraded by including a mesh cover, to give smaller birds a chance before being chased away by the larger birds.

After a time, among the many birds we attracted, I started to see Indian myna birds move in and start chasing away the native birds. They also had a habit of eating our dog’s food and messing up our patio furniture.

Ipswich City council recently held a pest information session on Indian mynas delivered by a biodiversity speaker. The audience of about 15 were surprised at the way these birds take over. He stated Indian mynas can have up to five clutches of four chicks a year and, as they are in a flock, take over our native bird nesting logs and chase them away, restricting their breeding. In comparison, native rosellas will lay four or five eggs, and they’ll only raise two or three chicks a year. Mynas were listed among 100 of the world’s worst invasive species by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 2000.



Splish, splash just taking a bath...



The Noisy Miner is native to southern and southeastern Australia.

Indian myna is a pest and should be removed.

Indian mynas also move along the ground devouring beetles and insects as they emerge from the mulch. The lecturer asked the audience when we had last seen a Christmas beetle. None of us put up our hand. He further stated kookaburras get about one in four insects as they emerge, but the mynas move along in formation and get the lot. They will also attack the nests and eat the young of finches, wrens and other small birds straight out of the nest. Have you noticed a reduction of these small birds around your garden?

The Indian myna has the potential to spread avian malaria and damage fruit, vegetable and cereal crops. It builds large, noisy, communal roosts in suburban areas, including roof cavities and can cause dermatitis, allergies and asthma in humans.

About two years ago a friend lent me his Indian myna cage trap. Since then, I have removed about 30 birds. I also started using my cat trap that I take on hunting trips and have removed six in the past four weeks. Mynas are very smart birds and quickly learn what is dangerous to them so I can only remove them from the cage at night when the other birds cannot see.

One of my hunting mates from west of Toowoomba has removed many hundreds of mynas and his neighbour has removed more than 1000.

If you’d like to help remove these pests, there are many online YouTube videos and plans on building traps. Simply type in ‘How to make an Indian myna trap’ to get started.

In Gladstone and Bundaberg, Queensland, residents can earn a bounty for successfully trapping and handing in Indian myna birds. The bounty is \$5 per bird, provided it is alive and in good condition. These bounties are offered as part of local councils’ efforts to control the invasive species, which pose a threat to local native wildlife.

Note, the Indian myna should not be confused with the slightly smaller, grey Noisy Miner, which is a native species found in eastern and southeastern Australia. 🌐



Attracting native birds to the home brings music to your ears.

### YOUR GENUINE REASON

Membership of SSAA Queensland satisfies the Queensland State Government’s requirement to have proof of ‘genuine need’ to have a firearm’s licence.

It’s as simple as that.

And we can also help you with your approved safety course.

### JOIN NOW

📞 07 3492 9237 🌐 [www.ssaaqld.org.au](http://www.ssaaqld.org.au) 📧 [enquiry@ssaaqld.org.au](mailto:enquiry@ssaaqld.org.au)





When everyone obeys the rules, a great day is sure to follow.



# RULES FOR THE RANGE

## SAFETY FIRST

Compared to many other sports, competitive shooting is very safe. This is largely due to people observing the rules and prioritising safety. Rules on the range keep everyone safe and the first rule you should know is that the range officer on site (RO) oversees everyone, and his/her commands must be obeyed immediately. Ignoring an RO is a surefire way to be dismissed from a range.

The below are generalised range rules found in various forms at shooting clubs, but your club may have additional rules. These rules are called 'Standing Orders' and 'Range Rules' and you must familiarise yourself with them before attending the range. Even though the RO is in charge, safety is everyone's responsibility. Familiarise yourself with these rules and encourage others to do so as well.



When a range gets this busy, rules are everything.

## GENERAL RANGE RULES

- 1 An RO must be present during all shooting times and be clearly visible to all shooters.
- 2 Firearms must not be loaded unless you are on the firing line and the RO has given the go ahead.
- 3 If your firearm is not in a bag or case, carry it with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction with the action open, removing the bolt and magazine, if possible.
- 4 To carry your firearm from the car to the firing line, it must be in a bag or carry case.
- 5 Firearms with actions that do not remain open must be held open with an empty chamber indicator (ECI), so it is clear to all that the firearm is unloaded.
- 6 Dangerous activities or actions should be reported to the RO immediately.
- 7 Cleaning, adjusting or simply examining a firearm should be done at the firing line or in a safe, designated area. Do not handle your firearm behind the firing line.
- 8 Approach the firing line only when the RO issues the command.
- 9 Only handle your firearm when permitted by the RO.
- 10 When the RO gives the command 'cease fire', you must immediately stop shooting and take your finger off the trigger and wait for further commands.
- 11 When you hear the command 'Unload and show clear', you must open your action, put your firearm on the bench, with the muzzle pointing downrange, and stand behind the firing line.
- 12 Do not go downrange until the RO has cleared all firearms and gives the appropriate command.
- 13 Never handle a firearm when people are downrange.
- 14 Warning flags must be flying before shooting can begin.
- 15 Do not try to clear a stuck live round. Advise the RO of the issue. The firearm should be made safe and removed from the range. The firearm should be taken to a qualified gunsmith for safe removal of the round. (Refer to the SSAA Mandatory Stuck Live Round rule.)
- 16 Safety glasses and ear protection should be worn when shooting.
- 17 Drugs or alcohol are not permitted prior to or during shooting.
- 18 Only SSAA-approved targets can be used (never shoot at any flora or fauna on the range).

A great day out at the range starts by following the rules so make sure you obey the Standing Orders as posted at your range. ☺

## POLITICS IN FOCUS

# MINISTER SAYS TRUST IS A MUST

By David Henty



Dan Purdie, Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Open communication and trust between the Queensland Police Service and the firearms community have been highlighted as a priority by new Police Minister Dan Purdie.

The Minister met with SSAA Queensland's General Manager Bob Green and Executive Director Tim Bannister to discuss various issues affecting licensed shooters, including administrative overreach in recreation/hunting licence renewals, misinterpretation of power factor and large calibre limitations particularly in relation to permits to acquire, SSAA range approval renewals, firearms storage requirements and the recently launched, poorly named Operation Whiskey Firestorm.

Various members of his senior staff attended in addition to a senior advisor to Premier Crisafulli.

"I will look forward to working constructively with the SSAA and meeting many of you over the exciting year ahead!" Minister Purdie said.

It was a positive meeting and General Manager Bob Green said he would continue to convey member's concerns to both Queensland Weapons Licensing Group and the Minister. We invited the Minister to issue a statement to the membership, which we posted below.

### From Dan Purdie, Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

*As a former frontline police officer with an appreciation for the utility of firearms, it is a pleasure and a privilege to engage with the industry in my capacity as the Queensland Police Minister.*

*Having recently met with some of the executive, I can attest to their passionate advocacy on behalf of the 80,000 strong membership base.*

*I am cognisant of the importance of firearms, particularly in our regional, rural and remote communities.*

*The Crisafulli Government is*

*committed to best supporting our law-abiding firearm owners whilst being mindful of our duty to improve community safety outcomes.*

*Queensland is a great state to be a sporting shooter. We have an abundance of land, more than 300 sporting shooting clubs, and our Government has an appreciation for those involved in recreational shooting and hunting.*

*I will continue to work closely with the QPS to promote open communication, clarity, and trust between our Government and the firearms community.*

*As we approach the 2032 Brisbane Olympics, the Crisafulli Government has confirmed additional investment to improve the Brisbane International Shooting Centre, which will showcase sport shooting and our State to the world.*

*I look forward to working constructively with the SSAA and meeting many of you over the exciting years ahead! ☺*



# TRADITION IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

## The Craft of Tristram Oliver-Skuse

By Rod Hoare

Nestled in the rugged landscape of Victoria's Goldfields region, Tristram Oliver-Skuse of Huntsman Fabrications isn't chasing trends—he's chasing time-honoured tradition. For the past seven years, Tristram has been quietly building a reputation among collectors and knife enthusiasts for his finely crafted traditional slipjoint pocketknives. While not necessarily a 'hunting knife', most hunters, campers and adventurers would carry a folding pocketknife in their kit as a small utility knife, and/or as a backup for their purpose-built fixed blade.

Knifemaking for Tristram began as a curiosity but quickly led to a lasting pursuit. Though he occasionally makes kitchen and camping knives, his heart lies with slipjoints—those folding pocketknives your grandfather might have carried, built for utility but steeped in heritage. Tristram says, "I spend a lot of

evenings looking over 1890's knife catalogues, wishing I could buy the knives they list. Since I can't, I work out how to make them." Which we're glad he does.

This historical focus doesn't mean his knives are stuck in the past. Tristram's attention to detail and commitment to craftsmanship keep his blades relevant. He favours a full flat grind—ideal for the slim, precise edges that pocketknives demand. "They have to be good cutters," he says. "You want them as thin behind the edge as possible."

While his passion leads to stunning results, it can sometimes be a double-edged sword. "My greatest strength is also my weakness—I get obsessed with small details. Lately, it's been dyeing and jigging bone for handles. It would be easier to buy pre-jigged bone, but I'm chasing something specific in the texture." These obsessions pay off when he finds customers who appreciate

*"My greatest strength is also my weakness—I get obsessed with small details."*

A large 4.5" closed English Jack with AEB-L blade and Sambar antler handle.

the same subtleties. "Those are the moments I love most—when someone gets excited about the same details I've been working through."

Tristram's favourite materials speak to his nostalgic inclinations: jigged bone and ebony—natural handle materials found on many historical knives. "They give the knife an old-world vibe, something familiar and comforting. When you core an apple with one in mixed company, you're less likely to get the side-eye that a tactical folder might attract."

His steel of choice is AEB-L, a stainless steel known for its balanced properties. It hardens well, wears evenly, and resists corrosion—a must for a knife that lives in your pocket and might get used to cut lunch, whittle wood, or dress a rabbit, before disappearing back into your pocket until day's end.

Though Tristram doesn't hunt himself, he has a deep respect for the practical traditions of the field and asks friends and customers to test any new designs. One of his dream projects is the 'Bunny Knife', a small slipjoint originally made in Sheffield for the Australian market. With a clip point blade and small pen blade, it's designed for field dressing rabbits and other small game.



Tristram Oliver-Skuse

TRADITION IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND



A range of different slipjoint patterns and materials Tristram had available at the 2024 Sydney Knife Show.

On average, Tristram turns out around 20 handmade knives per year—more if he focuses on non-folders. The complex nature of traditional folders means more time goes into each piece ensuring he gets the opening and closing of the blade spot-on. When he does make fixed blades, they come with a Kydex sheath for durability and ease of carry.

An active member of the Australian Knifemakers Guild (AKG), Tristram is a regular at the AKG Melbourne Knife Show, and also attends other shows in Sydney and Canberra when time allows.

When asked what the most important part of knifemaking is, he replies simply: "Matching or bettering the execution of anything

I got right on the previous knife, but technically the movement of a folding knife and heat treatment of the blade."

It's this humility, paired with an obsession for precision and tradition, that defines Huntsman Fabrications. Tristram doesn't just make knives—he revives lost details, one blade at a time.

If you're looking for a traditional handmade slipjoint that can be passed down through generations, those from Huntsman Fabrications are definitely worthy of your consideration. Tristram can be contacted through Instagram @huntsmanfab, email tristramos@yahoo.com, phone 0434 774076, or his Etsy shop HuntsmanFabrications. 📍





# QUEENSLAND'S CUTTING EDGE

By Peter Jackson

One of Stephen Grove's finished knives.

*"Taking that French influence and incorporating Australian timbers with the 'Thiers' style influence..."*

QUEENSLAND'S CUTTING EDGE



Locally sourced timber highlights the craftsmanship.

Retired Aussie Army veteran and bladesmith, Major Stephen Groves has been an admirer and collector of edged weapons of all descriptions since he was in high school, a passion that continues to this day.

During the past 20 years, Steve has showcased his collection in exhibits in Japan as well as back here in Australia, so it really comes as no surprise that the natural progression of his passion was to try his hand at forging his own creations.

It worth noting that his current sword and knife collections carry some serious steel. Standing head and shoulders within that collection is the highly prized Samurai sword formally owned by the Japanese Chief of Staff at the end of WWII, General Yoshijirō Umezu.

**'So, who's he?' I hear you ask.**

Well, as it turns out, Umezu was the General that signed the Instrument of Surrender documentation onboard the mighty USS Missouri in front of General Macarthur in Tokyo Bay, officially ceasing the war with Japan.

For you military, sword and knife collectors out there, I'll let the historical significance of that sword, and its owner, sink in for a moment.

With only seven years of working from his home forge, Groves has produced some outstanding work for someone relatively new to the craft.

The other side of the coin is that as a veteran who has 'been and seen' much in his 30 years with the Australian Army, including active service deployments in Cambodia and East Timor, knife making is a somewhat cathartic way to occupy the mind.

Knife making has become an expanding past time in Australia, with senior craftsman being sought to share their skills with collectors and individuals who appreciate the uniqueness and talent these new craftsmen put into each knife.

Steve was fortunate enough to be mentored by a blade maker from the very heart of French knife making - Thiers.

This small hamlet in France has oft been quoted as the standard in French blades, from pocket and culinary knives to hunting and combat knives, for

## Fun fact

**There are more than 24 individual named elements on a single Samurai Sword, from the handle right down to the blade tip, each singular part as important and considered in its forging and binding as the last.**

more than six centuries, it has been said.

Taking that French influence and incorporating Australian timbers with the 'Thiers' style influence of knife making gives the product a unique look and feel.

Having said all that, Steve still has a strong admiration for the centuries old Japanese blade making techniques that are steeped in centuries old customs and rituals.

Steve not only looks for the traditional when it comes to

fashioning his blade handles to compliment his work, but the current range of blades also feature fossilised giraffe bone handles. The combination of off white and naturally streaked bone gives the result a striking and unique look.

They say that artists are influenced by their surroundings and after 15 years working across many locations in Papua New Guinea, this is evident with Grove's Kokoda range of blades -The Isurava and The Sogeri.

These blades are so named in honour of the famous Kokoda Track villages that Steve worked in and around as he provided communication to those and many other out post villages across our northern neighbour.

As the veteran's skill began to grow, it was not long before he began highlighting his work online...and it was not long after

when requests began to come in from his circle of friends.

Members of the Australian Special Forces community, military motorcycle clubs, and current and past serving military members across the spectrum were contacting Steve for custom-made blades as gifts and signs of respect from one mate to another.

Although happy to oblige, Steve is sticking to his original plan of keeping his blade making hobby as just that...a hobby. 🍷



Stephen Groves hard at work.





# CLASSIC CARTRIDGES

## The 12 Gauge Shotgun

By Steve Marchant

In 1866 a reloadable steel 12-gauge shotgun shell was patented by Thomas L. Sturtevant. Since then, they have been made from wound paper, drawn brass, drawn aluminium and cast zinc. Remington introduced the plastic shell in 1958 and almost all modern shotshells are now made from some variety of polyethylene plastic.

The 12-gauge shotshell is commonly loaded with shot made from lead, bismuth or steel and shot charge weights run from 7/8 ounce to 2½ ounces. Steel is less dense than lead, so steel shot pellets are slightly larger than lead pellets to achieve the required range. Pellet sizes range from No. 12 shot (.05" diameter) through to 000 Buck shot (0.36" diameter) and factory shell

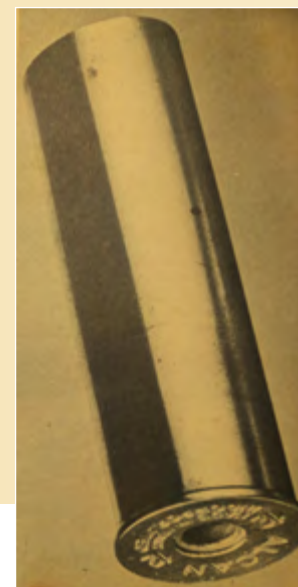
casing lengths range from 2½ inches to 3½ inches, with 2¾ and 3-inch shells being the most widely used.

The most popular 12-gauge target load is with No. 7½ shot and a 1-ounce charge. This load produces a good shot pattern at appropriate distances for a variety of clay target flight paths. Hunting loads depend on the shot size required to stop a particular prey, i.e. shot sizes suitable for waterfowl will not effectively dispatch a pig.

Twelve-gauge shotgun cartridges are also available with a single solid projectile or 'slug'. The most used slug types are rifled slugs, which can be shot out of any smoothbore shotgun; and sabots, which require specialised rifled shotgun barrels and chokes to optimise load performance.

Rifled slugs are inexpensive and sufficiently accurate for hunting deer out to 100 yards, provided the shotgun is equipped with a set of rifle sights and is properly sighted. Sabots are more costly, but they tend to shoot flatter and group tighter than rifled slugs. For example, a comprehensive test in 2008 found the best three-shot rifled slug group at 100 yards measured 6.8 inches, compared to 2.1 inches for the best sabot slug group. Sabot slugs are thus effective out to 200 yards.

The 12-gauge cartridge is chambered in single shot, double barrel and triple barrel break action; bolt action; lever action; lever release and 'straight-pull' actions; slide or 'pump' action; and semi-automatic and automatic shotguns.



Brass 12-gauge shell casing.



Four popular 12-gauge loadings: small game hunting loads on the left and clay target load (top) and 00SG buckshot load (bottom) on the right.



Merkel 96KS drilling with two shotgun barrels over a rifle barrel.

It is also chambered in combination guns, i.e. a shotgun barrel over or under a rifle barrel; and drillings, which can have two shotgun barrels with one rifle barrel, two rifle barrels with one shotgun barrel or three rifle barrels.

While mostly regarded as a sporting cartridge, the 12-gauge shotgun has been and is still extensively used in law enforcement and military applications. From the 18th century, smooth bore muskets were used as both rifles and shotguns because they were able to fire a single solid lead ball or shotgun shot. The Brown Bess musket, for example, which was used by the

British Army for more than 100 years, could be loaded with small buckshot.

Once rifles were adopted for military service, the use of shotguns in warfare waned, as they could not match the rifle's lethality at longer ranges. However, the wide implementation of trench warfare in World War One saw a resurgence in the use of shotguns. This was because long-range accuracy wasn't that important when the fighting was done within 20 yards. At such distances, a shotgun was both deadlier and easier to manoeuvre than a rifle. Combat shotguns thus became known as 'trench guns' and most of these trench guns were 12-gauges.

After WWI, 12-gauge shotguns continued to be widely utilised for close-quarters combat. In WWII, the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War, they were mainly used for jungle warfare. More recently, 12-gauges were used in Afghanistan and Iraq to defend US supply depots and for breaking locks and hinges during door breaches. And Ukrainian and

Russian forces are currently using 12-gauge shotguns as a last-resort defence against drones.

The 12-gauge is by far the most popular shotgun cartridge choice for target shooters, hunters and police and military forces throughout the globe. But not only does the 12-gauge dominate shotgun cartridge sales, it is the most popular centrefire cartridge. According to *Cartridges of the World (11th Edition)*, in 1995, the number of commercially available, unique 12-gauge loadings in the USA exceeded the total of all available high-powered rifle loadings for all cartridges. This seems extraordinary, but a quick check of ADI's *Handloader's Guide* reveals something similarly remarkable. Twelve-gauge reload data takes up 19 pages of ADI's current *Handloader's Guide*, whereas the cartridge with the second largest amount of reload data, the .30-06 Springfield, requires only three pages! 🎯



"After WWI, 12-gauge shotguns continued to be widely utilised..."



# NATIONAL SHARP-SHOOTING TITLES AT STAKE at Captains Mountain

## Small groups the aim *By Sam Talbot*

In April, Captains Mountain played host to the National Centrefire Benchrest competition. While not quite the biggest of all time, it was the largest centrefire event held in recent memory, drawing an impressive crowd from across the country, and it was also the first National Championships held at Captains Mountain.

Precision and accuracy were on full display, with many SSAA Hall of Famers lining up alongside talented up-and-comers, some of whom walked away with serious bragging rights. Shooters competed across several classes, each testing the limits of consistency, concentration and meticulously tuned equipment. Discipline Chairman Les Fraser said conditions were challenging but facilities were amazing.

“The event was first class. Credit to Gavin Marshall [Queensland Discipline Chairman] and his team for running a competition that will be remembered for years,” he said.

The competition opened with the Unlimited Class, and it was Ron Sinclair who led the way at 100 yards before John Babic stormed home at 200 yards to claim the Grand Aggregate with .2951.

Michael Thompson, Ean Parsons and Milan Morrell were close behind, each finishing under .3300.

Special mention to Queenslander Steve Blaine who shot a .162 screamer at 100-yards. Screammers were also recorded by Paul Sullivan (.181 at 100 yards) and Michael Thompson (.412 at 200 yards).

Light Benchrest delivered some of the tightest margins of the entire event, as Queenslanders and Hall of Famers battled it out. Paul Sullivan

emerged on at 100 yards and, overall, with a Grand Aggregate of .2306.

Aggregate runner-up Josh Russell came out swinging with a .2182 at 200 yards, recording the best result for the entire class, while John Gnech, Annie Elliott and Sonia Steinhardt also put in standout performances, each finishing with aggregates under .275.

Another special mention must go to Richard Winckel, whose .122 group at 100 yards was not only a screamer, but it was also among the smallest recorded across all classes this year.

The competition continued for 42 shooters in the Heavy class, which saw Ean Parsons come out with a blistering .1652 at 100 yards, including an incredible .90 group. Not only a screamer, but one of the best groups seen at a



Heavy Score Winners in the Gold, Silver and Bronze position: Stuart Elliot, Annie Elliott and Brendan Atkinson.



Paul Sullivan (middle) took out the Light Benchrest followed by Josh Russell (right) and Annie Elliott (left).



Left to right: Ean Parsons – No. 40, Discipline Chairman Les Fraser and Michael Thompson – No. 41.

## NATIONAL SHARP-SHOOTING TITLES

national competition. Parsons went on to claim the Grand Aggregate, followed by Annie Elliot, Michael Thompson, and William Greer, each in the low .230s.

Further down the rankings, Kerry Moore showed she can mix it with the best, recording a .203 screamer.

Later in the competition, Heavy Score saw a very tight contest with the top three shooters each scoring 500. Stuart Elliott and Annie Elliott both shot 500.22, with the win going to Stuart, while Brendan Atkinson was just off the pace at 500.19.

There were no score complaints, so compliments to the scorers, as well as the other volunteers who made the event possible. “Catering, target crews and camping were as good as we could have asked for,” said Les.

Finally, a significant achievement went to Ean Parsons and Michael Thompson, both achieving Hall of Fame (HOF) status at the event, earning No. 40 and No. 41, respectively. “A ‘guard of honour’ was formed from existing HOF members at the presentation to welcome Ean and Michael to the HOF family,” said Les.

For the full results including the multi-gun winners and the Sporter Class, head to [ssaaqld.org.au](http://ssaaqld.org.au).

## What's a screamer? (Centrefire Screamer Criteria)

**100 yards:** 5 shot - 0.099" and smaller. 10 shot - 0.199" and smaller.

**200 yards:** 5 shot - 0.249" and smaller. 10 shot - 0.449" and smaller.



The best shooters can read and use all the environmental conditions.



Conditions were good, but constant changes made it challenging for shooters.





Twenty-five shooters from four states attended a hotly contested Muzzleloading National Championships in Townsville.

## 50 YEARS OF MAGNIFICENT AUSTRALIAN MUZZLELOADING!

five shooters. Paul White (WA) led with 96.3, narrowly ahead of Steve Nicholas and Michael Nicholas, both on 95.3. Vlad Potezney (SA) was on 95.2 and Anthony Wilson (QLD) on 95.1 As the competition moved to 200m, Paul White stretched his lead, winning the Class 3 Open Rifle Aggregate with a combined score of 191.3. Vlad Potezney placed second with 186.2, and Bruce Finlay (SA) rounded out the top three with 184.2.

In the Black Powder Cartridge Rifle event, Shayne Barnsley shot a strong offhand score at 100m, taking first place in the aggregate with 616 points, ahead of Dan MacDonald (NSW) on 605 and Anthony Wilson on 564.1.

Monday featured the 300m Prone and Shotgun events. Mark Sobierajski (NSW) captured the 300m Prone title with a score of 79. In the Percussion Shotgun match, Shayne Barnsley smashed 20 clays to win, with Gordon Gentle (QLD) and Frank Verdini

following on 18 and 17 clays respectively. In the Firelock Shotgun event, Frank Verdini came out on top with 14 clays, Anthony Wilson hit 12, and Ian Hanlon (NSW) hit 10.

In the Grand Aggregate — comprising a competitor's best Class 1 or 2 Pistol, best Class 1 or 2 Rifle, and best Shotgun score — Shayne Barnsley once again triumphed with a total of 732.2 points. Frank Verdini secured second place with 647.2, and Anthony Wilson (QLD) took third with 642.2.

In the ultimate challenge of endurance, the Super Grand Aggregate — adding together every event — Shayne Barnsley (NSW) achieved a strong total of 2950.11. Frank Verdini finished second with 2740.7, and Anthony Wilson came third with 2619.7.

Frank Verdini was the only person to finish all 32 events this year. Not a bad effort for someone who had open heart-surgery last year.

Overall, we had 25 shooters, from four states. The average number of events shot per person was 16. The largest event was Traditional Rifle 50m Class 2 with 17 shooters and the smallest was matchlock pistol with three shooters. No new national records were shot.

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
SA	19	21	15
NSW	16	13	7
QLD	3	7	19
WA	3		

Congratulations to all competitors for making this championship one to remember on a range with a spectacular backdrop. None of this would be possible without the tireless efforts of the volunteers. A huge thank you to SSAA Townsville for hosting an outstanding event — the branch's spirit and teamwork are truly remarkable. It's rare to see a branch where multiple disciplines come together to make the event a success. Our Chief Range Officer competed in Air Rifle Field Target; target changers took part in Combined Services and Metallic Silhouette; scorers joined the Lever Action Rifle matches and even the catering team competed in Benchrest! Well done to everyone involved for delivering an unforgettable shoot.

Next year's nationals are expected to be held in NSW — final confirmation will be announced later this year via the SSAA Queensland website.

Between July 2025 and December 2025, there will be a SSAA Muzzleloading Postal Shoot and between July 2025 and September 2025, the Pacific Zone Postal Shoot against New Zealand, USA, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, Japan and Argentina will take place.

**Stay tuned.** 📻

*By Michael Nicholas*

**T**his year marks a monumental milestone — the 50th SSAA Muzzleloading National Championships, proudly spanning from 1976 to 2025. What an incredible achievement by our passionate muzzleloading community!

The 2025 Nationals kicked off in spectacular fashion on Friday, 18 April 2025, with the thunderous firing of a cannon, setting the stage for an exciting weekend. Handgun and pistol matches quickly followed, where Michael Nicholas (SA) claimed victory in the Class 1 Revolver Aggregate with a score of 155.2. Shayne Barnsley (NSW) took top honours in the Class 2 Pistol Aggregate with an impressive 178.1. Other standout performances included Frank Verdini (SA), who won the Firelock Smoothbore Pistol event using a matchlock with a score of 89, and Michael Nicholas, scoring 86 in the 50m Class 3 Open Pistol Event. Meanwhile, Des Prowse (QLD) showed his enduring prowess, winning both the Firelock Musket and Open Musket events with scores of 89 and 83, respectively.

Saturday saw competitors line up for the Class 1

Military Rifle, Class 2 Traditional Rifle, and the 50m Vetterli Matches. Michael Nicholas continued his winning form, securing the Class 1 Rifle Aggregate with a score of 355.1, while Shayne Barnsley also won the Class 2 Traditional Rifle Aggregate with a score of 354.1. In the tightly contested MLAIC Vetterli Match (offhand 50m open rifle), Shayne Barnsley came out on top with a 96.3 using his Class 2 traditional rifle, followed closely by Anthony Wilson (QLD) at 95.2 and Michael Nicholas at 95.1.

Sunday brought more fierce competition, with the Class 3 Open Rifle, Black Powder Cartridge Rifle, and Firelock Rifle events. Humid conditions made for challenging shooting in the Firelock Aggregate, but Frank Verdini persevered to claim victory with a score of 236. Steve Nicholas (SA) was close behind with 231 and Gordon Gentle (QLD) celebrated his first national medal with a strong 219.

The Open Rifle Benchrest Matches saw an incredibly tight contest after the 100m Class 3 Bench event, with just a single point separating the top



Scores were close at this year's Muzzleloading Championships, requiring intense focus to come out on top.



# Adidas dropkicks kangaroo leather use

By Michael Redwood

Adidas CEO Björn Gulden recently informed shareholders that the company has not purchased any kangaroo leather since August 2024.

The final pairs of kangaroo leather athletic shoes are currently being produced at Adidas’ factory in Scheinfeld, Germany, with remaining stock still available in several countries.

The company, and competitors, have come under pressure from activist groups in recent years over their use of kangaroo leather.

However, the kangaroo industry has called the activists’ efforts and the brands’ decisions misguided, caused by misleading information

and a misunderstanding of the need to manage an overabundant species and properly use all of the animal.

In 2024, Ray Borda, President of the Australian Wild Game Industry Council (AWGIC), said: “Kangaroo numbers have to be managed to ensure their survival, and the commercial industry is the way we do this sustainably and humanely. As kangaroo populations fluctuate in different conditions, they compete with each other and other animals for food and put stress on agricultural land.”

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\*SSAA Qld membership is required to be a member of ICPC

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# SHOOT OFF! Quiz

Welcome back to the **Shoot Off Quiz!**  
It's a chance to test your knowledge on firearms, hunting and the great outdoors. Whether you're a competitive shooter, or closer to a bushwalker, there's something here for everyone.



## SCORING

20 out of 20: Bullseye!

14+: 9 ring

11+: 8 ring

8 or less: Time to re-sight your 'scope'

## QUESTIONS!

1 What type of bullet expands on impact to reduce over-penetration?

2 What type of action uses a lever to eject spent cartridges and load new ones?

3 What term describes the downward arc of a bullet over distance?

4 How many clay targets does a shooter face in a standard round of 5-Stand according to the SSAA rules?

5 What measurement is used to describe rifling twist rate?

6 What distance is used for the 'Standing Post Rest' position in centrefire Field Rifle competition?

7 Which of the following is a real type of centrefire primer: Boxer, Border, Budrem?

8 Which type of shotgun choke provides the tightest spread?

9 What type of sighting system projects a beam onto a target surface?

10 In what year was the SSAA Inc founded?

11 What natural feature is created when a river changes course and leaves behind a curved or isolated body of water?

12 Which century saw the invention of the percussion cap system?

13 Which shooting event was contested at every Summer Olympics from 1896 until 2016, before being discontinued?

14 When giving a location, does longitude or latitude come first?

15 Clip point, drop point and spear point are all types of what?

16 Which city hosted the first Olympic Games to feature a dedicated women's shooting event?

17 In the Working Gundog Discipline, which of the following is not a recognised category: Retrieving, Spaniel, Tracker, Hunt-Point-Retrieve?

18 True or false: You can shoot any kind of target at SSAA Queensland ranges.

19 True or false: The Thompson .45 calibre sub-machine gun was used during the battle of Kokoda.

20 In EPIRB, what does the "E" stand for?

If you want more quizzing, there's a second half to our Shoot Off Quiz, including an extra 20 questions, on our website: [ssaaqld.org.au](http://ssaaqld.org.au)

Answers can be found in the Sunset section, page 67.

**Good luck and next time you are at the range, don't be shy in comparing scores... it's all about bragging rights with this one!**



Eat WILD

# Wild boar sausages

## WITH ROASTED GARLIC AND CHEDDAR CHEESE MASH

Prep: 20 min   Time: 90 min   Serves: 4

### Ingredients

- 8 Wild Boar Cumberland Sausages
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp dried thyme (or 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves)

### For the onion and beer gravy

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 large onions, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup dark beer (such as stout or porter)
- 1 cup beef stock
- 1 tbsp flour
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- Fresh rosemary sprigs (optional, for extra flavour)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### Roasted garlic and cheddar cheese mash

- 1 whole head of garlic
- Olive oil, for roasting
- 1kg floury potatoes (such as Sebago or Maris Piper), peeled and cut into chunks
- Smoked sea salt, to season the water and for finishing - we used Olssons
- 100g mature cheddar cheese, grated
- 200g butter, plus extra to serve
- 1 cup full cream milk (warm)
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- Black pepper, to taste

### HOW TO COOK IT

Preheat oven to 200°C. In a large oven-safe pan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Season sausages with salt, pepper and thyme. Add sausages to the hot pan and brown on all sides (5-7 mins). Once seared, transfer the pan to the oven and roast sausages for 15-20 mins or until fully cooked (internal temp 70°C).

### For the onion and beer gravy

While sausages are roasting, prepare the gravy. In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add sliced onions and cook slowly, stirring occasionally until they are caramelised (15-20 mins). Add minced garlic to the onions and cook for 2 minutes until fragrant. Sprinkle flour over the onions and garlic, stirring to combine. Slowly pour in the beer while stirring, scraping bits off the bottom of the pan. Add the beef stock, Worcestershire sauce, balsamic and brown sugar. Stir to combine.

Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook for 5-7 mins, until the gravy thickens and becomes glossy. If the gravy becomes too thick, add a bit more beer or stock to loosen it. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

If you like, throw in a few rosemary sprigs for extra flavour as the gravy simmers. Pour into the sausages in the oven and coat well. Cook for a further 5 mins. Serve with roasted garlic and cheddar cheese mash.

### Roasted garlic and cheddar cheese mash

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Slice the top off the garlic head, drizzle with olive oil, wrap in foil, and roast for 30-40 mins, until soft and golden. Set aside to cool slightly.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of well-salted water (using smoked sea salt) to the boil. Add the potatoes and cook until tender (around 15 mins). Drain well, then return the potatoes to the hot pot for a minute to allow excess moisture to evaporate.

Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves from their skins and mash with a fork. Add to the potatoes along with the butter, cheddar cheese, and wholegrain mustard. Mash until smooth and creamy, adding the warm milk a little at a time until the mash reaches your desired consistency. Season with smoked sea salt and black pepper to taste. Serve with an extra knob of butter over the top.

Recipe courtesy: [australianmeats.com.au](http://australianmeats.com.au)

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### ANSWERS

- |                     |                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Hollow point     | 11. Billabong                  |
| 2. Lever-action     | 12. 19th century               |
| 3. Bullet drop      | 13. Men's 50m Pistol           |
| 4. 25               | 14. Latitude                   |
| 5. Inches per turn  | 15. The shape of a knife blade |
| 6. 100 metres/yards | 16. Los Angeles (1984)         |
| 7. Boxer            | 17. Tracker                    |
| 8. Full             | 18. False                      |
| 9. Laser sight      | 19. True                       |
| 10. 1948            | 20. Emergency                  |

Answer to question #1 from July: Rapid Fire, Standing/Offhand, Standing Post Rest and Sitting or Kneeling Post Rest

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## PROTECT YOUR LICENCE!

SSAA members, please remember if you are using your membership to satisfy state-government requirements for a genuine reason to hold a firearm's licence, it is **your responsibility** to ensure your membership is **current and financial**. Your expiry date is written on your membership card.

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