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In the wake of the Bondi Islamic extremist terrorist attack on the Jewish community, we are left with a confusion of rushed and bizarre federal laws that will only impact the lawful firearm owner. While the NSW State Government was quick to rehash its own firearm laws in response, other states have been more cautious, and Queensland's Government has pointed out the lunacy of making laws that only effect the law-abiding firearms owner. Premier David Crisafulli and Police Minister Dan Purdie have, at the time of writing, rejected a firearms buyback and refused to copy the NSW Government in creating new laws that do nothing to prevent criminal misuse of firearms. Increasing punishment for deliberate harm with a firearm is in their sights, not curtailing the freedoms of us, the sporting and recreational shooters.

We have met with the Police Minister's Office and are in regular contact and so far, can optimistically say they are being practical and honest. Full marks to them. The majority of laws that impact firearm use come from the state not federal government so their response is crucial.

So far, the embarrassment of the goings on in the 'Canberra bubble' thankfully have not crossed the Queensland border and we thank our members who have contacted their politicians to say we will not be blamed for the acts of terrorists or made a scapegoat by a federal government looking to cover up its own failings.

Ironically, our first magazine for the year, the February *The Report* issue, was a 'junior shooter' special, featuring stories about our youngsters getting into target sports and hunting. While these are the very people the antis would like to ban taking up our sport, we are proud to see them learn the skills and take on the responsibilities of firearms handling and marksmanship. It is cliché to say they are the future of our sport, but it is true, and we will be as an association going to new and great lengths to increase our junior membership. You can do your part in bringing your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to the range or hunting grounds and we will be there to support you all.

Jeff Ross



SSAA Queensland President

Letters

**Beautiful Bren**

Thank you for the story on the beautiful Bren gun in the September 2025 issue of *The Report*. I have long been a fan and my dad and grandfather (*Lieutenant Joseph Herbert Lewis*) spoke very highly of them from their experiences with them in WWII. My dad served in the RAN and my paternal grandfather served with the 11th Training Battalion. He was not allowed to serve overseas due to losing an eye from a gas attack in WWI, so he trained our new NCOs and officers.

In my grandfather's collection of training manuals, I found this little gem.

Regards

Gary L, Qld



**Contacting your local MP**

In response to our pre-Christmas special email to members encouraging them to contact their local MP, Nadine, N wrote in saying:

*Thank you for making it easy and supplying the contact details. I called Hon Tony Perrett's office (Gympie) and had a great chat with Chris. Their office is definitely opposing any change of the law.*

Merry Christmas

Nadine N, Qld

**Top contestant**

Even though I didn't win this time, I really appreciate the chance to take part and I'm excited to keep entering your monthly competitions. The new prize from GME sounds fantastic, especially for anyone who loves the outdoors, so I'll definitely be throwing my hat in the ring again.

Wishing you a successful 2026. Looking forward to staying connected and seeing what fun competitions you have coming up.

Best regards,

Andres M, QLD

**Interstate recognition?**

Hi. While working (from time to time in various locations as a locum pharmacist) in NSW during the past few years, I became a member of the Cobar Pistol Club. I applied for and was granted a NSW provisional pistol licence. I applied for a full licence a couple of months ago, but was denied, as I was not a NSW resident. (If I had not been honest and had not updated my NSW and QLD addresses, no one would have been the wiser.)

The lady I spoke to at NSW licensing said there may be some interstate mutual recognition. Is this so and how may I proceed?

I am currently working in Gayndah, QLD. My permanent home address is in Gladstone, QLD.

I am still a member of the Cobar Pistol Club and haven't joined locally yet.

Regards,

Russell S., Gladstone, Qld

**From the Membership Office:**

Good morning Russell,

*Unfortunately, you can only hold a Weapon's Licence for one state (generally where you reside, where you Drivers Licence is registered). So, if you reside in Gladstone, QLD, then your Weapon's licence would need to be one from Queensland Weapons Licensing.*

*In NSW you can still apply for an R- Licence (such as a permit to hunt in NSW), with SSAA QLD being an Approved Hunting Organisation.*

*To hold a firearms licence for Category H in NSW, you must be a resident of the state. You can find out more from police.nsw.gov.au/online\_services/firearms/interstate*

*Once you hold a Pistol Licence in the state in which you reside (QLD), you can then participate in competitions in NSW, as your Queensland Weapons Licence is recognised by other states. However, it is worth checking if a pistol club will allow you to participate in competitions prior to travelling with your firearm.*

**2026 Discipline Competition Calendar**

If your competitive nature needs nurturing, check out the 2026 Discipline Competition Calendar on our website: [ssaaqld.org.au/annual-calendar/](http://ssaaqld.org.au/annual-calendar/)

2026 promises to see new records set and fierce but friendly rivalries play out.



2026 SSAA Queensland State, National, Open and Postal Shoot Calendar - SSAA Queensland



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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.

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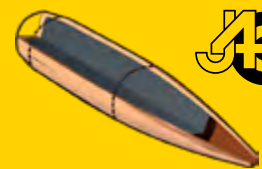
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# AXOR ARMS BUSHPIG 2.0

## A standout evolution in lever-release shotguns

By Rob Mori

Instagram:@hunt.aus

In a market crowded with straight pulls, push-button actions and an increasing number of look-alike designs competing for attention, the Axor Arms Bushpig 2.0 has emerged as one of the most talked about and eagerly anticipated arrivals in Australia's shooting community. Most importantly, it's not hype without substance. This updated model delivers meaningful improvements, thoughtful engineering and real-world performance gains that set it apart from the pack.

Whether you're a feral hunter who demands fast handling and rugged dependability or a practical shooter looking for speed and smooth cycling without crossing into semi-automatic territory, the Bushpig 2.0 offers a compelling blend of innovation, practicality and durable field performance. It feels like a firearm designed with a purpose and designed with the Australian shooter in mind.

### A faster, smoother shooting experience

The headline feature, and arguably the biggest drawcard of the Bushpig 2.0, is its upgraded lever-release system.

While the broader category of lever-release shotguns has grown in popularity over recent years, not all designs feel equally natural or intuitive in the hand. The Bushpig 2.0 stands out because of just how smooth and uninterrupted the shooting rhythm feels.

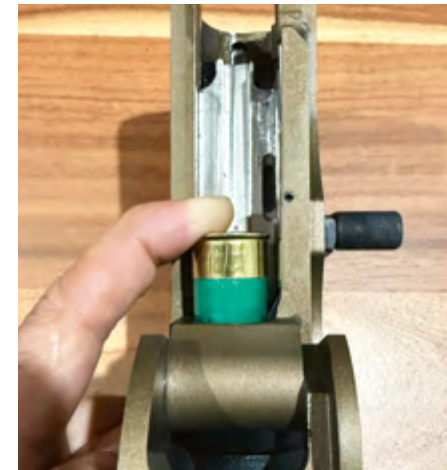
With each trigger pull, the gas-operated system cycles the bolt without needing to break your cheek weld or needing to shift the firearm dramatically to reset the action. This means that you can simply press the thumb-operated release lever to chamber your next round.

It's a subtle motion that requires minimal muscle movement, minimal disruption to your hold and minimal loss of sight picture.

For hunters, this translates directly into better performance. Staying on target becomes second nature and follow-up shots feel almost instinctive. When you're shooting at fast moving targets like pigs or foxes, that extra quarter second of reaction time and the ability to keep the shotgun firmly shouldered can genuinely make the difference between success or frustration.

Shooters familiar with other less ergonomic straight pulls, push buttons and lever release systems will notice the improvement immediately thanks to less motion, less time spent resetting and a more confident natural rhythm with every shot.

### AXOR ARMS BUSHPIG 2.0



Loading and unloading has never been easier or safer than when utilising the direct access to the tube feed system.

### Dual loading, dual advantage

Practicality is one of the strongest themes running through the Bushpig 2.0's design and nowhere is that more evident than in the dual loading system. Axor Arms clearly understood that shooters value flexibility not just in firing, but also in how the gun is topped up, unloaded and managed safely.

Users can load the shotgun in two different ways:

1. Via the traditional under-belly loading gate, allowing quick and efficient insertion of shells directly into the magazine tube.

2. By breaking open the action, thus giving full access to the chamber and the magazine tube for direct loading or unloading.

This dual system pays dividends in more ways than one. On the range, the loading gate is fast and familiar. In the bush, the break-open method becomes a powerful safety tool, letting you clear or top up the shotgun without cycling live rounds through the action. Being able to unload quickly and cleanly is particularly valuable when crossing fences, entering vehicles or navigating tricky terrain.

The design is simple, intuitive and practical... An excellent example of Axor Arms improving functionality without over complicating the firearm.

*"While the broader category of lever-release shotguns has grown in popularity over recent years, not all designs feel equally natural or intuitive in the hand."*



Lying in wait for the next task at hand, always ready to deliver.

**Smart, compact folding action**

One of the standout physical improvements in the Bushpig 2.0 is the addition of a smart folding action. While folding firearms are nothing new, Axor Arms has implemented the concept in a way that enhances usability without compromising strength or reliability.

When folded, the Bushpig 2.0 becomes incredibly compact, which is ideal for but not limited to: vehicle storage, backpack carry, quad bike or buggy transport and manoeuvring in tight safe or storage spaces.

For hunters who cover long distances or travel through harsh terrain, compactness can become as valuable as weight savings. A shotgun that folds neatly away is less cumbersome and more secure when not in immediate use.

The folding design also gives easier access to the magazine tube for loading/unloading, maintenance or clearing debris. Importantly, the gun is completely inoperable when folded, which provides an added layer of safety when moving between locations.

The Bushpig 2.0 comes complete with a set of chokes and a hard case for transportation.



**A rugged design with refined features**

The Bushpig 2.0 makes a strong first impression even before you fire the first shot. Axor Arms includes a robust hard case, providing plenty of space for the folded shotgun, chokes and any accessories you may need out on the range or in the field. For new buyers, and particularly those who plan to travel or hunt in remote areas, having a durable protective case included in the initial purchase provides a welcome value add.

Moving to the firearm itself, the upgrades become immediately obvious. The reinforced receiver represents a significant improvement and has been tested to handle a wide range of loads. From light 28-gram target shells to heavy-hitting 42-gram hunting loads, the shotgun shows confidence and consistency.

Recoil management feels well balanced and the action maintains smooth cycling across the load spectrum.

The Bushpig 2.0 features a pistol-grip mounted

release button positioned exactly where the thumb naturally rests, a reliable safety that is both easily accessible and intuitive, an adjustable cheek riser for a customised fit and even built-in spare round holders on the stock for practical field reloads.

These elements combine to create a firearm that feels deliberate and user-friendly while being something designed for and around real Australian conditions, not just a generic template.



Much more than just a great looking shotgun; it is very aesthetically pleasing.

**Optics-ready and customisable**

Today's shooters expect flexibility in optics and Axor Arms delivers. The Bushpig 2.0 arrives with Glock-style fibre-optic sights, which are clear, bright and quick to acquire in most if not all conditions.

For shooters wanting more precision, the real magic lies in the removable top rail section. Beneath it lies an RMS-compatible mounting footprint that is ready to accept popular red-dot optics such as the range of ZeroTech reflex sights available in today's market.

Many shotguns in the Bushpig's price category force buyers to invest in aftermarket modifications before they can mount premium optics. In this instance, however, the BushPig 2.0 delivers this option straight out of the box. For pig hunters who want a fast, clean sight picture or even competitors looking for quicker target transitions, this is a strong advantage.



Optics upgrade completed by way of a ZeroTech multi-reticle red dot. A real game changer.

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**In the field:**  
**Reliable and balanced**

All the engineering refinements in the world mean little if the gun doesn't perform where it matters: in the field. Fortunately, in this case the Bushpig 2.0 well and truly lives up to its spec sheet.

During my testing, the shotgun delivered smooth, consistent cycling, confident handling with both light and heavy loads, fast and fluid target transitions, especially with a red dot installed, and provided dependable reliability in all conditions.



In action is where the BushPig 2.0 shows its true worth.

For pig hunters in particular, the ability to remain shouldered and deliver quick follow-up shots is a huge strength. The gun feels lively yet nimble and settles quickly on target and recovers rapidly after firing.

In short, it behaves exactly as a modern lever-release shotgun should in my opinion, which is fast, controlled and confidence inspiring.

**WHY IT'S WORTH YOUR ATTENTION**

**Versatility:** Capable across hunting, sport shooting, recreational shooting/hunting and general field work.

**Speed and efficiency:** The lever-release system preserves sight picture and grip, enabling rapid follow-ups.

**Exceptional value:** Packed with features usually seen on more expensive shotguns.

**Portability:** The folding action and included heavy-duty case make it ideal for travel and field transport.

**Customisation:** Optics ready, adjustable ergonomics and accessory friendly.

**FINAL VERDICT**

The Axor Arms Bushpig 2.0 isn't just another incremental update to a popular design; it represents a thoughtful and meaningful re-imagining of what a modern lever-release shotgun can and should be, which is practical, robust and highly adaptable. It introduces genuine innovation without compromising the simplicity, safety or reliability that Australian hunters and shooters depend on.

For those seeking a versatile, fast-handling shotgun suited to pigs, pests, sporting use and as a general-purpose field carry, the Bushpig 2.0 stands out as a firearm that is not only worth considering but genuinely worthy of being your next shotgun acquisition. ©

*"Being able to unload quickly and cleanly is particularly valuable when crossing fences, entering vehicles or navigating tricky terrain."*

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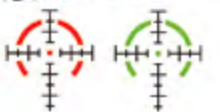
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## A TALE FROM A PARALLEL UNIVERSE, WHERE CHITAL DEER ARE MUNDANE AND PIGS ARE UNOBTANIUM

By *Brendan Jones*

Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good. A pair of pigs with a pair of .308s used to take them.



The author with a last-minute pair of pigs intercepted on the way back to the homestead. It's unclear who was more surprised, the hunters, the pigs or the owner.



### Pigs?!

“Pigs?!” scoffed the leading hand. My heart sunk a little. “You’re not gonna find any ‘round here”. My jaw muscles tensed involuntarily, and I pursed my lips. “Hmm. Hasn’t been any getting into the troughs or around the spring?” I quizzed. “Nah, that was ages ago. Maybe we’ll see some over the other side,” I replied. “How ‘ya gettin’ out there? On that thing?”, spotting the quad on the back of the ute. “Good luck,” he said with a wry smile. Hand over completed and free to start the weekend, he promptly burned off in a cloud of dust, bee-lining it for Charters Towers. A leisurely 200km dirt bike ride on an unfenced unsealed road. “You didn’t ask about the deer”, pointed out Stuart. “Don’t worry about the deer; that’s the easy part,” I said.

We were deep in the heart of basalt country on a 50,000-acre cattle property, executing a dual-purposed two-night mission. Part one was get Stuart his first chital deer, the second was some unfinished business with the pigs. I had been here once before but was unable to find, let alone shoot, any pigs. That felt like a blemish on my hunting record, a wrong that needed righting, a score that needed settling. But after our chat upon arrival, I was already nervous. A few days ago, the owner, who was away for the weekend, assured me over the phone of plenty of pig activity. He had also reassured me we could access the ‘other side’ on my quad.

You see, the property was in an odd, narrow u-shape of sorts. The short section that joined the left and right uprights was rather narrow and rendered impassable by a large spring that increased its output of the blue a few years ago. The adjacent swamp this created drowned the track that weaved through the rocky basalt-bouldered corridor, forcing the owner to access the other side via the neighbour’s property. A detour we didn’t have permission to take.



Home for the next two nights. A rudimentary camp on the edge of a clearing that would suffice as long as we didn’t get hit by an early season storm.

**Stuart's first deer**

After setting up camp on the edge of a clearing, we travelled a short distance to a successful spot from last time to begin our hunt. A low basalt rise overlooked an open expanse with a squat-statured tea-tree variety behind. The deer liked to hide in these clumping thickets during the heat of the day before venturing out late afternoon to feed and drink. The outcrop screened the main track where we parked the quad and begun sneaking up to the top. Stuart had his Tikka T3 lite stainless in .308 Win and I had my binoculars and range finder. Stuart silently motioned to a rifle, thinking I had forgotten one, but going gun free is a useful trick I have learned for getting someone else onto game. Firstly, without a gun in hand, I wouldn't be tempted to takeover if an exceptional opportunity arose. Secondly, it puts the ball firmly in other person's court. With only one shooter there's no question over who will be taking the shot, freeing them up to focus on those crucial final moments, not second guessing or waiting for my lead.

Sure enough, as we slunk up over the top of the rise there were deer already out grazing in the late afternoon light. Stuart excitedly



Stuart's first chital deer. It took all of five minutes hunting to tick off this milestone. His second and third wouldn't be far behind.

*"With only one shooter there's no question over who will be taking the shot, freeing them up to focus on those crucial final moments, not second guessing or waiting for my lead."*

looked back. I acted out a charades-style reminder not to shoot any antlered deer. Stuart slipped in behind a fallen tree and improvised a rest and from another a few metres back I ranged the deer: 264m. A memorable number being that it was a calibre equivalent of the 6.5mm. I signed to Stuart 264m. He looked confused; unfortunately, he didn't know sign language. But then again, neither did I. First mouthing "2-6-4" and then hissing a whisper as loud as I dared; a raised eyebrow and a slight shrug in response before turning back to the scope filled me with zero confidence the message got through to Stuart. Crack! A doe went down on the spot, as the rest of the group floated away over a fence and melted into the vegetation. We had been hunting for less than five minutes. "Nice shot, mate!" I said as we began to walk down to the clearing. "Thanks! Looked further than 164m though," he replied.



A group of chital deer out on the spring-fed swamp, curiously observing us attempting to un-bog the quad.



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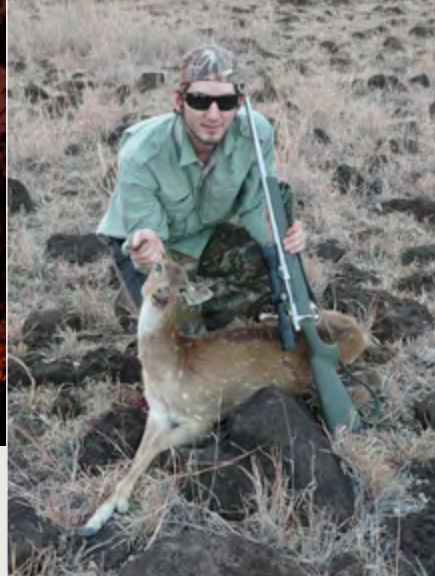
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Author with one of the many antlerless deer taken during the short trip.



**Unravelling plans**

Having ticked off objective one, along with the obligatory photos and some meat recovery, I wanted to nip across on the quad to confirm we could access the far side in preparation for the morning. The golden hour, while great for hunting and photography, turns out is also a good time to bog a quad. Diff-lock and aggressive tires mean you can get along way into a problem before you really get stuck. With zero chance of a recovery from another vehicle, we were forced to turn back and persist in our own escape, all the while being watched by some inquisitive deer.

On the way back past the homestead that overlooked the spring, we dropped in for a courtesy call. A backpacker working on the property was minding the house for the weekend, so we went to introduce ourselves and explain we'd be hunting round the swamp that night. Minutes of calling out and banging on the door eventually saw it crack open partially and a wide eye peer out. "Wh-wh-who is it?" quivered a distinctly English female voice. You didn't have to be a great white shark to smell the fear. We explained who we were and what we were planning and left. "I reckon she's been watching too much

The green line that cut through the property didn't end up producing the pigs we thought it should.

*Wolf Creek,*" said Stuart. I agreed, but we decided not to hunt around the swamp as not to terrify the poor girl any more than she already was.

I now had a growing suspicion I'd been had. Considering we weren't allowed to shoot any antlered deer by order of the owner, if I knew 60 per cent of the property was still inaccessible and there was zero recent pig sign, we would have gone elsewhere for the weekend somewhere a few hours closer to home. The owner sensed this on the phone, and I suspect told me what I wanted to hear, allegedly, to lure us out to cull does.



This picture sums up why synthetic and stainless is often a better choice over wood and blued steel when hunting.



Stuart processing one of the does taken on the trip.

**Pig-less persistence**

A long night of spotlighting the part of the property we could access proved pig-less. The next morning my new plan was to go on foot and follow the small streamlet fed by the spring as it weaved its way through the basalt. In the late dry season, it was like someone had taken a giant green highlighter and drawn a snaky verdant line across the parched landscape. With far side exploration and the spring swamp off the cards, this was our best and only remaining plan for pigs. We traced the green line for around 8km until we hit the boundary, then struck-out cross country another 4km back to camp. Arriving around lunch, we were drained, both physically by the

November build up to summer, and mentally by another failed plan. Ah well, we could spend the arvo shooting more antler-free deer, I guess.

A pig-less afternoon bled into another pig-less night, all the while the chital tally continued to climb. As I laid down to sleep, I couldn't help but recall the *Seinfeld* 'bizarro world' storyline (Season 8, episode 3). The irony of our upside-down, back-to-front situation, where we were drowning in deer meat, but couldn't find a pig to save our lives, felt like we'd passed into some comedic parallel universe. With lightening threatening on the horizon, I drifted off to dream of pigs and George Costanza.



Carcass recovery doesn't get much easier than this. A 150m quad ride back to camp for the swag-shot doe.

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A prime example of the relative ease with which deer were taken on the trip. This one was shot by the author (pictured) from his bed. Note the camp 150m away in the top right.



**Last-minute luck**

I rubbed my tired eyes as they struggled to focus in the grey light of the final morning. Picking up movement in the clearing next to camp saw my heart skip a beat. Was I still dreaming? It couldn't be pigs, could it? It wasn't. I shoved Stuart, telling him to wake up and shoot the deer. Mumbling something unintelligible, he instinctively swatted my hand away and rolled over. His subconscious, at least, had had enough doe culling. I got up, quietly retrieving my .308 from the vehicle. Reloading it and inserting the bolt I got back into my swag, this time laying prone. Through the scope in what was now sufficient light I could clearly make out a string of a dozen deer walking right to left 150m away. The muzzle blast next to his swag had Stuart up and madly trying to find pants and a rifle, perplexed I hadn't gotten him up

first. I generally don't give up hope on a hunt, but as the surviving 11 deer bounded away, even I was having to admit the pigs might have foiled me again.

After a few hours we packed up and drove down to the house to check in with the owners who should be home before we left for our own. Enroute a couple of small black creatures trotted across the track in the middle of nowhere. A hasty pursuit, quick shooting and gathering of photographic evidence they indeed existed, we were back on schedule in under five minutes. "Pigs!?", coughed the owner, choking on his morning coffee with a level of surprise and disbelief commensurate with being told we had bagged a SCI trophy-book unicorn. "Where did you find any pigs around here!?"

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# WHY FEELING BLAMED MATTERS FOR AUSTRALIA'S GUN LAWS

By Suzanna Fay and Amy Templar

Following the tragic Bondi Beach attack in December 2025, Australia's gun laws are back in the spotlight. Within 48 hours of that terrible day, National Cabinet announced plans to further tighten gun regulations. New federal legislation just passed has proposed a national buyback scheme, restricting importation to Australian citizens, and augmenting the background checks to be more easily integrated with national security background checking mechanisms.

For many in the shooting community, we imagine this feels familiar - another tragedy, followed by more restrictions on law-abiding gun owners. The father involved in the Bondi attack was a licensed recreational hunter with six registered firearms and a hunting club membership. He had 'no incidents' on his record. In trying to make sense of how this attack happened, the use and ownership of guns have dominated the conversation. The response focuses squarely on further restricting legal gun ownership, leaving many dealers and shooters asking: Why are we being blamed again?

Over the course of our research with the gun-owning community, we ask how negative public perceptions impact them. This research brief draws on interviews with Australian gun dealers to explore a question that rarely gets asked in these debates: What happens when an entire community of law-abiding citizens feels stigmatised, blamed and shut out of conversations about laws that directly affect them?

## What do we mean by 'stigma'?

In criminology, the term 'stigma' refers to the negative labels society systematically applies to a group of people - labels like 'dangerous', 'irresponsible,' or 'violent - that overshadow everything else about who those people really are. It's about how those labels shape every interaction, change the way people are treated, and even how they might see themselves.

Research also suggests that those labels affect their job prospects, their relationships, and how they move through the world.

The stigma many gun owners may feel today has deep roots. In June 1996, just weeks after the Port Arthur Massacre, then-Prime Minister John Howard addressed a rally of gun owners in Sale, Victoria. He wore a bulletproof vest. The message was clear to those in attendance and everyone watching: gun owners are dangerous.

Howard later expressed regret about wearing the vest, admitting he never felt his life was in danger and acknowledged the crowd wasn't violent. But the damage was done. In a time of uncertainty and fear, that single image linked gun ownership with dangerousness and violence.

## What dealers experience today

When we interviewed gun dealers across Australia, we asked them directly: Have you experienced negative reactions because of your business or involvement in shooting?

The answer was overwhelmingly yes. Dealers who lived through 1996 were particularly direct. As one put it: "In 1996, you were a leper if you were a gun dealer."

Another described the feeling: "Shooters, the organisations, legitimate people, had been blamed for the Port Arthur incident, they felt victimised, and consistently demonised even to this day. It's always a negative connotation."

The experiences aren't just feelings. Dealers also reported:

- hate mail sent to their businesses
- graffiti sprayed on shop fronts
- nasty comments from people walking past their stores
- social media attacks calling them 'murderers'
- being treated with suspicion by police during routine traffic stops.

One dealer explained how even symbols associated

with hunting - like a deer - can trigger attacks: "If there was a firearm on their Facebook picture, or this one family had an image I think it was a deer. Well, you're an evil person, by killing you shouldn't be alive anymore."

You might think these feelings are limited to dealers who lived through 1996. They're not. Younger dealers who entered the industry in the last decade also report managing negative stereotypes.

Young employees are advised not to put shooting-related stickers on their cars. One dealer observed his staff carefully censoring themselves: "I've got people who are very vocal, but you put them in a group of people they don't know very well... they probably will never ever mention they enjoy shooting or anything like that." This suggests the stigma associated with gun ownership has had a lasting influence on the gun-owning community and how they navigate public space.

## Why this matters for gun control

Research on stigmatised groups consistently shows that negative labelling leads to withdrawal, decreased cooperation and weakened support for the systems that stigmatise them. This isn't unique to gun owners - it's a human response to feeling attacked and excluded.

Our position is that targeting and blaming the gun-owning community in the wake of attacks like Bondi risks weakening our gun laws. That's because our system doesn't just rely on laws written in Canberra. It relies on gun dealers and responsible gun owners to make it work day-to-day. Dealers are the front line - checking licences, reporting suspicious behaviour, teaching new shooters about responsible ownership, and managing the mountains of paperwork that track every firearm transaction.

Most gun dealers actually support Australia's gun control laws and want to prevent gun violence. They take pride in being law-abiding citizens. And they mourn senseless death with the rest of us. This shared commitment is what makes the system work, but constant stigmatisation chips away at that goodwill, making gun owners feel like scapegoats and outsiders.

## The Bondi response and what it means

After the Bondi attack, we advocated for meaningful consultation with the gun-owning community.

The expertise, knowledge of legal gun sales, and understanding of the community all sits with legal gun owners - especially dealers - who should be partners in legislative changes, yet proposed reforms appear to be happening without their input.

Consider NSW's proposed four-firearm cap for recreational hunters. It raises practical questions that dealers and active shooters could help answer: What about people who shoot multiple disciplines? What about collectors? What about those who need different firearms for different game animals? These aren't arguments against safety. They're about the practicality of implementing laws that actually work. Dealers have this knowledge. But are they at the table?

Public discourse after Bondi suggest not much has changed since 1996. The same assumptions resurface: gun owners are a problem to be managed, not partners in public safety. This attitude undermines the very collaboration that makes Australia's gun control successful.

## A different approach

What would a different approach look like? It would acknowledge that gun dealers and responsible gun owners share the goal of preventing gun violence. It would meaningfully include them in policy discussions. It would recognise their expertise. It means treating them as partners rather than problems and understanding that effective policy isn't just about what's written in legislation but how it gets implemented on the ground by people who live with it every day.

Australia's gun control success story isn't about the 1996 laws but a community of gun owners who largely accepted those laws, complied with them, and helped make them work despite the negative public perceptions. Maintaining that success requires fostering that partnership. Stigma threatens it. As we move forward with new regulations in response to Bondi, the question is whether policymakers will choose collaboration or alienation. 🤝

Amy Templar is a PhD Candidate in the School of Social Science, University of Queensland. Her expertise centres on disentangling complex issues in firearms-related violence, such as terrorism and hate crime. She currently works with Associate Professor Suzanna Fay on understanding gun dealer perspectives on gun control.

# IN THE FIELD WITH THE DNT OPTICS TNC635R THERM NIGHT

By Robert Mori (aka @hunt.aus)

I will cut straight to the chase... the first time I stepped behind the DNT Optics ThermNight TNC635R I felt like I had accidentally stepped into tomorrow. This is not just a scope, it is a full-blown night-vision, thermal and day-view hybrid monster all packed into a compact unit. Weighing in at about 724g, it is lighter than I expected given everything it brings to the table. But do not let that fool you; this scope packs serious performance.

### Setup and first impressions

I mounted the TNC635R onto my .223 using the included 0MOA Picatinny base (there is also a 20MOA base option provided). It seated securely with absolutely no movement, no need to second-guess zero and I can confirm that setting up the scope and zeroing was an absolute breeze.

Next came the real revelation: the multispectral imaging. As advertised, you can switch effortlessly between thermal and digital night vision or even run both in picture-in-picture mode. This hybrid ability in day, night and thermal mode is exactly why I chose this scope.

### Thermal clarity and night vision: Stunning image quality

The thermal channel grabbed my attention first, with a 640x512 uncooled VOx, 12 µm pixel pitch, and NETD ≤ 18mK, which delivers crisp and detailed thermal imaging in all terrains - and even across open paddocks.

I could make out heat patterns of animals making their way around the property and was even able to see subtle movement of leaves and other details I have not seen before with lower-resolution brands and models.

Switch to night vision and you are taken aback by the Sony Starvis 2 CMOS sensor matched with a 1920x1080 Micro OLED display running at 60Hz. Colours are vivid, sharp and enticingly smooth. It is daylight-level clarity, but in near-total darkness.

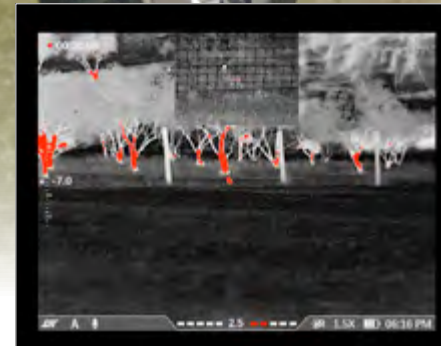
During a recent outing, I utilised the picture-in-picture mode at which time the thermal took centre stage, with real-time digital night vision running in the inset picture in picture. I could pinpoint heat signatures while simultaneously confirming images in pure clarity in and amongst complex terrain.



Mounted and ready to work.



Out in the paddocks ready to clear out some pests for a local farmer.



A bunny soon to be evicted at 80m.



Two rabbits at about 185 metres.



It was a bad day to be a fox when you're in the crosshairs of the DNT ThermNight 635r.

### On target precision: LRF and ballistic calculator

The built-in laser rangefinder is capable of accurately measuring distances from five metres out to about 1,100 metres, which is a very wide range of distance I am sure you will agree, especially when your target might be hiding in or among the shadows. It was able to instantly calculate precise holdovers and dial in settings on the fly, thanks to the well designed and powerful onboard ballistic calculator.

I used it to range a fox at 200 meters and the ballistic calculations popped up in a heartbeat. Having the correct holdover with these calculations done for you was a breeze, which makes you wonder how we ever managed to estimate distances without this technology in years gone by using guesstimation alone.

*"The beauty of this scope is there is no uncertainty..."*

### Real-world performance

Once during my travels around a farm, I paused in a clearing upon seeing a heat signature sitting ahead of me, which I thought was most likely a small kangaroo due to its silhouette... The beauty of this scope is there is no uncertainty; I was able to very quickly confirm, with the press of a button, that it was in fact a fox, which was my target species for the night. Without that dual clarity, I would have held fire unnecessarily but instead, after confirmation, it was one less fox to bother the landholder's stock.

In open paddocks, scanning at 200+ meters, the thermal channel painted a landscape in glowing detail. Combined with a smooth digital zoom from 1.5x up to 6x on thermal, and 5x to 20x optical magnification on digital day/night view, I could pick out movement, assess size and take steady shots.

**Usability and build quality**

The layout and controls are simple and straightforward: buttons are intuitive, responsive and glove friendly. There is a zoom lock for thermal mode, a variety of reticle options, IR illuminator on/off and quick mode toggles.

The battery life hovered around five hours on the included 21700 flat-top lithium-ion units, which was more than enough to last an evening or nighttime session. It can also be charged directly via USB C, which is a blessing when you're hunting remotely for prolonged periods or even camping light.

The construction feels rock-solid, with an IP67 waterproofing and rated recoil resistance of up to that which a .50cal BMG would generate; this beast is built to last!

**Extras: Recording, app and accessories**

This scope is not just about seeing; it is about documenting and learning also. It stores up to 64GB onboard, with video recording at 1800x1080p, complete with audio. The perfect example of this is when a fox I downed got up and ran 30 yards. Reviewing the footage later taught me about where I could have improved my shot placement.

Connecting to the DNT Optics app via Wi Fi, I could store multiple ballistic profiles, update firmware and tweak settings on my phone before heading out. Smart, modern and surprisingly handy when you are wearing gloves and hunting in chilly air.

Other accessories provided include a lens cover, sunshade, extra mount, spare batteries and a charger, which are all thoughtful accessories that are provided as part of the kit.

**Drawbacks and considerations**

Practice: The learning curve with multispectral operation and its button configuration took a little bit of getting used to. Switching between modes quickly, and especially in real-world hunting situations, also takes a bit of practice but was second nature after spending a bit of time navigating the unit.

Also, at about \$5,000, it is a premium investment (though significantly more affordable than military-grade multi spectral units).

*"This scope is not just about seeing; it is about documenting and learning also."*

**Final verdict: A tool for the future**

After multiple nights in mixed terrain, scrubland and open paddocks, the TNC635R has not just met expectations, it has elevated them. Whether in full thermal, digital night vision or blended multispectral mode, the clarity, adaptability and reliability blew me away.

**Key takeaways**

- Unmatched clarity from a high-res thermal sensor and premium digital night vision.
- Multispectral fusion that provides situational awareness like nothing else.
- It is a precision tool with built-in LRF and ballistic calculator, which are game changers.
- Rugged and portable, well-built, weatherproof and battle-ready.
- Smart extras include recording, app and battery life, which all add 'real life in the field' value.

**In closing**

If you are a recreational hunter, professional pest-control operator or anywhere in between and are serious about performing in the dark, the DNT Optics TNC635R is more than just a scope... It is a night-vision system, a top-shelf thermal sensor, a recording device and a ballistic brain all in one. It will elevate how you operate at the maximum level of your capabilities in any conditions or terrains.

I would go as far as saying it is quite possibly the best multispectral scope on the market at this point in time. 🍷



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**ZERO TECH**

# TRACE ED 1-10x24 Illuminated LPVO

By Brad Allen

ZeroTech International, founded in 2018, is an Australian company with an in-house team of optical and mechanical engineers who design, test and deliver high-quality optical equipment, currently built in China to their exacting specifications and exported world-wide. Tasco Sales Australia (TSA) is the distributor of ZeroTech scopes in Australia, so when they requested *The Report* to review the new ZeroTech Trace ED 1-10x24 Illuminated LPVO, I was very interested.

During the past several years, there has been strong worldwide growth in the low power variable optic (LPVO) scope market, primarily driven by consumers in the US, where such scopes are the preferred optic on tactical style semi-automatic rifles used for hunting, competition and military use.



I'm no stranger to the LPVO concept, as my first bolt action .223, many, many years ago was topped with a 'Pecar' 1.5-4x, which was a 'first focal plane' (FFP) scope. The scope was great to hunt with in the thick stuff on the lower settings, although I struggled with only 4x at times on the longer shots that the rifle and calibre were well capable of. I still own several such scopes, which are mainly mounted on hunting rifles intended for short-to medium-distance hunting. With modern scope manufacture, the power range of LPVO scopes has increased dramatically, making them even more versatile across a wide range of applications, from hunting through to competition and military use. Most military rifles now rely on either 'reflex' type optics, fixed low-power scopes or some type of LPVO.

*"With modern scope manufacture, the power range of LPVO scopes has increased dramatically..."*

The ZeroTech Trace ED 1-10x24 Illuminated is a scope that will suit a specific type of rifle and purpose. With its 34mm main tube, it's not a scope that would sit well on a slim, light bolt action hunting rifle. However, the Trace ED would be perfectly at home on AR type platform rifles, in both .223 and .308. Here in Australia, where such rifles are in short supply, they would also be perfectly at home on similar pump action, lever release (push button release) and straight pull and bolt action chassis rifles. There has been a proliferation in these action types and styles of rifles in Australia ever since semi-auto rifles were banned for general hunting and shooting back in the late 90s.

The ZeroTech Trace ED 1-10x24 Illuminated, with its 34mm main tube, is a solid piece of ordinance, made from 6061-T6 aluminium and weighing in at 727 grams. The

matt black finish is well executed, and I specifically like the inclusion of UP and R (right) markings with arrows on the rear of the turret housing, allowing shooters to make the correct adjustments without shifting from their shooting position. Also noteworthy are the precision aluminium front and rear flip up lens covers included with the scope, which lay flat against the ocular and objective housings when open. Although probably aimed more at the competition shooter, another nice touch is the removable magnification change throw lever, for fast, easy magnification changes.

Following the online instruction manual, I placed the scope on 10x and adjusted the dioptre to suit my eyesight. The reticule was crisp and clear, and it was easy to read street signs at extended distances. At 10x, the MRAD reticule

appears to be quite 'busy', with lots of information available to the shooter. Being a 'first focal plane' (FFP) scope, the reticule appears to grow as the power is turned up and, conversely, it appears to get smaller as the power is turned down. These days, most hunting scopes have the reticule in the 'second focal plane' (SFP), where the reticule remains the same size throughout the whole power range. The attraction of FFP scopes has increased in recent times, with the introduction of MRAD and MOA reticules, both of which rely on their internal hash marks to determine and judge both windage and elevation at longer ranges. In an FFP scope, this concept will work throughout the entire power range of the scope; however, in a SFP scope it will only work on the highest power.

The ZeroTech TRACE ED 1-10x24 Illuminated mounted on the author's Chimera .223.



Author's familiarisation session with the ZeroTech TRACE ED LPVO.

I am far more familiar with the old MOA system and have always measured my shooting distances with the imperial yards and inches. I can, however, appreciate the MRAD scope reticule system that uses metric measurements and I'm sure it would be a superior system for a shooter to use, once mastered. The MRAD scope reticule system is now the preferred system for military snipers who take shots at ranges that mere mortals would never contemplate.

The LPVO MRAD reticule of the ZeroTech 1-10 was specifically designed for LPVO usage and should be satisfactory out to ranges that are past the capability of most shooters. ZeroTech states that the reticule remains uncluttered at low power and reveals advanced holdover and windage references as you zoom in, with the illuminated crosshair providing a clean aiming point when light is low. I particularly like the 'circle' around the centre point of the reticule, which assists speed of aiming at all ranges, immediately centring the shooter's eye on target. At closer ranges, on lower powers, it's simply a matter of putting that central circle (normally black but red when illuminated for low light) where you want the round to go and squeeze the trigger. A very desirable feature when engaging multiple and/or moving targets at close range.



Battery cover removed. Illumination is generated by a CR2032 battery.



The scope comes packaged with a neoprene scope cover, aluminium lens covers, cleaning cloth and other accessories.

**LPVO RETICLE**

**RIFLE AND CARTRIDGE DETAILS**

CARTRIDGE: \_\_\_\_\_ PROJECTILE: \_\_\_\_\_ BC\*: \_\_\_\_\_ VELOCITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 H.O.B.\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_ TWIST RATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZERO DISTANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTANCE	DIST	ELEVATION	DIST	ELEVATION	DIST	ELEVATION
100m	100m	325m	325m	500m	500m	
150m		350m		525m		
200m		375m		550m		
225m		400m		575m		
250m		425m		600m		
275m		450m				
300m		475m				

\* BC = BALLISTIC COEFFICIENT \*\* H.O.B. = HEIGHT OVER BORE

**ZEROTECH**

RMG-L Illuminated (LPVO specific) reticule of the TRACE ED 1-10x24.

**Specifications**

- Magnification Range:** 1-10x
- Objective Lens Diameter:** 24mm
- Main Tube Diameter:** 34mm
- Parallax Adjustment:** Fixed at 100 meters
- Eye Relief:** 3.7" (94mm)
- Field of View @ 100 Meters:** 39.1m (1x)-3.91m (10x); @ 100 Yards: 117.3ft – 11.73ft
- Turret Adjustments:** 0.1 MRAD per click, 10 MRAD/revolution
- Elevation Travel:** 934 MRAD
- Length:** 10.35" (263.1mm)
- Weight:** 25.64oz (727g)
- Illumination:** Digital illumination control (push button brightness settings)
- Reticule:** RMG-L (FFP) LPVO specific
- Tube Material:** 6061-T6 Aluminium
- Lens Coating:** Weathershield protection
- Flip Covers:** Precision aluminium lens covers included

**Warranty**

ZeroTech backs its optical products for the life of the product with an unconditional lifetime replacement or repair warranty, regardless of fault or reason. No paperwork or proof of purchase is required, and the warranty is fully transferable; if you sell the scope, the warranty automatically goes with it. ZeroTech calls it its 'Any Owner, Any Problem, Always Covered, Lifetime Warranty'. A hard act to follow.

Being suitably impressed with the scope so far, it was time to put it to the test. My own zombie apocalypse/pig hunting rifle is a Chimera .223 lever release, which uses the ever-reliable AR magazines. I removed my own LPVO (Leupold VXR 1.25-4x20 Illuminated) from the Chimera and replaced it with the ZeroTech Trace ED for testing.

Although heavier than my Leupold and 45mm longer, it was still compact and didn't upset the balance of the rifle in any way, giving the outfit a very 'tactical' look and feel. The extra scope power, above my usual 4x, was a welcome feature and the clarity of the glass was apparent.

A session at the range confirmed my initial feelings about the ZeroTech. The precise elevation and windage travel and the extra scope power (up to 10x) with the clear 'Weathershield' coated lenses were much appreciated on longer shots. On the lower powers (1x to 4x), where I would normally have my scope set for hunting in closer cover, the ZeroTech's wide field of view was a distinct advantage. As I suspected, the 'circle' around the centre point of the RMG-L Illuminated (LPVO Specific) reticule made it fast and easy to acquire targets at all ranges, with or without the illumination engaged.

The ZeroTech TRACE ED 1-10x24 is a solid, well-made scope specifically designed for rifles of a 'tactical' nature. On a fast-handling tactical rifle like my Chimera, the SCSA Taipan pump action, Warwick Wedgetail, Remington 7615 or other chassis rifles, it would work extremely well. So, if you're in the market for a LPVO for your tactical rifle, have a closer look at the ZeroTech TRACE ED 1-10x24 Illuminated, and you too may be suitably impressed. At the time of writing, the recommended retail price for the TRACE ED 1-10x24 Illuminated was \$1699. ☺

*"Being suitably impressed with the scope so far, it was time to put it to the test."*



Flip-up scope covers, magnification change throw lever and push button scope illumination are all easy to use.



**ZEISS**

# Conquest HDX

## LRP 15x56 Binocular

By Neil Schultz

New to the market from renowned optics manufacturers Zeiss, is a binocular specifically designed for shooters. It's Conquest HDX LRP 15x56 binocular has all of the hallmark features one would expect from Zeiss. At the heart of its optics is precision-ground German lenses, which are multi coated to eliminate any aberration. In the Conquest HDX, those lenses are mounted into a robust magnesium alloy frame.

Most unique among the features of this binocular is the etched, milliradian (MRAD) reticle. The reticle has 5 MRAD of windage each side of the centre dot and 5 MRAD vertically. Each hash mark is 0.2 MRAD. This inclusion is aimed squarely at target shooters, both competition participants and those smacking steel at distance recreationally. Having a reticle in the bino' allows accurate measurement of a steel plate and even more useful, instant gauging of adjustments required when spotting misses.

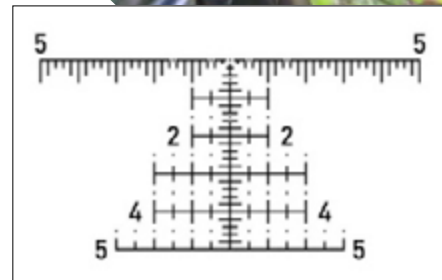
Dual locking diopters allow those of us with less than 20/20 vision to focus each eyepiece individually and then lock them in place. The eyepieces can be unscrewed from the body of the unit for cleaning.

A great inclusion with the LRP binocular is a tripod mount. This is both tripod thread and Arca rail adaptor compatible. Once the adapter is installed, the tripod mount simply clicks into place and is push button release; very useful indeed.

Retail, sub \$4000, price may deter some buyers, but these are comparable to other top-shelf units. One doesn't expect to get this sort of quality for a budget price.

Picking apart a distant hillside in search of deer is where the 15x magnification shines. Obtaining a stable image while using them handheld is not a problem.

Seen here mounted to a tripod, the operator's controls include dual diopters, the usual central focus dial and, on the left eyepiece, the toggle for leveling the internal reticle.




The etched reticle is of the commonly used Christmas tree style.

### In the field

During the course of several months of use in Australia's diverse hunting applications, the Conquest HDX were never found wanting for any features. The image is crisp edge to edge and true to colour. Depth of field is incredible, eliminating any need to continually fine tune the focus when scanning for game. I had initially anticipated 15x magnification would be difficult to hold steady, but the large frame of this unit has enough weight to eliminate user wobble. When in the mountains searching for deer, I found the use of these binoculars more comfortable than my usual spotting scope. The ability to keep both eyes open is much less fatiguing than having one eye clenched. For sessions of long duration, the tripod mount was appreciated. Being able to pop the binocular on and off the tripod with the touch of a button is a bonus. Magnification of 15x made it possible to accurately determine if a largely obscured animal on a far hillside was a macropod or deer. The same was true when dark shapes were observed at extremely long range in open paddocks. Pigs or calves, roos or deer, no guesswork needed once the 15x Conquest binoculars were brought to the eyes.

Most impressive, however, is the image quality. Even in low light conditions, the picture is bright and incredibly sharp.

In a nutshell, the Conquest 15x56 HDX LRP were found to be very user friendly with a host of useful features. 

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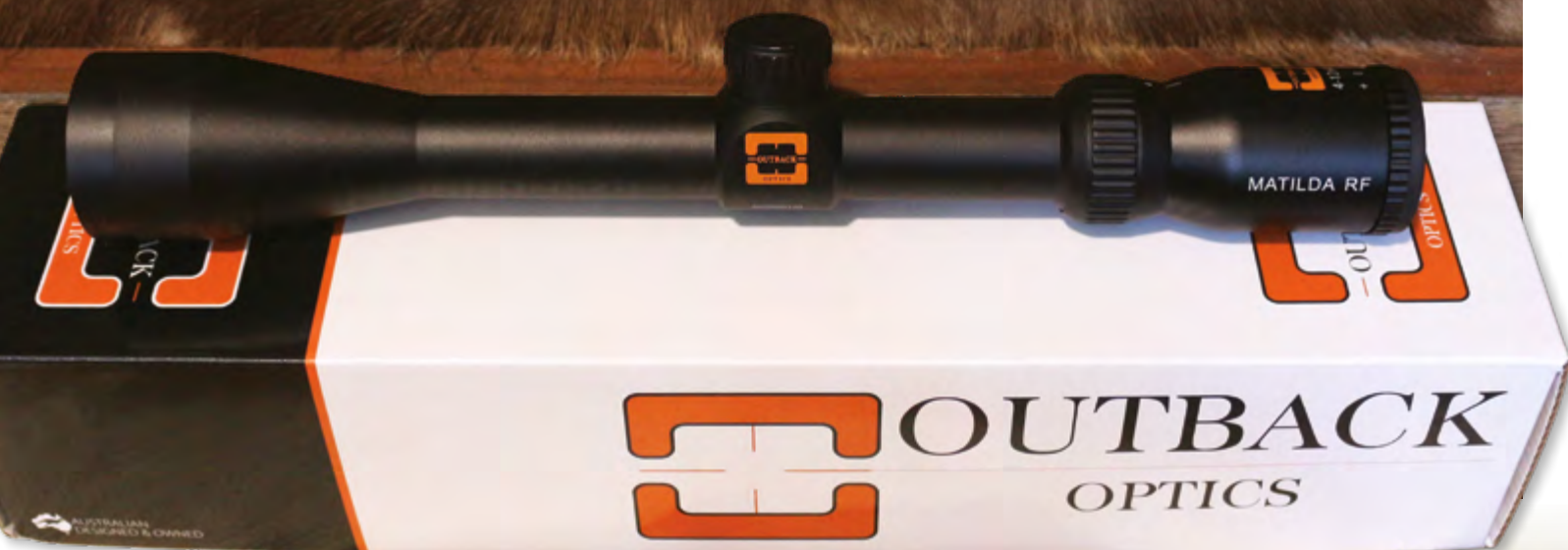
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OUTBACK  
OPTICS

# MATILDA RIMFIRE SCOPE 4-12X40 REVIEW

By Billy Allen



The Outback Optic, Matilda Rimfire 4-12x40 Scope, with its box. After opening it for inspection.

As an avid Australian shooter and hunter, I've always appreciated gear that combines reliability, affordability and a touch of national pride. When Outback Optics reached out to *The Report* with its Matilda Rimfire scope 4-12x40 for review, I was keen to put it through its paces. Outback Optics was originally founded by George Barton, a two-time Olympian with a passion for shooting. Outback Optics is an Australian-owned and operated company that started with a focus on supporting rural stores. Their products, like many optics at this price point, are manufactured in China, but it's worth noting that even bigger brands are shifting production there.

I was in the market to replace the old scope on my Ruger All-Weather 77/22 in paddle stock

*"Outback Optics was originally founded by George Barton, a two-time Olympian with a passion for shooting."*

configuration with one better suited for rimfire rifles, particularly with parallax adjustment tailored for closer ranges. Seizing the opportunity, I mounted the Matilda on my rifle to see if it lived up to the hype. Over the following weeks, I tested it in various conditions, from sighting in from the bench to evening hunts. What follows is my honest assessment, broken down into first impressions, technical specifications, field performance and final thoughts.

## First impressions

Unboxing the Matilda Rimfire scope left me with a positive vibe right from the start. The packaging was store-quality—a sturdy box that protected everything inside. Inside, I found the scope itself, a user manual, standard plastic lens covers and what has to be the largest lens cleaning cloth I've ever seen.

The scope is built to a budget, but it doesn't feel cheap. Its simple, clean lines give it a no-nonsense appearance and holding it in hand, it exudes a sense of solid construction. Peering through the lenses, there was clarity right to the edges, with no noticeable distortion.



The windage and elevation adjustment dials for the scope with the turret caps removed for inspection.

There was some burring on the threading that the turret caps screw onto, but this didn't hinder the function of the scope. Adjusting the windage and elevation turret dials

*"Adding to the appeal is the lifetime warranty, backed by a no-questions-asked replacement policy.."*

provided positive, slack-free clicks with a satisfying audible snap that inspires confidence.

The fast-focus diopter on the eyepiece was straightforward to use, quickly bringing the reticle into sharp focus—even for my bespectacled eyes. In many ways, this scope reminds me of the affordable models that used to come out of the USA about 20 years ago: straightforward, reliable and built

to last. That nostalgic quality was a real draw for me. When I compared it side-by-side with some of those older American scopes, the Matilda held its own in terms of optical clarity.

Adding to the appeal is the lifetime warranty, backed by a no-questions-asked replacement policy. Knowing that support is local and prompt is reassuring. I dropped by my local gun shop, The Open Range in Toowoomba, which stocks the Outback Optics line and chatted with the staff. They mentioned they haven't had a single return due to faults, which speaks volumes about the improved quality control in Chinese manufacturing.

I mounted the scope on both of my .22 rifles to get a feel for balance. The weight struck a good middle ground—not too heavy to burden the rifle, nor too light to feel insubstantial. It sat well on each, enhancing the overall handling. Interestingly, it's a tad longer than some lower magnification scopes I've used. On my Brno, the extra tube length was a bonus, allowing the objective lens to clear the rear iron sight without issue.

On the shooting bench with my Ruger All-Weather 77/22 in paddle stock configuration and Outback Optic, Matilda Rimfire 4-12x40 Scope, during the sighting-in phase.



## OUTBACK OPTICS MATILDA RIMFIRE SCOPE 4-12X40

Overall, my first impressions were that this is a scope offering excellent value for its price point, blending modern manufacturing efficiencies with a timeless feel.

### Technical specs and data

Diving into the nuts and bolts, the Matilda Rimfire 4-12x40 (model M4-12x40RF) is designed specifically for rimfire applications, with features that punch above its recommended retail price of \$285.

It's a second focal plane scope, meaning the reticle size remains constant as magnification changes, which is ideal for hunting in my opinion. The tube is constructed from 6063 T-06 aluminium alloy, with a standard one-inch diameter for easy mounting on most rifles. The objective lens measures 47mm outer diameter, contributing to good light gathering without adding bulk. The Matilda scope is also produced with a fully nitrogen-purged scope tube to prevent fogging.

The reticle is a BDC (Bullet Drop Compensator) type tailored for rimfire ballistics, featuring

additional crossbars for quick range estimation. Optics are fully multi-coated crystal lenses, enhancing light transmission and reducing glare. A fast-focus eyepiece ensures quick adjustments for individual eyesight.

Field of view is respectable: 10.13 metres at 4x magnification over 100 metres, narrowing to 3.33 metres at 12x. Eye relief ranges from 81mm at 4x to 70mm at 12x, providing a safe and comfortable buffer. Exit pupil is 10.5mm at 4x and 3.3mm at 12x, supporting bright images even in lower light.

Windage and elevation adjustments offer 53 MOA total travel top to bottom and left to right, with 1/4 MOA clicks. Each turret rotation has 60 teeth, allowing precise dialling. The overall length is 329mm, keeping it within a reasonable length for field use.

Backed by that lifetime warranty and no-questions-asked replacement policy, the Matilda is built to endure the rigours of Australian shooting pursuits.

### In the field

Theory is one thing, but real-world performance is where a scope proves its worth. I took the Matilda-mounted Ruger All-Weather 77/22 out for several evening sessions on local farms, targeting hares, rabbits, cats and foxes.

While hunting along a creek, the sling of my rifle accidentally slipped off my shoulder, causing the rifle to have a controlled fall to the ground, where the scope took a minor bump (some might say bounced off the ground). On inspection, the finish remained unscathed and after testing the zero, the point of impact had stayed true. The Matilda demonstrated its durability and quality of build through my minor blunder. This scope stood up to the biggest test a scope can have, taking a good knock, and passed without a blemish or losing its zero. The scope held up admirably—no scratches, marks or tarnishes, still looking factory-fresh after weeks of use.

Sighting in at 50 yards was straightforward. The 1/4 MOA clicks translated accurately to point-of-impact shifts, unlike some scopes where adjustments feel inconsistent. Once zeroed, it held firm through transport and shooting, even on my trusty stainless Ruger All-Weather 77/22.

In low light—dusk and dawn—the fully multi-coated lenses performed admirably. It gathered enough light to extend viable shooting time right to the edge of darkness, impressing me, given the price. The field of view on higher magnification remained decent, making target acquisition easy compared to scopes I've used with

tunnel-like views on higher magnifications.

The BDC reticle's crossbars were a handy feature. At 6x, the gaps corresponded to about two inches at 50 yards with CCI Velocitor and subsonic ammo; at 12x, it was roughly one inch. This aided quick holdovers, though results may vary with different loads—best to test your own groups. Even if you ignore the bars and stick to the crosshairs, they don't clutter the view or obstruct the sight picture.

Lower power magnification shone during a close-quarters stalk on a hare in thick scrub along a fence line. The 4x setting and rimfire-specific parallax kept things clear and focused, even at shorter ranges.

### Final thoughts

Wrapping up my time with the Matilda, I'm impressed. The lifetime warranty, accompanied by no-questions-asked replacement, is a strong vote of confidence from Outback Optics in the durability of their product.

This scope has earned a permanent spot on my Ruger All-Weather 77/22—I'll be keeping it and sending a check back rather than returning the scope. At its price, it competes fiercely with bigger brands at the same price point, offering top-tier value in the current market. Twenty-five years ago, when I started shooting, comparable quality came from the USA at a much higher cost. In today's economy, with rising living expenses, budget-conscious shooters like me will find the Outback Optics range a smart choice.

Rimfire-specific scopes are scarce in stores and

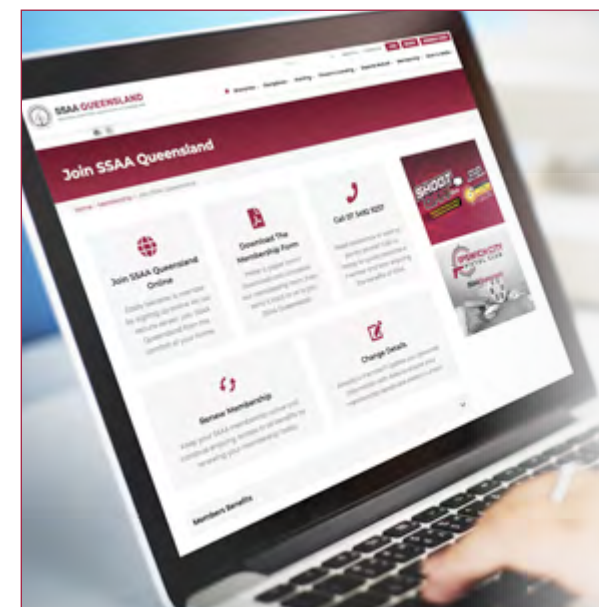
finding one of this quality in this price point is refreshing—especially from an Australian-owned and operated company. Outback Optics understands our local needs, supplying gear tailored for Australian conditions.

### Conclusion

The Outback Optics Matilda Rimfire 4-12x40 is a testament to how far affordable optics have come. It delivers clear performance, robust build and practical features without breaking the bank. Whether you're a seasoned shooter upgrading on a budget or a newcomer building your kit, this scope deserves consideration. Supporting a local company like Outback Optics not only gets you reliable gear but also invests in Australian shooting culture. If you're in the market for a rimfire optic, head to your nearest stockist and give the Matilda a look. 📍



Author (Billy) shooting his Ruger All-Weather 77/22 in paddle stock configuration and Outback Optic, Matilda Rimfire 4-12x40 Scope, during the sighting-in phase.



## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS URGENT

**Members:** Please ensure you are renewing your SSAA Queensland membership through the **SSAA Queensland website (saaql.org.au)** or if in doubt call our office on **07 3492 9237**. Do not attempt to renew your membership through the SSAA Inc website, as this will sign you up to a South Australian company called the Queensland Hunting & Shooting (QHS) club that doesn't qualify as a genuine reason for a firearms licence in Queensland or allow access to our clubs and ranges. If you have been tricked and have joined QHS, call the SSAA Inc membership office and demand a refund. Call **02 8805 3900**. 📍





By Sam Talbot

**T**alk about two birds with one stone. The Northern Lions Club Shoot for a Cause event was again held at SSAA Townsville back in August and showed that not only can you raise money for charity, but you can get a whole bunch of people to try shooting. That's serious community impact, delivering shooting fun and supporting a worthwhile cause all at the range.

First run in 2016 by the Cleveland Bay Lions Club, Shoot for a Cause was conceived as a way to combine fundraising with shooting. When the Cleveland Bay branch later closed, many members moved to the Townsville northern suburbs, ensuring the event lived on. Since then, it has been held seven times, with only the COVID years of 2020 and 2021 interrupting its momentum.

Originally held on the last Sunday of October, the event has found a cooler home closer to August. "This has made running things a lot easier on participants and especially volunteers, particularly with an aging volunteer base," says Senior Vice President – Northern Region Development, Mick Norris.

The format of the event has evolved as well. Early editions featured six stations and around

100 competitors, which, while successful, involved a fair bit of waiting around. Today's version is bigger, better and far more fluid: ten stations, ten events and plenty more trigger time. Each station is based on a recognised match format but shortened to ten shots, keeping things fair, fast and accessible for shooters of all experience levels.

Almost every discipline is covered across the 10 stations. Rifle shooters tackle silhouette, field rifle, benchrest and air rifle field target. Pistol competitors rotate through action pistol, single action, ICORE, and target pistol. Shotgunners round things out with trap and five-stand. All events are rimfire, except the shotgun stages, which use low-recoil 12-gauge ammunition to keep things comfortable and inclusive.

Competitors compete in teams of five and are paired with another team, sometimes friends, workmates or sporting groups. One team shoots while the other scores.

"This creates not only efficiency but a friendly rivalry that adds to the day's atmosphere," says Mick.

Each group receives a detailed pack outlining station order, scoring and key



Events like this take a lot of manpower. 35 volunteers were needed.

information, making the experience easy to navigate even for first-timers.

At day's end, bragging rights are firmly established. The top individual shooter and the highest-scoring team are recognised, with trophies awarded for both. The team prize includes the perpetual Col Hills Memorial Trophy, engraved with the names of all five shooters. Col Hills was a long-time Lions Club member who passed away from cancer, and the inaugural funds raised through the event were donated to the Townsville University Hospital oncology department, helping purchase specialised equipment for patients undergoing treatment.

Since its inception, the event has supported a range of charities, most recently the Ronald McDonald House. To date the shooting competition has raised more than \$40,000 total.

Around 35 SSAA Townsville and Lions Club volunteers are required to make the event happen.

"This is probably the biggest factor in the event, as those running it are getting older but still put their hands up. The Lions Club also have quite a few running their side of it as lunch is provided and they are always wandering around selling drinks, etc," says Mick.

Each year, entries have filled quickly, with businesses even sponsoring teams as part of staff bonding and development programs.

The money raised for charity is great, and it's just as great to have the shooting sports be the vessel that allows that to happen. ☺

A few businesses, such as Hall's Firearms, also sponsor teams to attend each year as part of their character building/bonding programs.



Before

# DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE TO ENTRANCE

SSAA Queensland Vice President (Northern Developments), Michael Norris, shared these before and after pictures of SSAA Townsville's entrance to the range. The new owner of the land, on which the range entrance passes, cleared the area so his cattle could move about better. "We have had quite a few members miss the entrance and or near miss it due to the dramatic difference," said Michael. "This will now allow us to place the large sign in a better place, which will also assist those attending and advertise us better." ☺



After

**CLUBS' CORNER**

# SSAA BRISBANE

By Sam Talbot

Just a short drive from the Brisbane CBD is one of our biggest and most popular ranges, SSAA Brisbane.

Located within the Belmont Complex, SSAA Brisbane has been operating for many decades across about 400 hectares.

If you want to shoot 'it', there's a very good chance SSAA Brisbane has the option. Benchrest can be shot out to 400-yards and silhouettes to 500. There's a 50m pistol range and Pistol Silhouettes can be shot up to 200 yards. Plus, there's both Skeet and Trap ranges, as well as a 25m Indoor Air Rifle Range (.177 limit).

With all that at its disposal, the club of course offers an extensive variety of shooting disciplines with competitions being held both during the day and at night. For competition shooters, the site hosts 17 rifle, five shotgun and approximately 55 handgun competitions per month. State and national championships are also hosted as required.

Additionally, the club offers regular practice sessions throughout the week, and it is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, as well as all day Friday through to Sunday.

SSAA Brisbane also plays an active role in introducing new participants to the sport through

its successful junior section and try shooting program. For the more serious though, the club hosts many championships, including last year's Brisbane Fly United Invitational, the Fly Nationals, RMS State Championship, PSQ 2025 Metallic Silhouette 200m and the Big Bore State Championships.



The club is committed to being accessible and welcoming to all members and guests. It provides accessible parking, toilets, ramps and other assistive equipment. The club is also in the process of upgrading lift access to areas of the site that are currently less accessible. SSAA Brisbane remains committed to continuous improvement in accessibility and encourages feedback from members and visitors on how it can further enhance its facilities.

In addition to its seven ranges, the site includes a range shop, workshop and maintenance facilities. There's also a club office, trophy room, meeting room and a fully equipped commercial kitchen and bar.

A dedicated training building is used for weekly safety courses, and a section of the building provides space for competition matters. The site also allows on-site camping during competition events, with access to bathroom facilities.



Plenty of lanes for shooters.

**The future**

Recently, the club has gone through some significant personnel changes. The new team said they were focussed on listening to members and continuing to improve facilities, competitions and increasing new shooters entering the sport.

SSAA Brisbane has recently purchased new sets of high-grade Rifle Metallic Silhouette targets for 500m Centrefire events, and the pistol section has new professional-grade Steel Challenge targets and Texas Star targets for both rimfire and centrefire competitions.

The club has also recently introduced a new RF 2-Gun competition under the Practical Shooting rulebook, with shooters transitioning between firearm types during the course of fire. The plan is to continue developing this and introducing more similar shoots that members have asked for.

SSAA Brisbane also recently introduced a new pricing structure to make shooting supplies more attractive to Q01 members and even more so for ARP holders.

Suffice to say, SSAA Brisbane has been busy and are only getting bigger and better. 🌟

## What people are saying about SSAA Brisbane

"Have been here a few times now for the Come and Try sessions. Highly recommended. The team there are super knowledgeable and keen to provide tips and guidance as much as you are willing to listen and learn." - No name supplied

It is well organised, and simple to get started even if you have little to no experience. Safety is paramount, but the environment is still casual enough to enjoy yourself. Go yourself or take a friend," - Chris Adams on Google Reviews.

"This range is well organised, super friendly range officers who are there to help and assist in any question you have as a new shooter." - No name supplied

"When I became a frequent visitor of this range, I was always welcomed and made to feel really supported as a new shooter." - No name supplied

"Very clean range also," - Bailey Catlop on Google Reviews.

"Visited for the first time last week, organised range, friendly staff and felt welcome. I prefer an open range, the benches were well spaced out and the range officers do their job without being gruff. They like their job and want you to enjoy the experience, which as a novice and female, makes a huge difference. We brought our daughter for her first try with a .22, and despite the loud 308s booming, we have a new shooter in our midst. Wish we lived closer to Brisbane and we will go back again. Thanks to all the staff and a couple of fellow members who were both warm and welcoming." - Diana T2 on Google Reviews.

"Great shooting facilities with hanging metal targets out to 500m can place paper targets from 200m inward in increments of 25m, awesome range officers and plenty of ammo in the shop; has most popular calibres and some odd ones, so you should be good if you end up 'winchester' - you can go to the shop and re up and keep sending it." - Matt Martin on Google Reviews.



NIOA held a trade show at SSAA Brisbane last year.

# FROM NERF WARS TO THE FIRING LINE



Firearms, whether real or fake are being treated with the same respect and rules in our house, which will hopefully one day translate to educated and competent junior shooters joining me at the range.

## Teaching firearms safety at home

By Rachael Oxborrow

It is not unusual to hear the commands commence fire, range is closed or reset your targets at your local shooting club, but recently you can hear this commentary from my living room.

My chosen sport of target shooting and personal commitment to firearm safety has collided with the parenting era, where my young children are obsessed with Nerf guns and it's been an interesting experience. I'm choosing to use this phase as an educational



Talking about firearm parts, firearm types and different types of target shooting competitions has allowed me to share some of my own personal interests with my children in an unexpected way.

opportunity and a chance to bond with my children, even though I'm quite sure there would be some eye rolling happening around me.

As a part of our day-to-day activities, we have visitors (both adults and children) who join us in the fun and thankfully our wider friendship circle knows my personal and professional backstory and understand why we have certain rules. The visiting children who return to our house are adapting, and I hope the impact of how we use our Nerf guns and what we talk about is creeping in.

It isn't all about rules though, there's been a lot of healthy competition; we're talking about different firearm types and parts and explaining how these Nerf guns work and what is similar to the real firearms myself and other family members use for hunting and target shooting.

The Nerf guns are creating bonding experiences and bridging a gap I didn't realise existed. For me and many others reading this magazine, I'm sure firearms have been a part of our daily lives since a young age. I grew up on a farm



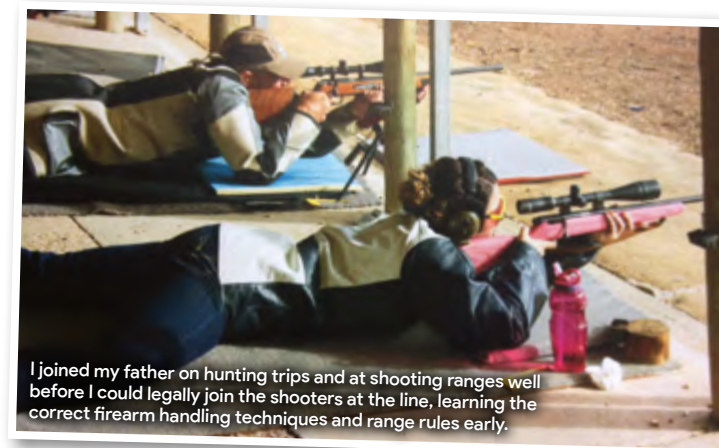
My niece has recently started accompanying my brother to his local range and she's joining in the fun in a safe and supportive environment.

and can vividly remember going spotlighting as a kid, joining the crew on hunting trips and accompanying my father to the shooting ranges around the state well before I was allowed to handle a firearm.

I helped with scoring, target resetting, passed the theory safety tests before the age of 10 and by the time I finally could join the shooters at the line, I was more than ready and capable. But the thing I hadn't thought of until now is, this understanding and respect for firearms and safety established from a young age was an important foundation built by my parents knowing firearms were a part of my life.

However, this hasn't been the case so far for my children purely because of where we live. As my children are now out of the toddler and pre-school

## FROM NERF WARS TO THE FIRING LINE



I joined my father on hunting trips and at shooting ranges well before I could legally join the shooters at the line, learning the correct firearm handling techniques and range rules early.

phase, my ability to get back to the range more often without significant logistics and babysitting favours involved is increasing. With this transition, I'm hoping to start fostering that involvement I had and build towards encouraging them to take part.

Meanwhile, a number of the people who I know from target shooting actively bring and involve their children from a very young age and it's clear that kids quickly learn boundaries and respect for the rules and the use of firearms in a controlled environment.

The reality is that shooting is one of the few sports that encourages and caters for the participation of the young and old, males and females, able-bodied and disabled. Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Queensland (SSAA Qld) recognises junior shooters as an important part of its membership, they are after all the future of the sport.

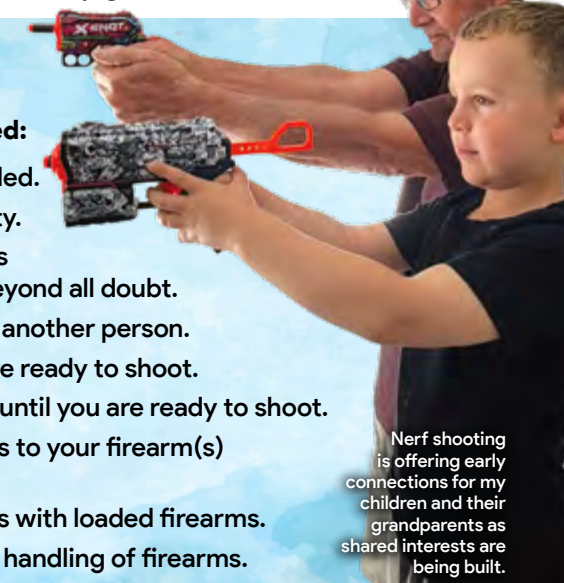
Sport shooting in general is a family-orientated pastime and the whole family can enjoy a new-found group of friends, as well as many challenges, once they get involved. 🎯

## FIREARMS SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Many of the firearms safety rules and messages that apply as adults can be translated for young children in an age-appropriate way. It goes without saying that the focus should be on teaching young children that if they come across a real firearm, they need to treat it as if it is loaded and let an adult know. Some further basics that ensure they understand why firearms are handled, stored, and used in certain ways are also important.

For example, a number of the National Firearms Safety Code recommendations can be adapted:

1. Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
2. Your firearm is your responsibility.
3. Always ensure your firing zone is clear and identify your target beyond all doubt.
4. Never point a firearm at or near another person.
5. Never load a firearm until you are ready to shoot.
6. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
7. Never allow unauthorised access to your firearm(s) or ammunition.
8. Do not climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms.
9. Encourage safe and responsible handling of firearms.



Nerf shooting is offering early connections for my children and their grandparents as shared interests are being built.

# REBEL GUN WORKS

By Paul Heiser

Walking into Rebel Gun Works is akin to walking into an Alladin's cave. Besides stocking new and second-hand firearms that you would expect to see in a gun shop, there you will find an array of cast projectiles, hard to get cartridge cases and bits and bobs. On several occasions I have walked in seeking something off beat and have been told 'I'll just have a look out the back'.

I was fortunate to be able interview James, the manager of the store. Below are the questions and responses for that interview.

**Q: When did Rebel Gun Works first open its doors?**

Rebel Gun Works began operating in 1996, right in the heart of Woolloongabba, Brisbane. From day one, we've been a proudly family-owned business. What started as a modest venture has steadily grown over nearly three decades. In fact, we'll be celebrating our 30th anniversary next year, which is a milestone we're incredibly proud of.

Rebel Gun Works can be found in Woolloongabba, Queensland. Twenty years ago, three gun shops operated within 30 minutes of each other. Today, Rebel stands strong but alone.

**Q: Where does Rebel fit within Australia's firearm retail industry today?**

Over the years, we've established ourselves as one of Queensland's (and the country's) most trusted names in firearms and accessories. Beyond our physical retail store, our website and phone sales allow us to support recreational shooters, hunters, collectors, and rural professionals all over Australia. Our store offers a broad range of new and used firearms, ammunition, optics, accessories, and an extensive selection of parts. We also offer a highly regarded consignment service for pre-owned firearms.

**Q: Did you set out to fill a specific niche in the market, or did that evolve over time?**

That niche definitely evolved. Not long after opening, we noticed a real gap in the market particularly around spare parts and components for older or discontinued firearm models. Customers were telling us they simply couldn't find what they needed. So, we started sourcing parts to help where we could. What began as a sideline quickly developed into a core part of our business. Today, we're known nationally for our extensive parts inventory, which continues to grow.

Rebel Gun Works could be described as an Alladin's cave, as the selection of goods is most impressive.



**Q: What would you say Rebel Gun Works specialises in today?**

Our speciality is parts, hands down. We now carry over 20,000 individual components, catering to everyone from gunsmiths and collectors to everyday shooters chasing hard-to-find items. Whether it's an obscure spring or a discontinued sight, we've built a reputation for tracking it down. That's in addition to our wide retail offering of firearms and accessories. Our consignment service is also extremely popular and has helped hundreds of customers find new homes for quality second-hand firearms.

**Q: Have you noticed any particular trends emerging in the past year or so?**

Yes, particularly in demand for parts that support modern rifle brands like Howa, Tikka, Sako, and many others. Many retailers don't stock components and spare parts for

these rifles on their shelves, but we've worked hard to stay ahead of that curve. Our longstanding relationships with nearly every major distributor in Australia mean we're able to source parts and accessories that others might not be able to. Staying agile and in tune with what shooters actually need has become a key part of our store.

**Q: How big is the Rebel team today?**

We operate with a dedicated team of around 15 staff. While our shopfront remains relatively modest, there's a lot happening behind the scenes. Our team runs a tight and efficient operation, and many of our customers have been with us for years. That loyalty really stems from a combination of deep product knowledge, reliable service, and a genuine commitment to supporting the shooting community. It's that old-fashioned service ethic that still defines who we are today.

It is heartening to see a gun shop survive and thrive in what can be a negative environment. Twenty years ago there were three gun shops within a thirty-minute walk from my home; now there is only Rebel. We need to support our local dealers so that our sport will prosper.

Rebel can be contacted on 07 3391 6744 or email [sales@rebelgunworks.net](mailto:sales@rebelgunworks.net) [rebelgunworks.com.au](http://rebelgunworks.com.au)



In addition to Rebel's wide retail offering of firearms and accessories, it is best known for its large selection of parts – even obscure ones.



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# THE STILLNESS BEHIND THE SHOT

What biathletes, soldiers and SSAA shooters can teach us about control

By Robert M. Walkley

Not long ago, a Secret Service agent found himself face to face with an assassin aiming at a former US president. He drew, fired five or six rounds from barely five feet away and missed. Completely.

Think about that for a moment. A man trained to protect world leaders, froze in the most critical second of his career. Pressure doesn't discriminate. You can train for years, qualify top of your class, and still, in the white heat of real life, your body can betray you.

So, it isn't enough to have skill. You have to be able to deliver that skill when the pulse spikes, when the noise swells, and when adrenaline turns precision into chaos.

It's the same reason I'm fascinated by Winter Olympic biathletes. You see a biathlete skiing at Olympic pace, heart pounding, then suddenly stop, drop a knee and shoot five times at a target the size of a beer coaster. It's beyond impressive. In a split second, they switch from chaos to calm, from maximum physical exertion to surgical precision shooting. The shooter in me just watched in appreciation, thinking: 'Now *that's* control'.

And this is, in fact, the very heart of shooting. Because no matter if you are skiing the Alps, fronting the SSAA range in Townsville on a hot and humid Saturday morning, or lining up a

prize game shot deep in the bush, the challenge remains the same: stay calm when your whole body screams for you to move.

Here's the science. Under stress, the body doesn't ask permission - it just reacts. Adrenaline surges, the heart races, breathing quickens, and fine motor control disappears, along with it that delicate stuff we depend on for trigger finesse; it's the 'fight-or-flight response' - identical to back in the caveman days. Utterly awesome escaping a sabre-toothed tiger; maintaining a perfect sight picture at 50 meters...not so much.



These biathletes have learned how to stay in control even when their hearts are pounding.

Every shooter can relate. That tiny muzzle movement you cannot help but notice, the shake that wasn't there when dry-firing at home, the mental noise starting as soon as you are trying to be still. Folks, that's not a sign of weakness; it's biology. And you can't force your body to play nice; you have to cooperate with it. From weekend plinkers to state contenders - the same but different - if you get my drift.

It applies to shooters at every level. From new SSAA members learning which end of the rifle points forward, to competitors fighting for state-level titles where a single point can decide the podium. The fact is, the stress response doesn't care who you are.

The new shooter's nerves might come from self-consciousness: 'Everyone's watching; don't stuff this up.' Or maybe from being worried about the potentially

*"My goal isn't to get rid of nerves, it's to shoot well despite them."*

deadly weapon he or she is holding and about to fire.

The elite shooter's nerves come from expectation: 'I've trained for months; don't throw it away now.' Or, 'I'm up against him, the guy who pipped me at the last Nationals.'

Different words, same biology. Heart rate, breath, adrenaline. It's universal.

Psychologists help athletes recognise that pressure is universal and unavoidable. It's unavoidable.

Indeed, the best mindset for the novice is to recognise that feeling pressure isn't a sign you're out of your depth, it's a sign you care. And to the top-tier competitors 'My goal isn't to get rid of nerves, it's to shoot well despite them.'

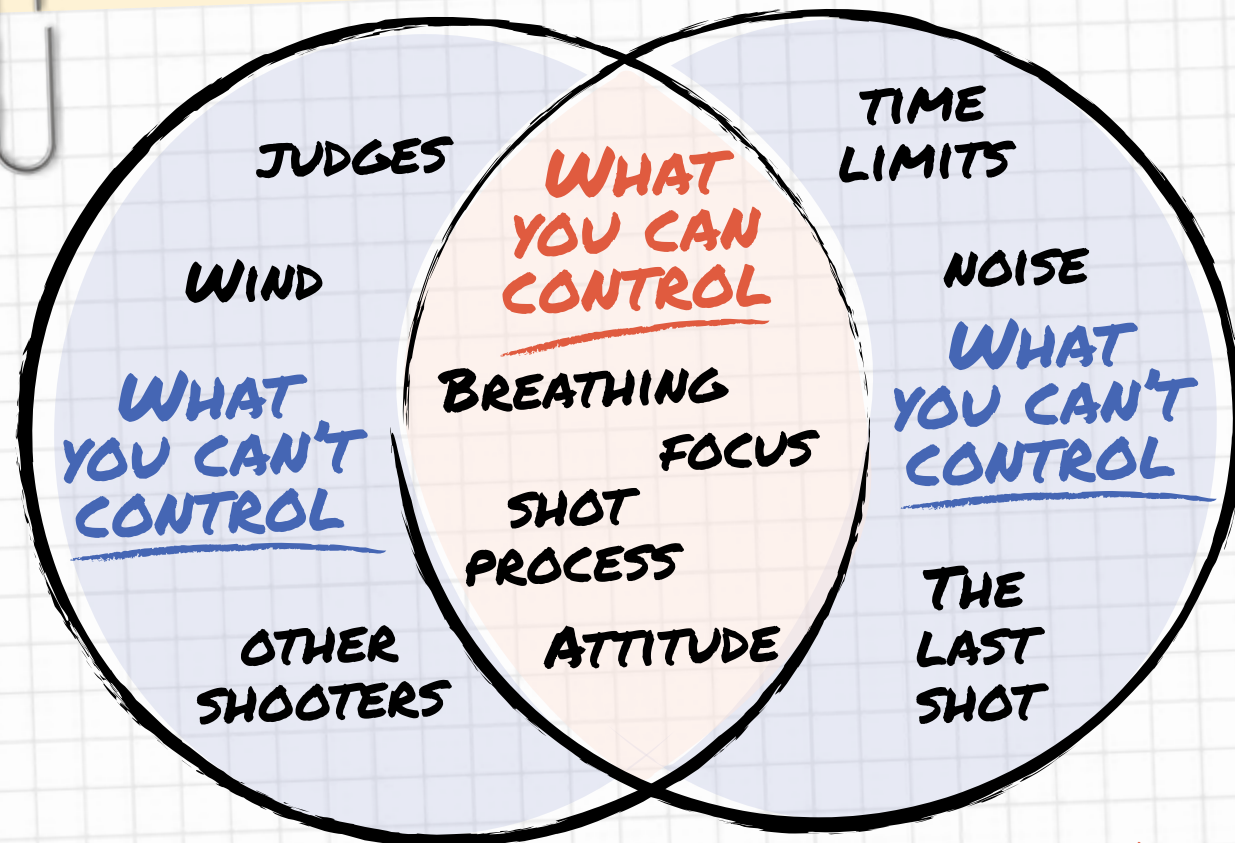
At every level, the trick is to train the body and the mind to meet in the middle, to channel that arousal into precision, not panic. That's what separates the consistent performers from the ones who unravel after a single bad shot.

Let's start with the most underrated tool in the box: breathing.

I've seen shooters with rigs worth thousands forget to breathe properly once the timer starts. Their pulse skyrockets, and suddenly they're chasing their own heartbeat across the front sight or down through the scope.

Controlled breathing, what we call slow, diaphragmatic, and deliberate, is your built-in reset





Draw two circles on paper. In the middle, write what you can control: your breathing, your focus, your shot process, your attitude. In the outer circle, list what you can't control: wind, noise, time limits, other shooters, judges, the last shot.

switch. It lowers your heart rate, steadies your hands, and gives your brain a simple task to anchor and focus on. Some shooters take the shot at the bottom of the exhale, others after a half breath. The method doesn't matter. The rhythm does. It's your metronome. It's a physical cue that says, 'I'm in control here.'

And what about pressure? Whether you're in competition or out on a hunt, it's like the wind -invisible, unpredictable and capable of pushing you just enough off course to ruin a perfect group. It's what makes competition such a great leveller.

At the club level, it might be the first time you shoot for a score with people watching. At the regional level, it's that friendly rival who

*“Every time your mind drifts outward, you lose bandwidth for what really counts. Bring it back to the inner circle, your controllables. That's where performance lives.”*

never misses. At the state level, it's knowing a single flier could erase months of preparation.

Remember above where I spoke of nerves and how they might manifest? Here, I'm speaking about pressure and how it might manifest. Notice the similarities. That's because the mind-body connection of how we each perceive pressure and turn that into a nervous reaction

is of our making. The trick is to master that as best you can.

What changes across those levels isn't the feeling of pressure, it's how familiar it becomes. The best shooters aren't immune to nerves; they've just made friends with them. The trick is to get the conscious brain out of the way while the body runs the program.

I've seen this same process in

every high-pressure environment I've worked in. Soldiers shooting under real fire learn to find quiet in chaos. Professional footballers learn to block out crowds and noise. Olympic divers learn to slow time to a single breath before take-off.

They all develop what's called 'micro-control': the ability to shrink awareness to the moment - the grip, the stance, the breath, the sight picture and let the rest fall away. It's what the great performers all do intuitively.

Try this at your next range session. Draw two circles on paper. In the middle, write what you can control: your breathing, your focus, your shot process, your attitude. In the outer circle, list what you can't: wind, noise, time limits, other shooters, judges, the last shot.

Every time your mind drifts outward, you lose bandwidth for what really counts. Bring it back to the inner circle, your controllables. That's where performance lives.

Don't forget the impact of the adrenaline rush. Shooters...no matter how fit or calm you are, your pulse is ALWAYS in the equation. The trick is to sync with it, not fight it. At a thousand metres, your heartbeat can be the invisible crosswind you never see coming. Each pulse shifts the muzzle by a hair, but out at the steel, that can open into a miss measured in feet.

Long-range shooters learn to read their pulse, timing the press between beats or breathing just enough to smooth the motion. It's a humbling reminder that at distance, even your own body becomes part of the terrain. Some use a heart rate monitor during training to find their shooting window' - the moment of stillness between heartbeats. Remember - whatever works. Your heart will race in competition. That's fine. What matters is that your mind doesn't race with it.

Pressure releases are vital. Every sportsperson has had the game or round they'd rather not talk about. The trick is not to let one bad shot breed a dozen more. Humour keeps the edge off; humility keeps the learning curve alive. The best shooters carry both in their range bags. Learn to laugh at yourself. It works wonders lightening the mood, releasing pressure and calming you down.

Finally, try this the next time you're out for a shoot. Think of yourself as a goldfish, with the memory of a goldfish. Swimming round and round in your little

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
Robert M. Walkley is a forensic and sports psychologist, long-time SSAA member, and competitive shooter based in Townsville, Queensland.

bowl, and by the time you're back at the start of the circle, you've forgotten what the world out there looks like. Treat errors and mistakes just like that. The best shooters have that capacity. They can wash away the last mistake before the brass even hits the ground. The mind resets, the breath steadies, and they're already thinking about the next shot.

After half a century in psychology and sport, I still find shooting endlessly fascinating because it sits at the intersection of physiology and philosophy. It's about discipline and self-awareness. It's about knowing that the only variable

you can truly master is yourself.

From the biathlete on the world stage to SSAA novices learning to trust their breathing, the journey is the same: finding the stillness behind the shot.

Because in the end, the muzzle doesn't lie. It simply tells you how calm you really are. ☺



The Biathlon combines cross-country skiing and rifle shooting – a challenging mix.

# BUYING & SELLING FIREARMS IN QUEENSLAND

By Brendan Jones

What to pick? With so many firearms to choose from, having the help of a dealer/gun shop makes your decision easier.

Confused about the process of selling or buying a gun? Read on about the basics of acquiring and disposing firearms in Queensland.

For those new to the shooting sports, buying and selling firearms can be confusing and complicated. Buying from a dealer, is pretty straight forward. But if you are buying, selling, gifting or receiving firearms privately in Queensland, there are some things you should know.

## Permit to Acquire

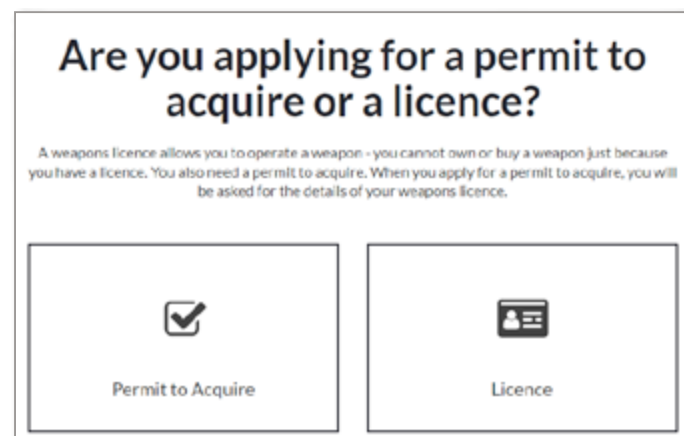
To acquire a firearm in Queensland, whether that be by purchasing one or being gifted one, you will need a permit to acquire (PTA), additional to holding the correct licence. This is true when acquiring from both a store and an individual. In many cases, a store might help you apply for the PTA and you won't need as much detail (for example the serial number is not required). But doing it yourself is also pretty simple.

The easiest way to apply for a PTA is online at [police.qld.gov.au/units/weapons-licensing](http://police.qld.gov.au/units/weapons-licensing), where the PTA application can be found. You will be walked through five pages, where you will need to confirm your own details (you being the acquirer). Additional to this, you will require information about the firearm like category, brand, model, magazine capacity and its serial number. Lastly, you will also need some details about the person you are getting the firearm from (the disposer), including their name, weapons licence



Dealers most commonly encountered when buying or selling a firearm are those associated with a gun shop, such as Hall's in Townsville.

*"The transaction must be brokered by a licensed dealer."*



To acquire a firearm, whether that be by purchasing one or being gifted one, you will need a permit to acquire (PTA).

number and address. There is, of course, a fee involved when applying for a PTA, which increased to \$45.98 from July 1, 2025. You will need to be able to pay this fee online to progress with the application.

There exists an option to download a printable version (Form 28) from Weapons Licensing and, once filled out, it can then be lodged in person at a police station along with payment. How long this remains an option for is unknown.

You should receive an email with a case number to confirm your application is progressing, with current processing time estimations listed on the Weapons Licensing website. Once it has been approved, you will be mailed out a hardcopy of your PTA. The PTA is valid for six months from date of issue.

If you are disposing of a firearm (be that through sale, gifting or surrendering), you don't need to get any kind of permit. If gifting or selling to an individual, that person will need to get a PTA first. If trading in or selling to a licensed dealer, there is no need to wait, as they are not required to have a PTA to acquire the firearm.

## What is brokerage?

Once a PTA has been received, there is still one last vital step that must be undertaken - the exchange must be brokered. Brokering, in a general sense, refers to 'facilitating a deal or transaction between two parties', usually by a third party, that holds some kind of special certification or licence. In the case of firearms in Queensland, the addition or removal of a gun from a shooter's licence must be brokered by a licensed firearms dealer. While there are people who possess dealers' licences without running a retail store, the dealers most commonly encountered are those associated with a gun shop. When a transaction is occurring between an individual and the store, the dealer is acting as two of the three parties, either acquirer/disposer of the firearm in question, as well as the broker. When an exchange is occurring between two parties who do not possess a dealer's licence, a dealer is a necessary third party to the transaction. In unique situations, when there is not a licensed dealer within 100km of your place of residence, a Queensland police officer may broker the transaction.

## BUYING AND SELLING FIREARMS

### The transaction

For the exchange to be finalised, the dealer who is acting as a broker must sight the actual physical PTA, the firearm in question and the acquirer's valid weapons licence. They will then perform some paperwork and reporting behind the scenes to Weapons Licensing that will then result in the firearm in question being removed from the disposer's licence and be added to the acquirer's licence. It is important to stress this process must occur for the exchange to be legal. Simply having a PTA issued and then taking possession of the firearm will not result in the firearm changing licence. The transaction must be brokered by a licensed dealer. Dealers are afforded the right in legislation to charge a small amount for the service of brokerage.



A dealer acts as both the acquirer/disposer and a broker during a transaction between an individual and a store. Image supplied by Queensland Shooters Supplies.

A dealer acts as both the acquirer/disposer and a broker during a transaction between an individual and a store.  
Image supplied by Queensland Shooters Supplies.



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## **Interstate**

In a case where a firearm is registered, or is to be registered, in a different state as part of the transaction, a dealer from each of the states in question is required to be involved. This is often referred to as a dealer-to-dealer transfer.

## **Advertising**

In Queensland, legislation requires you to list the serial number when advertising a firearm. There are no restrictions legally on where you can advertise, but some sites or publications choose not to allow the advertisement of firearms on their platforms.

Other states have their own rules about what is required to advertise, so you will find many websites dedicated to advertising gun sales require additional information such as seller's licence number and the dealer being used.

After getting your Permit to Acquire, the exchange still must be brokered.

## **Conclusion**

While there are rules to follow and steps that must be taken, buying and selling guns privately isn't as complicated as you might have first thought. But like any kind of buying and selling, you will need to use commonsense to protect yourself. Beware buying unseen from unknown sources and sending deposits and payments before goods are received. And just like buying a used car or new puppy online, if a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. 🚫





# THE HORROR OF BONDI

By Robert M. Walkley

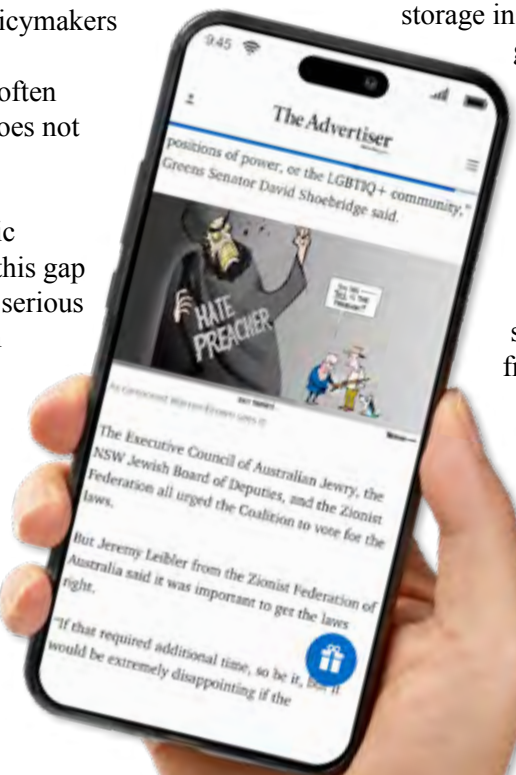


In the aftermath of the horrific Bondi attack, the national reflex, at least at the political level, was immediate and predictable. Grief followed by outrage. Outrage followed by calls for further restrictions on firearms. This, despite Australia already operating under one of the most restrictive civilian gun-control frameworks in the democratic world. A bit of self-disclosure: my personal experience was deepened by the fact that I, too, am Jewish.

For shooters, the script is familiar. Every atrocity, in an almost knee-jerk reflexive manner, becomes the reason to revisit laws that already treat licensed firearms owners as a risk class rather than as folks with demonstrated responsibility. But rather than focus on the well-worn argument that we, the law-abiding shooters, will once again pay the price, there's something I feel is more important that deserves attention, one that shooters intuitively grasp and policymakers consistently miss.

First, let's start with the notion often captured in memes that the risk does not reside in the firearm. It resides in the person.

Coming at this as both a forensic psychologist and a shooter, I see this gap clearly. In my professional work, serious violence is almost never a sudden lightning strike. It is a process. A pathway is followed. It typically begins with a grievance, then resentment, progresses through fixation and rumination and hardens into intent – sometimes murderous intent. But long before an act occurs, there are signals, 'behavioural leaks', as we like to refer to them as, and warning signs. Violence



announces itself quietly before it announces itself loudly.

We, as shooters, understand this in a way that rarely gets acknowledged. Every range has its own informal but effective threat-assessment system. The bloke who always seems angry, unstable, obsessed with violent fantasy or socially disconnected is noticed pretty darn quickly. He's watched. Conversations take place. Range officers might intervene. Sometimes access is quietly withdrawn. Not because shooters are reckless, but because they are practical.

Aussie firearms culture, at its best, is built on a sober appreciation of consequence.

Contrast that with the political response to Bondi. The focus was not on the behavioural trajectory, possible mental deterioration or warning-sign interception. It was on the *theatre* of regulatory control. On tightening a system already replete with licensing hurdles, storage inspections, mandatory waiting periods, genuine-reason tests, the 'fit and

proper person' metric and ongoing scrutiny that, dare I say, no other high-risk activities are subjected to.

From a psychological standpoint, this response is understandable but flawed. After trauma, we, as humans, crave something tangible to control. Trauma strips people of their sense of control, and from that loss flows panic, anxiety, anger and the dead weight of helplessness and hopelessness.

For many, the way forward to reestablish control is to address the weapon. Something *visible*. Concrete. Countable. Bannable. A disturbed mind is not. Legislating against objects feels decisive – like we're doing *something*. And for politicians...it's far more important

to be *seen* to be doing something. Intervening in human pathways requires judgment, coordination and the willingness to act before certainty exists. And certainty is the luxury we never get in prevention.

One of the most inconvenient truths about mass violence is restricting one method almost never removes the intent. Those who reach the point of such moral disengagement required to kill strangers, will adapt. We have seen this over and over again. Vehicles, knives, arson and improvised means used where firearms are unavailable or impractical. The method changes. The outcomes do not. Threat-assessment work shows that when intent is fixed, means are flexible and restricting one method simply drives substitution.

What stops these events is not simply the absence of a tool, but the early disruption of the trajectory.

Australia invests heavily in post-incident response and regulatory compliance, but comparatively little in coordinated threat assessment. State mental health systems remain fragmented. Information sharing between agencies is either inconsistent or entirely missing. We, in the liberal west, are culturally hesitant to act on concerning behaviour until it becomes criminal. So, we wait for proof, even when warning signs are already flashing.

Shooters know better. We do not wait for a negligent discharge before we intervene. We act on discomfort, pattern and intuition long before something goes wrong. That mindset, applied at a societal level, would do far more to prevent atrocities than another round of legislative tightening aimed at people who are already compliant.

The uncomfortable truth is this: Australia does not have a gun-law problem in the aftermath of Bondi. It has a failure-to-intercept problem. And the even more uncomfortable truth is there is a clear and manifest threat embedded in our society. But even more sadly,

*"The uncomfortable truth is this: Australia does not have a gun-law problem in the aftermath of Bondi. It has a failure-to-intercept problem."*

and perhaps now tragically demonstrated, there's an overwhelming reluctance to speak the truth with respect to what the problem actually is.

In practice, concern about accusations of bias can discourage precise language in threat assessment, making it harder to clearly identify the ideology as a specific driver of risk and potentially delaying proportionate early intervention.

If policymakers genuinely want to prevent the next tragedy, they need to stop virtue-signalling, stop treating firearms regulation as a moral signal, start treating violence as a human process and use clear, unambiguous language. That means investing in early threat assessment, empowering agencies to act before certainty and accepting that prevention will never be neat, simple or politically risk-free.

Shooters live with consequence every time they unlock their safe, load a magazine into a firearm, step onto a range, and take responsibility for a tool that demands discipline. We understand safety is not achieved by pretending risk does not exist, but by confronting it early and honestly.

The question after Bondi is not how much tighter the laws can be made. The question is whether we are prepared to do the harder work of recognising danger in people before they act, rather than punishing those who never would. 🚫

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# SmartRest SpydaBot Sting H2O

*A unique and interesting product that aims to take your thermal game to the next level*

By Brendan Jones

When looking to vehicle mount and Wi-Fi stream a thermal, a hunter's first thoughts usually go to the thermal itself - style, brand, specifications and so on. But on the other side of the equation is the equally important question: how will the thermal device be mounted and controlled? This review looks at a unique (and fun) answer to that question by Australian company Eagleye Hunting Gear, the SmartRest SpydaBot Sting H2O.

## Description

The SpydaBot Sting H2O is comprised of two main parts: the remote-controlled pan/tilt head for mounting the thermal device (or other attachments), and a magnetic base for securing it to the vehicle.

The head has an arca-style clamp, as is common with photographic equipment and increasingly so in shooting gear. The unit is full 360° pan capable and tiltable to 52°. Maximum payload is listed as 2.2kg and is powered by an internal 18650-style battery charged through an external USB type C port. A small control panel on the front consists of a power button, channel up and down buttons and a small red LCD display to show channel, battery charge and scan speeds.

The remote only weighs 80 grams and fits easily in the hand (110mm long, 40mm wide, 23mm thick). The multidirectional thumb-controlled joystick controls panning and tilting, allowing for variable speed based on how far you deflect the stick (panning topping out at 18rpm). It too has a red LCD displaying similar information as the main unit. A few buttons on the remote allow for setting up saved points and initiating auto scanning functions. A pair of triple-A batteries power the remote, and was tested to 60m, beyond which the author saw no point to test it further.

The base is comprised of a rectangular aluminium plate, and six metal adjustable legs 165mm long, each with a large magnetic foot



About as slick and futuristic of a night hunting setup as you can get. The double adaptor allows for a Nova H35R to be tandem mounted with a high-powered torch. The Eagleye Hunting Gear remote switch has been wired up to trigger the Olight Warrior X turbo; the Nova has its own built in green laser pointer and range finder, and the battery grip that is being used to power the nova threads in securely between the two. Good luck ferals, you're gonna need it...

A small amount of assembly is required when purchasing a Sting H2O, but it won't trouble anyone with a couple of allen keys and a spanner.



An optional upgrade to a dual picatinny clamp adaptor, combined with a dual ring mount, allowed the author to mount this ATN BlazeHunter, green laser and Olight torch in tandem. The remote switch box allowed the torch or laser to be controlled, with a quick switch of the plug. (Two remote switch boxes would be required to control both torch and laser at the same time.)

and rubbery cover. All up the unit weighed 2.5kg, with a maximum footprint of 425mm wide.

Rounding out the package is a charging cable, some AAAs for the remote, an arca to picatinny adaptor clamp, and a short pic rail with ¼-20 screw for attaching to a thermal. A small amount of assembly is required, but anyone with a set of allen keys and a spanner will be fine.

## Testing

Over a six-week period and 20+ hours of field time we found the device reliable and intuitive to use. Being that Dave's daughter, Alexis, came with us as 'Chief Robot Pilot' on the first couple outings we can say 'it's easy enough a child can use it'. Very quickly, with minimal instructions, Alexis was directing proceedings from the back seat with tablet and SpydaBot remote in hand. Mind you with its resemblance to a video game, it's no surprise a

12-year-old figured it out. It was also easy enough a parent can do it.

The six neodymium magnets along with the grippy rubbery covers gave ample holding force on the roof and bonnet of the cars used during testing. Rough roads and speeds up to 100kmph didn't see any movement in the base, with zero damage to the paintwork. Legs were able to be angled in a way to account for roof ridges, though flat roofs made for easier positioning.

After the first two nights hunting, a combined seven hours of use, the battery indicator was showing five out of five. As such, a bench test was undertaken utilising the auto scan feature to drain the remaining capacity. Four hours of constant scanning back and forth loaded up with a handheld and laser was required to flatten the battery, after which charging took a couple hours. According to Eagleye Hunting, the device can sustain being on idle for multiple days, being the act

*"Over a six-week period and 20+ hours of field time we found the device reliable and intuitive to use."*



The SpydaBot Sting H2O in action, mounted up with an ATN BlazeHunter handheld thermal monocular and green laser.

of panning/tilting is what chewed through the juice. It will depend how much panning you are doing while hunting, but tens of hours of real-world usage would seem like a reasonable expectation based on our tests. For reference, another 18 or so hours of field use saw the battery indicator at four.

While stationary, the Sting H2O gave smooth controlled panning and tilting, and driving on reasonably flat tracks at practical speeds was fine. However, we did feel that there was more image shake while driving compared to a remote handle. With a spotlight handle there is more play in the system, and counterintuitively we suspect this combined with the act of holding the handle is performing some kind of vibration absorption or shake dampening. Lowering the robot from the roof to the bonnet did



The SpydaBot without the base is also sold but is simple to remove and mount in different ways for different uses. Here during testing, it has been attached to a camera tripod and positioned in front of a Great Bowerbird (*Chlamydera nuchalis*) bower. Assuming you can remote control and trigger your camera, this with some patience provides a way to get some up-close nature photography.



The remote control worked flawlessly with zero dropouts and a range further than the author could be bothered to test (60m).



improve image shake on rougher tracks, and of course vehicle type, tyre pressure, suspension set up and track conditions will all contribute to image stability (Note: Eagleye sells a similar product with three-axis gimbal stabilisation for those heavily focused on scanning while moving). The Sting H20 is sold with an IP66 rating (no rain was experienced during the review window), a 12-month warranty on the electronics and a lifetime warranty on the base.

**The Spyda's 'web'**

The SpydaBot's web, or more accurately the SmartRest product 'ecosystem' by Eagleye Hunting Gear, encompasses a huge range of products. Some of these items are compatible with the SpydaBot and were included for review to highlight what else can be combined with the SpydaBot to maximise its effectiveness. The

small picatinny rails designed to attach to a handheld thermal via the 1/4-20 thread and lock into the arca-picatinny clamp made mounting a thermal to the SpydaBot very secure and extremely quick. More importantly detaching, when dismounting the vehicle to pursue game on foot with thermal in hand, was equally fast.

A double adaptor with two picatinny clamps is also available. This enabled running either a laser or torch next to the thermal, controlled by a remote switchbox and a garage-door style remote trigger. The control box magnets to a metal plate on the back of the SpydaBot head and plugs in via a modified tail switch. The laser proved useful as there was an increased tendency to sometimes get 'lost' with the thermal compared to using a spotlight handle. A quick fire of the laser, or just leaving it on, was a way to keep track of

where you are looking, saving valuable seconds when a target is spotted. Additionally, the option to trigger white light remotely to confirm what you are observing is useful or even facilitate taking a shot with a traditionally scoped rifle. The remote trigger box only has one channel, so you will need to decide which attachment to connect. Of course, the SpydaBot Sting H20 could be used without a thermal. While a larger spotlight would probably come in under the maximum payload, Eagleye recommends sticking to powerful modern torches, presumably due to wind resistance and additional wiggle from a tall spotlight.

We found the gold standard combination used a Nocpix Nova H35R thermal. With its built-in green laser, it enabled the best of both worlds when mounted next to a remote-switched torch. Eagleye even sells a battery grip that screws into the centre of the double adaptor to power the Nova. Making for a slick, tangle-free, turret arrangement at home in any dystopian future movie, I *almost* felt sorry for the pigs...

**Conclusion**

There was a definite element of novelty or fun factor to testing the SpydaBot Sting H20. In a market of new cerakote and stock colour options being touted as 'game changing', this was truly a unique and novel product. The ability to hand the remote to anyone in the front or back seats, have the windows up keeping the mozzies out and the aircon in, and not needing to drill a hole in the roof was fantastic. Flexibility to quickly move it from roof to bonnet, and between vehicles was great, not to mention the range of compatible accessories available to maximise its capabilities was impressive. Most surprising was the price of \$550 (available through eagleyehg.com.au itself, or its network of 150+ retailers). Being only a couple hundred dollars more than a quality remote handle and gas-strut window mount setup makes this a financially competitive option. And the value of incentivising a child to come hunting ferals with a tablet and controller in the real world, rather than stay home on their screens in the virtual world? Priceless. *The SpydaBot Sting H20, along with the other SmartRest attachments, were loaned to SSAA Queensland for the purpose of review.*



The SmartRest ecosystem encompasses a huge range of products, some of which work well with the SpydaBot Sting H20. Things like double adaptors, remote switches, lasers and so on can really expand the system's capabilities, which could be useful depending on your use case.



The remote-controlled scanning capability the Sting H20 provides proved an efficient and easy-to-use method for finding ferals at night, like this sow taken during testing.

# Electronic Digital Trigger Pull Gauge

By Steve Marchant



*The world's most accurate trigger gauge*

## Why do I need a trigger pull gauge?

No matter what your level of shooting expertise, if your firearm's trigger pull weight is excessive or inconsistent, regularly placing accurate shots on target will be a challenge. Then again, if you shoot in a competition with a minimum trigger pull requirement, insufficient trigger pull weight may see you disqualified from your event.

For occasional shooters, shooters on a tight budget, or those who own just one or two guns, the best option is to have your firearm's trigger pull weight checked by a gunsmith, who will also be able to adjust or replace it for you if required. But for shooters with several firearms, or those who shoot often, a trigger pull gauge is a very useful tool.

## Mechanical or electronic (digital) trigger pull gauge?

Mechanical trigger pull gauges use a loaded-spring mechanism that incorporates a calibrated scale to display trigger weight pressure. Mechanical gauges are generally cheaper than digital gauge models, but they tend to be more difficult to operate than digital gauges and are not as accurate.

While more expensive than mechanical gauges, the best digital trigger pull gauges are very easy to use and give more accurate readings. One of the best digital trigger pull gauges available today is produced by Lyman Products.

## Lyman Products – a brief history

William Lyman's patented No. 1 Tang Sight launched the Lyman Gun Sight Company in the late 1800s, and in 1925 the Lyman family purchased Ideal reloading products. Since then, Lyman has provided generations

of reloaders with high quality reloading presses, dies, casting furnaces and bullet moulds.

Today, Lyman manufactures and distributes quality products within the shooting sports industry, with the development of many of these commodities directly linked to feedback from customers who purchase them. One such product is Lyman's patented Digital Trigger Pull Gauge.

## Lyman Electronic Digital Trigger Pull Gauge – basic operation and specs

The Lyman Digital Trigger Pull Gauge comes packed in a sturdy storage case within a foam cutout. When not in use, the roller hook is housed inside the gauge and clipped to the top of the unit for extra security during transport. The whole package is compact and lightweight, and thus readily and safely stowed in a range bag with other tools and equipment.

The gauge is powered by two AAA batteries and is very easy to use. First, withdraw the roller hook and click it into position. The roller hook can be rotated and locked into four different positions at 90° intervals, enabling the gauge to be used on almost any rifle, shotgun or pistol.

Below the easy-to-read LCD display screen, four orange buttons activate all available functions. Operation is fast. After making sure your firearm is empty and unloaded, press the 'LBS/GM' button to select pounds/ounces or kilogram/gram readings. Then press the 'Ready' button, and an audible 'beep' indicates the gauge is ready for use. Next, locate the roller on the trigger and draw back on the unit gently and steadily until the trigger breaks, and the pull weight is displayed on the screen.

## Lyman Digital Trigger Pull Gauge - Specifications

<b>Measuring Range</b>	1oz - 12lbs / 2.8g - 5.4kg
<b>Resolution lbs/oz</b>	0 - 5lbs: ± 0.1oz    5 - 12lbs: ± 0.5oz
<b>Resolution kg/g</b>	0 - 2.2kg: ± 2g    2.2 - 5.4kg: ± 10g

Lyman's digital trigger gauge has a measuring range from 1oz (2.8g) to 12lbs (5.4kg), and the state-of-the-art strain gauge technology produces accuracy of +/- 0.1oz (2g).

The gauge will display and hold the exact trigger pull weight until the 'ready' button is pressed, or it will shut down after a few minutes to save the battery. It also automatically calculates the average pull weight of up to 10 individual readings. To display the average, press the 'AVG' button. Before starting a new string of readings, the 'CLR' button is pressed to erase the memory.

Mechanical trigger pull gauges are cheaper than digital gauge models, but they are generally more difficult to operate and not as accurate.



## 'Road testing' the Lyman Electronic Digital Trigger Pull Gauge

For *The Report*, I tested the Lyman digital trigger gauge with a S&W target revolver, a stock semi-auto Glock pistol, and a Lithgow LA102 .243 rifle. The revolver was cocked and dry-fired single action, as it has a hammer mounted firing pin, and dummy rounds were used in the Glock and the Lithgow to protect their firing mechanisms. Ten consecutive trigger pull readings were taken on each of the firearms. To minimise personal bias, I got my wife and a shooting mate to take a few readings for me, and their results were within the same range of variability as mine. The test data is provided in the accompanying table.

Three words are sufficient to describe the results of my tests: fast, easy and precise. In terms of speed, it only takes a couple of minutes to learn how to operate the gauge. After that you'll spend more time getting the gun out of your safe than you will running some trigger tests on it. The ergonomics of the unit and the ability to lock the roller hook into four different positions contribute to a smooth, consistent draw-back of the gauge, which in turn produces tremendous consistency in the readings.

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Lyman Digital Trigger Pull Gauge Test – Data				
Test Firearm	S&W Revolver	Glock SA Pistol	Lithgow Arms Rifle	
Trigger	Test #1	1lb 13.3oz	5lb 8.6oz	3lb 2.1oz
	Test #2	1lb 13.1oz	5lb 11.3oz	3lb 5.0oz
	Test #3	1lb 13.0oz	5lb 10.2oz	3lb 4.8oz
Pull	Test #4	1lb 13.6oz	5lb 6.4oz	3lb 3.3oz
	Test #5	1lb 13.5oz	5lb 9.0oz	3lb 4.6oz
Weight	Test #6	1lb 13.6oz	5lb 6.4oz	3lb 3.8oz
	Test #7	1lb 13.5oz	5lb 8.9oz	3lb 2.1oz
Readings	Test #8	1lb 13.8oz	5lb 7.0oz	3lb 4.9oz
	Test #9	1lb 13.0oz	5lb 9.1oz	3lb 4.9oz
	Test #10	1lb 13.8oz	5lb 9.8oz	3lb 2.6oz
<b>Mean Pull Weight</b>	1lb 13.42oz	5lb 8.67oz	3lb 3.81oz	
<b>Pull Weight Range (Highest – Lowest)</b>	0.8oz	4.9oz	2.9oz	

Not surprisingly, with its ‘worked’ trigger and well over 10,000 rounds fired, my target revolver had the lightest and most consistent trigger pull readings, averaging 1lb 3.4oz trigger pull weight and a range of only 0.8oz between the lightest and heaviest readings. The Glock trigger pull results were also largely as expected, with an average pull weight of 5lb 8.7oz and a range of 4.9oz. I was, however, quite surprised by the trigger pull readings on my Lithgow .243. Its trigger pull weight was checked when the rifle was new and measured around 3lb 12oz. Since then, 200-plus rounds have been put through it and now the pull weight averages 3lb 3.9oz at a range of 2.9oz. A firearm’s trigger pull will often ‘smooth up’ after several hundred firings, but I didn’t expect the pull weight to reduce by so much, so quickly. I’m very happy with the trigger on my LA102, and this test demonstrates why shooters competing in matches with minimum trigger pull requirements pay regular attention to their firearm’s trigger pull weight.



S&W target revolver trigger pull weight ranged between 1lb 13oz and 1lb 13.8oz.



The author is very happy with the trigger pull weight on his Lithgow LA102.243, which ranges from 3lb 2.1oz to 3lb 4.9oz.

**Summary/conclusion**

Lyman’s revolutionary Digital Trigger Pull Gauge is designed to be the fastest and most accurate trigger pull gauge available. Its position-adjustable roller hook enables quick and precise measurement of trigger pull weights on pistols, rifles and shotguns. State-of-the-art strain gauge technology produces accurate measurements from 1oz to 12lb (2.8g - 5.4kg) pull weight. The Lyman Digital Trigger Pull Gauge retails for around \$170 to \$190 and comes with a 12-month warranty. It is the perfect tool for measuring a firearm’s trigger pull weight accurately and easily. ☺

# Wild dogs

By Ken Payne

Over the years, my brother Dave and I have shot more than 20 wild dogs and pups. Many of these hunts were opportunistic, as we were usually hunting pigs.

At one sheep property we hunted on at Tara about 25 years ago, a single wild dog was harassing the flock each night, killing a sheep and leaving at least 10 hamstringed and struggling to keep up with the flock. The farmer believed the dog did this to keep the sheep fresh for follow-up tucker. He put the maimed ones down each day, only for the dog to strike again a few nights later. The farmer had to resort to sleeping in the back of his ute to protect his flock, taking quite the toll on him.

In about four instances on a property out from Springsure we have come across pups in dens ranging from hollow logs to a washed-out cave under a gully ledge. Both Dave and I love dogs, but as cute as they were, we proceeded to remove them as we knew they would grow up to become problems.

On one trip, as we were hunting along a creek, I saw a wild dog trotting along a track towards our hunting party. I squatted down and my 16-year-old niece copied me as

we waited for the dog to come abreast of us. When in view, I took it with my .444 Marlin. Some say overkill, but it was what I had at the time. Several days later, Dave shot a black dog that was hanging around some horses as we were walking back to camp. The lesson here is to never stop looking, as that is when you could miss out.

Wild dogs can severely impact a farmer’s profits. A central Queensland farmer told me that if a cow is bitten by a dog on the rump or back leg and gets away, it is normally left with a scar and a hard lump. When it gets to the abattoir, the value of the whole animal is thus decreased, or it can be rejected for human consumption all together.

For the sake of our wildlife and a farmer’s pocket, wild dogs must be removed. ☺



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# THEORY OF ETHICAL SHOT PLACEMENT IN HUNTING

By Billy Allen

In the pursuit of hunting, ethical considerations form the cornerstone of responsible practice. Hunters carry an inherent duty to dispatch game animals swiftly and humanely, reducing pain or suffering and ensuring a high probability of recovery. This not only aligns with moral imperatives but also supports sustainable wildlife management, as promoted by organisations like the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (QLD) and state wildlife authorities. Poor shot placement can result in wounded animals escaping, leading to unnecessary suffering and potential population impacts. This article delves into three key strategies for achieving an ethical kill: neurological shutdown, catastrophic trauma to vital organs, and a combined approach that targets vital organs while disrupting the circulatory system. Grounded in principles of animal anatomy, physiology and modern ballistics, these methods are supported by recommendations on projectile selection to optimise lethality and precision.

Ethical hunting demands precision, as improper shot placement can lead to prolonged suffering or lost animals. According to established guidelines, the ideal shot targets the vital zones - primarily the heart and lungs - for a balance of lethality and forgiveness in aim. For big game like deer, which are common in Australian hunting contexts, understanding the anatomy is crucial. The heart sits low in the chest, roughly in line with the midpoint of the front leg, while the lungs occupy a larger area above and behind it. This knowledge informs shot selection, ensuring hunters align their ethics with practical outcomes.

## Neurological shutdown: Instant incapacitation

The first mechanism for a swift kill involves inducing neurological shutdown by inflicting massive trauma to the central nervous system (CNS). The CNS includes the brain and the upper spinal cord, making head and high-neck shots the primary means to achieve this. A well-placed shot here disrupts the brain's ability to transmit signals to vital organs, causing immediate collapse and death. In physiological terms, this severs neural pathways, halting respiration, circulation, and motor function instantaneously.

Professional cullers and meat hunters often favour head shots, as they preserve the body and reduce meat spoilage or contamination from gut contents. However, they require exceptional accuracy due to the small target area - the brain in a deer is roughly the size of a small apple. Neck shots, targeting the cervical vertebrae, can similarly disrupt the spinal cord, leading to paralysis and rapid shutdown, but they risk missing vital structures if not precise.



A red stag harvested by the author during the 2025 rut. The author's father is pictured, pleased, beside the stag, which was shot using a .270 Winchester with 130-grain Remington Core-Lokt projectiles, striking the high heart-lung zone.



A fallow deer feeding, with the author's preferred high heart-lung shot placement marked for clarity.

The choice of projectile for neurological shots is less critical for penetration, as the skull or vertebrae are relatively thin in many game species. Focus instead on accuracy: select a projectile that groups tightly in your rifle, such as a soft-point or ballistic-tipped bullet for rapid expansion, ensuring the bullet reaches the CNS with excessive fragmentation, increasing the chance of disruption to the CNS. While effective, these shots are not recommended for novice hunters or longer ranges, where wind or movement could cause a glancing wound, leading to unnecessary suffering.

## Catastrophic trauma to vital organs: Targeting the essentials

The second approach focuses on causing irreversible damage to organs essential for sustaining life, such as the heart and lungs. The goal is to create extensive structural damage, rendering the organ incapable of functioning. In deer anatomy, the heart and lungs form a vital zone approximately the size of a dinner plate when viewed broadside, located just behind the front shoulder and one-third up from the brisket.

A direct heart shot can be devastating. If the projectile strikes when the heart is full of blood,

hydraulic pressure may cause it to rupture explosively, leading to immediate cardiac arrest. However, if the heart is empty of blood during its cycle, the wound may simply perforate it, allowing the animal to flee for a short distance due to a surge in adrenaline - a parasympathetic 'fight or flight' response. Lung shots, while targeting a larger area, often result in bilateral pneumothorax or haemorrhage, depriving the body of oxygen. Animals may run 50-100 metres before collapsing, complicating recovery.

From my perspective, this mirrors trauma cases where vital organ damage leads to hypovolemic shock or respiratory failure. To achieve reliable outcomes, opt for controlled-expansion projectiles, which penetrate deeply (often 30-45 centimetres in big game) while expanding to 1.5-2 times their diameter. These are ideal for torso shots, as they handle bone impacts better than rapid-expansion types, ensuring the bullet reaches the organs without fragmenting prematurely.

I generally avoid isolated lung or heart shots due to the potential for extended tracking. In my experience, straight lung hits on deer have led to animals travelling significant distances, underscoring the need for a more comprehensive approach.

**Combining vital organ trauma with circulatory disruption:**

**The preferred method**

The third and, in my view, most reliable method builds on vital organ damage by incorporating trauma to the circulatory system. At the apex of the heart lies the aortic arch, where major arteries branch off, alongside the superior vena cava, a large vein returning deoxygenated blood. Targeting this ‘high heart-lung’ zone - typically one-third up the body and just behind the front leg on a broadside animal - disrupts these vessels, causing massive haemorrhage alongside organ damage.

This placement accelerates death by compounding oxygen deprivation: damaged lungs or heart are starved further by rapid blood loss, leading to hypotension and neurological shutdown as the brain loses perfusion. The result is often a quicker collapse, with animals dropping within 20-50 metres. An exit wound enhances this by providing an additional bleed-out path, creating a visible blood trail for tracking.

*“Ethical hunting demands precision, as improper shot placement can lead to prolonged suffering or lost animals.”*

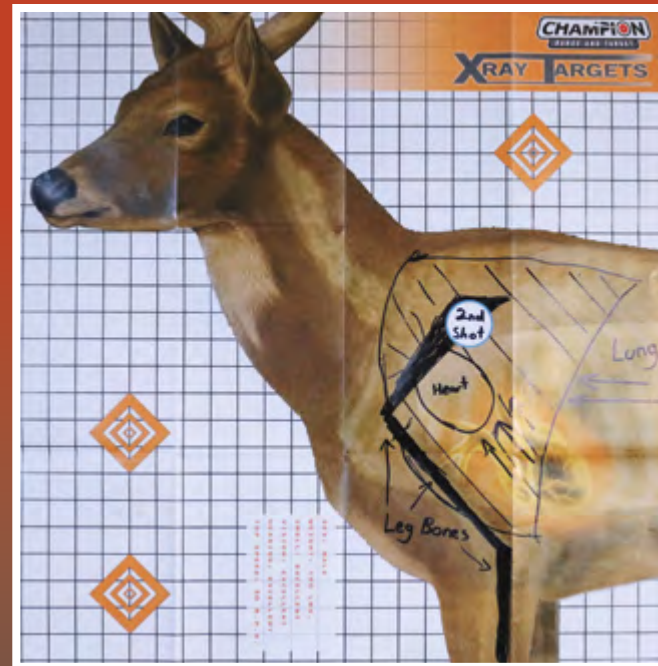
Pros of this shot include a larger target area than the head, ethical speed and utility for trophy hunters, avoiding skull damage. Cons involve potential meat loss in the shoulders from bone fragmentation or hydrostatic shock. Nonetheless, I recommend it for most hunters, especially with controlled-expansion projectiles that ensure penetration through heavy bone. Recent advancements in ammunition, such as bonded-core bullets, optimise this by retaining 60-95 per cent weight for consistent wound channels. Also worth consideration in bullet selection are the monolithic copper bullets that penetrate deep and bust bone, expand up to two times their diameter and don’t contaminate game meat with lead fragmentations.



Two examples of high-quality hunting ammunition. On the left, hand-loaded Outer Edge 120-grain monolithic copper projectiles in .270 Winchester. On the right, factory-loaded Remington Core-Lokt 130-grain mechanically bonded projectiles in .270 Winchester.



A deer target illustrating the author’s preferred primary shot placement, targeting the high heart-lung zone for optimal effectiveness.



A deer target indicating the author’s preferred secondary shot placement, aimed at the high shoulder. Note that the heart and lungs may shift forward and upward after the chest cavity is penetrated by the primary shot.



A deer target marked with the author’s preferred primary and secondary shot placements, highlighting the high heart-lung and high shoulder zones.

**Projectile performance: Choosing the right tool**

Projectile selection directly influences wound cavity size and lethality. Major manufacturers, with more than a century of development, categorise bullets by game type and expected performance.

Broadly, they fall into rapid-expansion (for varmints) and controlled-expansion (for big game).

Rapid-expansion projectiles, like ballistic tips and hollow points, fragment quickly for wide, shallow wounds - ideal for thin-skinned small game but suboptimal for deer. In my 20s, using an 87-grain ballistic tip in a .243 on a fallow doe at 70 yards, I experienced a shallow chest wound requiring a follow-up shot to dispatch the animal. Such chest wounds often create ‘sucking’ chest wounds, with no exit wound, trapping blood (AKA, Haemothorax) or air (AKA, Pneumothorax) internally and causing positive pressure that compresses organs forward and to the top of the chest wall, with failure of immediate fatality.



Barnes Triple-Shock 130-grain .270 Winchester projectile found embedded in a tree after fully penetrating the chest cavity of a harvested fallow deer.



30 cm-wide blood trail left by a warthog shot by the author during a hunt in South Africa. The author used a 180-grain monolithic copper Triple-Shock bullet in .300 WSM, aimed at the high heart-lung zone, which penetrated and exited, resulting in a prominent blood trail extending approximately 30 yards.

Controlled-expansion options, such as monolithic copper or bonded bullets, expand reliably while penetrating deeply, creating elongated wound channels. These are preferable for ethical kills on larger animals, especially in the high heart-lung zone.

**Considerations for secondary shots**

If an initial shot results in a non-fatal wound, such as a single-entry chest hit, the animal’s vital organs may shift due to changes in internal pressure. The lungs depend on negative pressure to remain inflated, with the diaphragm muscle serving as the primary mechanism for drawing breath. When the chest wall is pierced, the thoracic cavity can develop positive pressure, filling with air or blood. This displacement

pushes the heart and lungs forward and upward within the chest cavity. As a result, their new position will be situated high and forward of the shoulder, rendering a follow-up shot behind the shoulders ineffective, as it may strike an area with reduced vital organ presence, akin to shooting into an empty drum with minimal catastrophic damage.

For subsequent or follow-up shots, the aim should be adjusted to target the high shoulder centre or slightly forward. This placement destroys the animal’s ability to run by damaging the supporting structures (legs and shoulders). It simultaneously causes further trauma to the vital organs, which have been displaced into this region. Prioritising rapid follow-up shots is essential to minimise suffering and ensure a humane outcome.

**CONCLUSION**

In summary, ethical shot placement hinges on understanding anatomy and selecting appropriate methods to ensure humane outcomes. While neurological shutdown offers instant results, it demands precision; vital organ trauma provides forgiveness but risks flight; and the high heart-lung shot, my preferred approach, balances speed, reliability and trackability. By choosing controlled-expansion projectiles and practising accuracy, hunters can fulfil their obligations. Ultimately, this knowledge not only enhances success but also upholds the respect due to wildlife, fostering sustainable hunting practices for future generations.

Zero Tolerance ZT0203 folding knife.

# Built Rugged for the Bush

# Zero Tolerance ZT0203

By Rod Hoare

**Z**ero Tolerance (ZT) knives have gone back to their roots with the ZT0203, producing a large hard-use folder. While more recently making smaller knives, the ZT0203 is a welcome return to their more robust designs. This isn't your average folder; it's a serious, no-nonsense tool.



With a full 100mm CPM M4 blade, a tool steel known for its toughness and edge retention, it's a chunky and purposeful piece. The drop point profile boasts a sweeping belly and discretely integrated swedge for added slicing ability and piercing control. The blade's black PVD coating not only offers stealthy styling, but adds a durable protective layer against the elements. During testing, this coating held up exceptionally well.

The olive G10 3D machined handle is solid and tactile, offering a secure comfortable grip even with sweaty, dirty or gloved hands. PVD coated steel liners reinforce its frame, giving that reassuring thickness and resilience you want in a large workhorse blade. After prolonged use, the handle was still comfortable and presented no hot spots.

ZT's debut DuraLock crossbar mechanism, made from solid steel, is a standout innovation here; it's the brand's first model to offer this style of lock, something you would normally see on a Kershaw or Benchmade knife. The ambidextrous, textured lock release makes closing both safe and intuitive with little chance of accidentally triggering. Combined with dual thumb studs, it ensures smooth one-handed opening and user-friendly operation whether you're left- or right-handed. While the Duralock is secure and locks solid during normal to hard use, while lightly battenning through hardwood, the lock did release a

couple of times. Upon testing this further, the lock could be released by hitting on the back of the blade with not a lot of force, something to keep in mind (I have asked ZT for their thoughts on this).

Designed with maintenance in mind, the open build makes cleaning after use straightforward. While CPM M4 isn't stainless, the PVD coating gives it plenty of protection. A quick wipe-down and oiling preserved performance after some solid tests. Though CPM M4 can be a bit stubborn to sharpen, the blade held its edge well across all tasks, with a few swipes on a diamond stone and a stropping to get back to a good sharp edge. The pivot is also easily adjustable with a 5/16" wrench.

*“Designed with maintenance in mind, the open build makes cleaning after use straightforward.”*



BESS professional sharpness test performed to test edge retention and ease of sharpening.



Field testing performed to gauge edge retention, strength, comfort and durability.

At 187g, the ZT0203 is noticeably weighty, yet feels balanced in hand. It isn't for the fainthearted or dress-carry crowd; it's a bold, professional grade blade for serious use. Its rugged build and tactical aesthetics deliver all-around reliability. The premium materials used bring a higher price tag, with a current retail price of low AUD\$500. This may put some off, but for those wanting a larger folding knife that won't back down, it's well worth considering.

### Verdict

A rugged, dependable companion for Aussies heading bush; engineered to withstand hard use and built for reliability, edge retention and comfort, with no damage sustained during testing. While the Duralock lock releasing while lightly battenning is concerning, it's a tough folding knife and when battenning like that, I have always used, and recommend, a fixed-blade camp knife. This was performed purely for testing purposes.

You can view the YouTube video of this testing and review in more detail at Aussie Knife and Gear Reviews.

The ZT0203 is available direct from the Australian Zero Tolerance distributor, Aussie Outback Supplies: [aussieoutbacksupplies.com](http://aussieoutbacksupplies.com), email: [info@aussieoutbacksupplies.com](mailto:info@aussieoutbacksupplies.com), 08 9274 1997, or through their ZT distributors throughout Australia.

Aussie Outback Supplies are currently offering a bonus ZT Challenge Coin with purchase of the ZT0203 knife (while stocks last) and a shipped to-your-door price in the low AUD\$500 range. See this link for the deal: <https://tinyurl.com/2ukre658>

### Specifications & Features:

**Blade steel:** CPM M4 with black PVD coating

**Blade length:** 102 mm

**Blade thickness:** 4.1 mm

**Overall length (Open):** 235 mm

**Closed length:** 133 mm

**Weight:** 187g

**Handle material:** Olive G10 with full steel PVD coated liners

**Locking mechanism:** DuraLock crossbar PVD coated lock

**Opening mechanism:** Manual with thumb stud, phosphor bronze washer pivot

**Pocket clip:** Reversible deep-carry (right/left tip-up)

**Pivot adjustment:** 5/16" combo wrench compatible

**Made in:** USA





Lee-Enfield No. 4 Mk I (1943)  
(Swedish Army Museum, Stockholm)

# The Lee Enfield .303's diverse world



A British Home Guard soldier operating an SMLE No. 1 Mk III equipped with a grenade launcher cup loaded with an Anti-Tank Grenade. (British Army)

By Tom Lewis

The original Lee Enfield .303 SMLE moved on from a brilliant military career in two World Wars to encompass around 40 variants. Many went to a second life in the hunting world. Today, many hundreds of thousands of these rifles are still in use around the globe.

Readers may recall the previous article in this series, which outlined the military path the rifle followed. From an 1895 variant, the Short Magazine Lee Enfield was the major infantry rifle for British Empire forces in the Great War of 1914-1918. Reliability coupled with accuracy and ease of use were its main features, and these produced a stunning rate of fire of around 20-30 rounds a minute in trained hands.

As the years continued, with this rifle the variation most military men first noticed was that many included a butt trap fitted into the stock. This was configured to contain a pull-through with some pads and a bottle of oil. The other most common variant was the carbine, but it is to the specialised sniper rifle that we shall first turn.

One of the first variants was the No. 1 Lee-Enfield Mk I\* (HT). This was a sniper rifle with a telescopic sight. It varied from the standard infantry III\* with a slightly longer barrel – 26 inches as opposed to 25.2” – and the removal of the rear sight with compensatory furniture. A detachable telescope was included, with the windage adjustments made inside the ‘scope. Some of these rifles came with detachable rubber eye guard, but these were sometimes discarded in the field.

Billy Sing, an Australian World War I sniper, in a winter uniform. (Public domain)



## A sniper of renown, Billy Sing

William Sing joined the 5th Australian Light Horse Regiment on 26 October 1914. He was born of a Chinese father and Australian mother, and he managed to enlist despite enrolments only being given to ‘men of European descent’. After initial training he arrived at the Gallipoli battlefield, which had been established on 25 April, in May 1915. The great plan was to force a passage up the Turkish-held Dardanelles to reach the Black Sea and open up a new front against the Germans and their Turkish allies. This would reduce pressure on the Western Front stalemate. It was a fine idea, but in the end, it was carried out too slowly and again a stalemate was the result.

Sing was one of the many thousands of troops deployed. An experienced kangaroo shooter, he showed outstanding prowess as a fine shot, so was employed as sniper with a .303 Lee Enfield, usually working with spotter Ion Idriess, who post-war became a noted journalist and author. Idriess was wounded at Gallipoli, witnessed the charge at Beersheba, and was wounded again in the fighting after the battle of Gaza. He was invalided home in March 1918. His experiences formed the basis of a series of pamphlets on sniping and guerilla warfare the government published in 1942 when an invasion of Australia was expected.

Section of Billy Sing's Service Records. (National Archives of Australia)

31 <sup>st</sup> Btro	Marched in 31 <sup>st</sup> Btro detail. 27/7/16.	
	Extract from London Gazette of awarded D.S.M. for conspicuous gallantry from May to Sept. 1915. at Gallipoli as a sniper. His courage and skill were most marked as he was responsible for a very large number of casualties among the enemy. His work being too great for him to take.	10-3-16
	PROCEEDED OVERSEAS FRANCE.	3/12/16
31 <sup>st</sup> Btro	TAKEN ON STRENGTH from 7th Regt	1/4/17



A Lee-Enfield No. 4 Mk 2 with a ladder aperture sight flipped up and a five-round charger in place to push down into the magazine. (British Army)

Sing's service record says he killed 201 of the enemy. On 25 August he was slightly wounded, without requiring hospitalisation. Awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), he was also Mentioned in Dispatches, entitling him to wear an oak leaf on his campaign medal – not that they were worn in the field. His DCM was described in the *London Gazette*: "His courage and skill were most marked and he was responsible for a very large number of casualties among the enemy..."

With the closure of the Gallipoli campaign at the end of 1915, Sing was sent along with the other Australians to the Western Front, transferring to the 31st Australian Infantry Battalion. There he became a counter-sniper, hunting down German snipers. He was successful at that, in particular in the Polygon Wood area, in

A Delhi Police marching contingent in the celebration of the 60th Republic Day in 2009 carrying Lee Enfield SMLE rifles. (Indian Army)



Belgium. The work was different from Gallipoli, which is very much an area of hills and small valleys. The Western Front is flat for much of its area, with intricate trench systems and supporting works. Sing was recommended for the Military Medal, a distinguished honour, but instead received another Mention. He was later awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre.

He was again wounded in March 1917 with a gunshot wound to the left leg; but being obviously a very sturdy fellow found time on his leave convalescing in Britain to court and marry Elizabeth Stuart on 29 June 1917. Back in France he was later gassed and wounded for a third time on 18 February 1918.

Sing was sent on leave to Australia 21 July 1918 on submarine guard duty enroute, which meant being on the weather deck to look out for surfacing submarines which would shoot at the ship with a deck gun. After arrival, Sing was eventually discharged from the Army as medically unfit. His later life was not that successful. He worked as a labourer around his hometown of Clermont in Queensland, and it is unclear if he was joined by his wife. He ended his days in Brisbane without much in the way of financial support at the age of 57. He is buried at Lutwyche Cemetery in Brisbane. Every year at Clermont, the Billy Sing Marksman Shoot is held which commemorates his memory. (See <https://qldrifle.com/the-billy-sing-marksman-shoot-2023/>) A biography has also been written about this interesting soldier by John Hamilton with his 2008 book, *Gallipoli Sniper: The life of Billy Sing*.



*"As another war began in 1939 a variant on the earlier .303 sniper rifle was developed."*

An Indian rifleman with an SMLE Mk III in Egypt; 16 May 1940. (British Army)

## Onto World War II

As another war began in 1939 a variant on the earlier .303 sniper rifle was developed. In Australia this was the No1 MkIII\* HT Sniper Rifle, with the HT designating a Heavy barrel, and issued with a Telescope. The Lithgow factory issued 1,612 of these in WWII and beyond, including service in Korea and Malaya, with others used for sniper training through to the late 1970s. Throughout WWII the Lee Enfield was a common sight with all Empire troops.



Military historian, public speaker, author of 25 books and a retired naval officer, Dr Tom Lewis, received the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to naval history.

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### Carbine version

During its life, the .303 has been converted for use in a shortened version as a weapon that was more suited to confined areas such as heavy jungle. There were several versions with limited runs made before the most numerous and popular variant, the No. 5, was arrived at.

Now the barrel was shorter by five inches, and the wooden furniture was removed or reduced, leaving the muzzle end exposed, with a reduction in weight by two pounds. A flash eliminator was fitted, and a short No. 5 Mk II bayonet with an 8" blade included.

### Various other versions

The 'Rifle No.1 EY Grenade Launcher' was made up by Lithgow for Australian use from previously condemned rifles. It was fitted with a grenade discharger cup at the end of the barrel. To withstand the extra pressure generated when launching a grenade, the rifles were strengthened with copper binding around the forewood.

To launch a grenade a blank cartridge was fired with the butt of the rifle on the ground, similar to firing a mortar. By removing the grenade discharger cup, the rifle could be used as a conventional weapon.

### Lithgow advises

The Lithgow Small Arms Factory was opened during June 1912 and geared up to produce this rifle at the rate of 15,000 per year. Manufacture was well under way by 1914 when the British Government placed urgent requirements on production in readiness for any shortages upon the outbreak of WWI. All but 10,000 surplus rifles were sent to Britain, which caused a shortage here in Australia until production was increased. Some 30,500 MkIII rifles were produced during the 1915-16 financial year – this the highest rate of production during the Great War. A token 1,000 SMLE rifles were produced in 1956, presumably just to prove that it could be done. It is believed that most of these have a receiver date of 1953.

*"Various other versions of the .303 were designed and saw limited production."*

The first introduction however for thousands of Aussies to the .303 was not as such – it was the .22 version of the same rifle. These were identical to the larger calibre weapon in appearance, and that was the idea. In the hands of cadets, the heft and weight of the weapon were fairly similar too, so that for drill purposes the rifle handled in much the same way. When it came to shoot, the .22 rifle handled similarly, except for range and recoil. However, it was a single shot, although the magazine was left in place, albeit stamped with '.22'.

Various other versions of the .303 were designed and saw limited production. The Canadian Air Force had a survival rifle made with only minor alterations to the carbine design. The Royal Irish Constabulary carbine was a similar idea, although one of the alterations to make it shorter and lighter was a change to a six-round box magazine. Hundreds of .303s were converted post-war to accept the new 7.62mm NATO cartridge as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation came into being in 1949 to try to safeguard a major part of the new global order. And hundreds of thousands of the rifle were acquired for hunting across the world. The Lee Enfield .303 is truly one of the greatest rifles in history. ☺

An 1898 .303 rifle, with a 20.5-inch barrel. It is fitted with folding 'ladder' sights covered by a leather protector, and the action features a five-shot magazine. (Public domain)

# THE WINE OUTLAW

By Sam Talbot

After four decades in busy kitchens, chef-turned-winemaker and SSAA member, Damon de Ruiter decided it was time for something new. Wanting to combine his passion for food and drink with his love of the outback, he set out to create Outlaw Wines, taking ownership of a vineyard home to Shiraz vines planted in 1890. Those gnarly old vines still produce exceptional fruit today - fruit that Damon now delivers to some of the most remote places in Australia.

"I grow it, make it and I go out and sell it," Damon says.

While many winemakers settle in behind a cellar door, Damon has spent the last few years doing the opposite. He packs up his vehicle and heads bush, selling Outlaw Wines to remote pubs, roadhouses and tiny outback hotels dotted across some of the most isolated corners of the country.

"I didn't like selling wine in the city. I'd rather travel through the outback and sell my wine there," he says.

One of his favourite stops is the Betoota Hotel. "They still sell beer cans for five bucks, and I have travelled the Birdsville and Betoota tracks many times," he says.

Clocking up around 60,000km every year, including a recent run of 10,000km in just 22 days, Damon has become a familiar face on Australia's long stretches of road. He stops at places few tourists ever see, swapping stories

## TAKING BOTTLES OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

with publicans, truck drivers, station hands and other travellers. What began as sales trips have now become Damon's excuse to continue exploring and have roaming campfires. Each stop adding another colourful character to his growing groups of mates spread across the country.

Damon also has a simple philosophy for travel: never take the same road twice.

"Taking the old tracks doesn't save any time, but it does make the trip more fun," he says.

Damon has been a shooter since he was young and still helps with conservation work, tackling invasive species in some of the remote country he travels through.

"I see feral cats pretty much everywhere I go, and I wonder how we'll ever get on top of them when they're out in such remote areas," he says. Being a former award-winning chef comes in handy though; he's able to process some of the species he shoots, with goats being a personal favourite.

Damon says that he might be the only wine sales rep in the country carrying a .243, and we think he might be right.



A true character of the outback.



Damon grew up in a shooting family and still helps with conservation efforts today.

## SURVIVAL KIT ESSENTIALS

- > A sharp knife 
- > A container for collecting water 
- > Can opener 
- > Communication devices (e.g., PLB or EPERB) 
- > Emergency blanket 
- > Eyeglasses and hearing devices 
- > First aid kit 
- > Gloves 
- > Maps/GPS (work offline) 
- > Medications 
- > Phone and charger 
- > Rain gear 
- > Shovel 
- > Small mirror or magnifying glass to signal for help 
- > Small supply of non-perishable snacks 
- > Sun protection 
- > Torch 
- > Water 
- > Waterproof tarp/plastic sheet 
- > Waterproof matches and flint – or normal matches with the heads dipped in wax 
- > Whistle 

As well as the above, always remember to tell others about your plans, including location and departure and return dates.

# SURVIVAL BASICS

By Samantha Warren

When heading out bush, you need to consider what's in your survival kit, as you must be prepared for the unexpected. British celebrity, Bear Grylls, is known the world over for his offbeat survival exploits, most of which the majority of us would never have to employ. However, when it comes to everyday outback survival, his advice is nothing to dismiss. When lost or caught in

extreme weather situations, he suggests you recall this handy phrase: Please remember what's first, with P = protection, R = Rescue, W = Water and F = food.

First and foremost is to make sure you are protected from the elements or a dangerous situation. Once safe, consider how you might secure a rescue. Do you have phone reception, a personal locator beacon (PLB), could you SOS for help or do you need to resort to smoke signals? Make sure your location is safe and ensure you have the tools to ensure visibility.



A basic, yet important, start to a good survival kit. The dog bowls make a light container for capturing water.

Most people could survive a few weeks without food, but you can't survive more than three days without water. And if you can't carry enough for a few days, think about how you could find more water, such as from dew on plants or perhaps by creating a solar still.



A well-travelled first aid kit – an essential travel companion. Check and update the contents on a regular basis.

*“Carrying or packing a basic survival kit will make any emergency situation easier and increase your chances of survival.”*

Finally, even though we can go weeks without food, you wouldn't want to. Packing snacks high in protein is a good idea but you should also consider knowing what nature could provide in a pinch such as edible plants, berries or even grubs.

Carrying or packing a basic survival kit will make any emergency situation easier and increase your chances of survival. Obviously, the contents of survival kits vary but there are several items that everyone should have to follow Bear's advice.

## NEED WATER?

### Create a solar still for emergency water collection

By Samantha Warren

Think about how much water we are told to drink each day. The well-known average is eight glasses or so on a normal day, but that number may be more in the middle of summer or when out hiking or hunting in the hot sun. When you go out bush, do you carry enough water for the trip? What about extra in case you run into trouble and you are away from any clean water source?

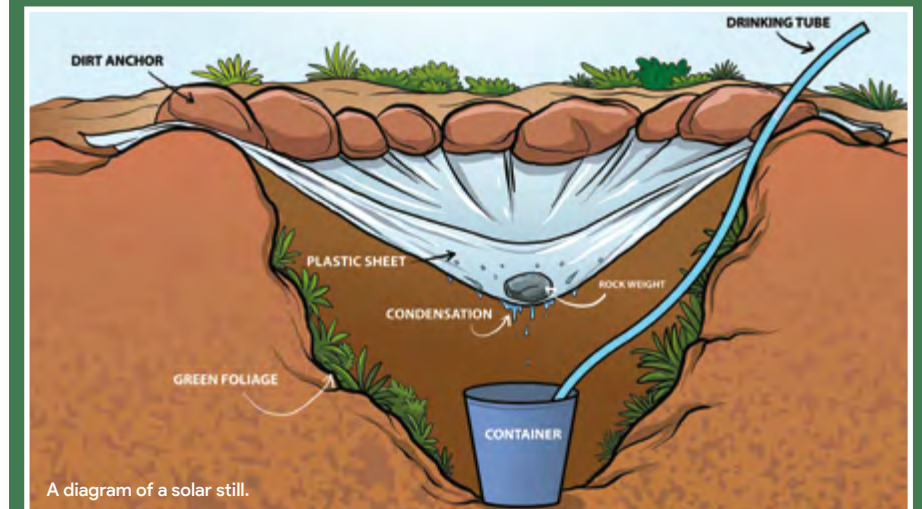
Even if you plan ahead, there could still be times when you need to find extra water. One method that only requires a few materials to provide clean drinking water is by creating a solar still, which works somewhat like a greenhouse. With only a large plastic sheet, a rock and a container, you could collect enough water to possibly save your life. Extra materials to make

the job easier include a shovel and a plastic tube to drink the water.

How do you create a solar still? Find the coolest ground you can and dig a hole about a metre in diameter and about 600mm deep. Place a container in the centre of the hole. Collect as much moisture-producing vegetation as you can, such as green grasses and leaves or succulent-type plants and put them in the hole around the container. Lay the plastic sheet over the hole and secure it with rocks and then shovel dirt over the edges to further hold it in place and create a seal over the hole. You don't want any air to get in or out. Place a small rock in the centre of the plastic. The plastic should now look like a funnel or cone over the hole and container.

Within a few hours moisture will start to build on the underside of the plastic and will drip down the plastic into the container. If done correctly, you could collect about a litre per day.

This is a simple yet very effective way to collect water. If you don't have a plastic sheet as part of your survival gear, get one now and keep it in your kit.



A diagram of a solar still.

# REVIEW REDGUM COMPACT CAMPING PILLOW

The camping pillow that finally beats the rolled-up jumper

By Alex Minicozzi

When it comes to something as simple as a pillow, most people wouldn't think much of it, just throwing their standard bed pillow in the car when they're about to leave. Or you could be like me, forgetting your pillow entirely and using a jumper or sleeping bag cover stuffed with clothes. When it comes to upgrading your sleep setup, the Redgum Compact Camping Pillow stands out as a well-appreciated addition. Designed specifically for the lovers of the outdoors, this pillow aims to combine comfort and compactness: two features that aren't always made well together.



The Redgum Compact Pillow gives you the comfort of a full-sized pillow without taking up the space.

## Design and functionality

The Redgum Compact Pillow is engineered with three connected memory foam panels. When it's time to sleep, you fold it out to roughly the height and feel of a regular pillow, which is a big comfort boost compared to flat inflatable pillows...or stuffed jumpers. When you're packing up, you unfold it back down, so it's only taking up a fraction of the space you'd expect, rolling up in the swag or roof top tent like nothing. What I appreciate most about this design is its simplicity. The first night I slept with it inside my swag, I noticed immediately how it felt more supportive than my rolled-up jumper method of old. Premium upgrade for sure!

## Comfort level

Comfort is always subjective but compared to cheap inflatable pillows or stuffing clothes into a sack, the Redgum Compact will always be light years better, with

very noticeable neck and head support. It's soft yet structured and due to the memory foam, it moulds nicely to the shape of your head.



## Packability and practicality

The standout selling point of this product is just how well it lives up to its name of being compact. It doesn't shrink to the size of an inflatable pillow, but it's small enough to fit inside a swag or rooftop tent bag without eating valuable space or making it a pain to pack up again. A little delight that the pillow offers is the storage pouches, which are perfect for small camp essentials like a headlamp or phone when you're not using it for sleep or, even when you are, we all know how hard and frustrating it is losing something in a tight swag and digging around to try and find it.

The outer cover also unzips so you can remove each foam insert and wash the cover after a trip away.

## Final thoughts

Overall, the Redgum Compact Camping Pillow is comfortable and supportive, packs down to nothing while maintaining its durability and practicality. Although it does compress to the size of some gear for ultra-light kits, it is not designed for that. It's a universal yet simple option for standard camping set ups. For anyone doing frequent car camping, swag trips or campsites where weight isn't the only concern, at \$50 RRP, this is genuinely one of the better camping pillows you can buy without spending big. The bottom line is, if you're tired of neck aches and a painful sleep while away, which can put you off camping for a few months, this simple solution is definitely for you.

Check them out here: [redgumcamping.com.au](http://redgumcamping.com.au)

# SHOOT OFF! Quiz

Welcome to another instalment of The Shoot Off! 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.

We think getting anything over 15 out of 20 makes an AA-grade quizzier. Answers can be found in the Sunset Gallery section on page 83.

## SCORING



20 out of 20: Bullseye!  
15+: 9 ring  
12+: 8 ring  
7 or fewer: Time to re-sight your 'scope'

## QUESTIONS:

- 1 When hunting deer, dogs and pigs, in a prevailing wind, should you walk into a breeze, across it or with the wind behind you?
- 2 In Pakistan chukar are what game animal?
- 3 Primarily, in what country are markhor hunted?
- 4 Thermal imaging devices don't 'see heat' directly - what do they actually detect?
- 5 Night vision devices amplify what?
- 6 In what state would you find the Monarto range?
- 7 What is a bosun knife used for?
- 8 The wildcat .25 Souper is based on what cartridge?
- 9 What has a larger neck diameter - the .30 Luger or the 9mm Luger?
- 10 Does the organisation Animals Australia support hunting?
- 11 What century saw the end of tinned rabbit?
- 12 How many of the world's seven marine turtle species are found in Australia?
- 13 What was the name of Springfield Armory's first bolt action rifle?
- 14 Is shooter Ross Vasta still a federal MP?
- 15 Are there more or less than one million registered firearms in Queensland?
- 16 Other than shooting, the Stewartdale range is a well-known what?
- 17 Who was the first editor of SSAA Queensland's magazine?
- 18 What does the 'R' stand for in .22 LR?
- 19 What is the primary reason hunters aim for a broadside shot on game animals?
- 20 Which rifle replaced the Lee-Enfield as Australia's standard service rifle?

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

Eat WILD:

# Pan roasted saddle of rabbit

with honey and rosemary sauce

By Anthony Hamilton-Smith

Prep: 30 min Serving: One saddle as an entree or both as a main

**Method**

De-bone the saddles. Place the saddles on the bench, tenderloin part towards you and carefully remove the spine with a small, sharp knife. Keep the rabbit spines for the sauce.

Lay the fillets on the bench and sprinkle with a little Maldon salt and dried thyme. Place two sundried tomato pieces in a row along the fillet next to the tenderloin. Place two olive halves on top of each sun dried tomato.

Roll the fillet up, using the belly flap portion of the fillet to roll the tenderloin and stuffing in. Sprinkle a little more thyme and sea salt on the outside of the rolls. Truss tightly with (non synthetic) kitchen string and refrigerate for at least half an hour.

**Sauce**

In a small stainless saucepan, colour the rabbit bones and shallot in a little olive oil. Add one cup of red wine and cook off the alcohol for a few minutes. Add the stock and simmer to reduce to about ¾ of a cup. This should take 45 minutes to an hour. Add a small rosemary sprig and honey to taste and cook out for another five minutes. Strain and remove shallots, rosemary and rabbit bones. Season to taste.

Pre-heat your oven to 180°C.

Using a frying pan or skillet that can be put in the oven, saute the rolled rabbit fillets in a little olive oil and brown on all sides.

Place pan in a preheated oven for eight minutes. In the meantime, re-heat the honey, thyme and rosemary sauce.

**Side dish to serve**

Baby carrots roasted with olive oil, whole garlic cloves (in the skin), salt and pepper and honey and thyme

**To serve**

Remove string from rabbit fillets, slice into 10-15mm slices and lay out on plates. Pour over the sauce, add the side of roasted carrots and garnish with the roasted pine nuts and a rosemary sprig.

**Ingredients**

- 2 saddles of rabbit (one saddle serves two)
- 4 halved sundried tomatoes
- 4 Kalamata olives cut into four pieces each
- 2 cups of veal or beef stock (made from roasted bones for colour and flavour)
- 1 cup of light red wine
- 1 shallot roughly chopped
- Dried thyme
- ¼ cup of roasted pine nuts
- 3 fresh rosemary sprigs
- 1-2 teaspoons of honey
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Maldon salt



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### MEMBERSHIP OFFICE

**Requirements:**

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- Firearms knowledge desirable but not essential.

### IPSWICH CITY PISTOL CLUB

**Requirements:**

- H firearms license.
- Courteous, safety-conscious and calm.
- May also be asked to assist the Queensland Shooters Supplies Gun Shop.

### QUEENSLAND SHOOTERS SUPPLIES GUN SHOP

**Requirements:**

- Firearm licence - A, B & H. If not currently licensed for H must be able to obtain in near future.
- Understanding of firearms, ammunition and accessories.
- Work flexibility essential.
- Retail experience desirable.
- May also be asked to assist the Ipswich City Pistol Club.

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESUME TO BOTH:

hr@ssaaqld.org.au and news@ssaaqld.org.au

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### SHOOT OFF! Quiz

**ANSWERS**

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Into and/or across  | 9. 9mm (.380" vs .322")     |
| 2. Partridges  | 10. No                      |
| 3. Pakistan  | 11. 20th century            |
| 4. Infrared radiation  | 12. Six                     |
| 5. Existing light  | 13. The 2020 Waypoint       |
| 6. SA  | 14. No, lost seat in 2025   |
| 7. Sailing/marine environments (Rigging/splicing boat lines) | 15. More                    |
| 8. A necked down .308 Winchester case                        | 16. Koala sanctuary         |
|  | 17. Gordon Nelis            |
|  | 18. Rimfire                 |
|  | 19. To ensure a humane kill |
|  | 20. L1A1 SLR                |



The Report is now on Instagram



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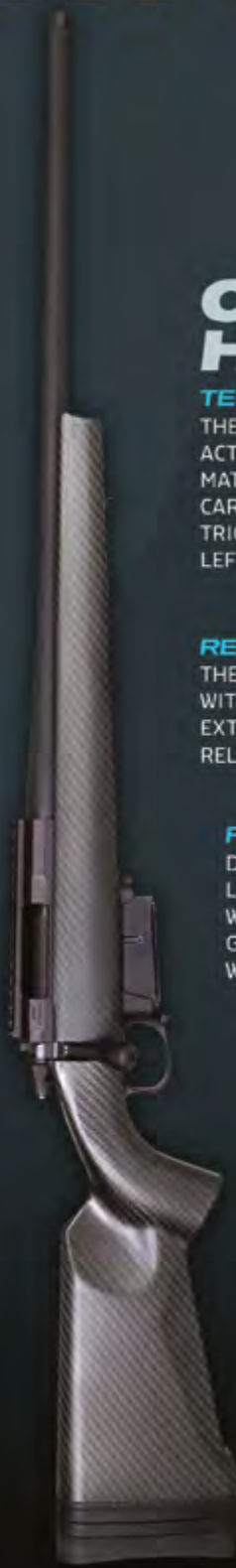
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