

THE REPORT

September 2026

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**BULLET
GUIDE**

Poster Inside



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Contents

6	Letters & News
8	Federal's 6.5 Creedmoor +Peak
14	Stretch your rifle's limits... With an Element Helix 1500 or Titan 3K Rangefinder
18	Cape York Hunting Lodge Veterans, values and the frontier of FNQ hunting
22	Becoming a Glock armourer
26	Zeroing In: Internal ballistics Part 2 Chamber and bore
30	Zeroing your scope in 10 shots
34	Clubs' Corner SSAA Inglewood
35	Willing to listen
36	Diggin' the Diana XR200 A highly capable and flexible platform
40	Politics in Focus Bondi and the Politics of Firearms
42	Berger Bullet Guide Poster inside!
44	The Steyr Mannlicher Zephyr II .22 Magnum
49	Starlink Mini Linking the bush to the internet
50	Meet the family Garmin Instinct 3 review

52	Unexpected double
58	CIVIVI Knives
61	Queensland councils try to claw back control
62	Stop guessing, start 'scoping'
65	Prizes Another month, another chance to win!
66	Nitecore on the move Power, light & reliability for modern adventurers
70	The Webley service revolver
75	That's not an Australian knife – this is!

GREAT AUSTRALIAN OUTDOORS

76	Station Stays Fairview & Koolburra Stations
79	Avian bird flu update H5N1 Avian Influenza reaches mainland Australia
80	Bee123 hits 10,000 hive health checks

81	Shoot Off! Quiz
82	Eat WILD Wild venison backstrap with chips and red wine jus

September 2026

Reviews

- Federal + Peak Ammunition8
- Element Rangefinders14
- Diana Air Rifle Series36
- Steyr Mannlicher Zephyr II44
- Garmin Instinct 3 Smart Watch50
- Civivi Knives58
- Nitecore Range66

FEDERAL'S

6.5 CREEDMOOR

+ PEAK

8

WIN

THESE

GREAT

PRIZES

65

Editorial

The road ahead

SSAA Queensland has never been bigger or better.

Our membership continues to grow, our clubs and branches remain busy, and the Association is in a strong position to make a real impact throughout the coming years. We have some ambitious plans and, while there is plenty of work ahead, there is also a great deal to be excited about.

Queensland has proven itself a leader in the firearms community time and time again. We have outstanding ranges, passionate competitors, dedicated hunters and shooters, and a strong network of clubs stretching across the state.

We also proudly produce Australia's leading magazine for shooters, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts: *The Report*. Each edition, including this one, gives us the chance to share the stories of our members, celebrate our clubs, promote upcoming events and keep readers informed about the issues that matter.

Of course, none of this happens by accident.

Behind every local competition, working bee, club meeting, training day and championship is a group of people giving up their time to make it happen. At this time of year, when the calendar has been especially busy, it is worth recognising the many volunteers who have been officiating, scoring, setting up ranges, preparing food, helping competitors and supporting events far and wide.

Many of these people work quietly in the background, but their contributions are enormous. Our clubs and shooting disciplines simply could not operate without them. The future of the shooting sports, our pastime and way of life is thanks to them.

It is also hard to believe how quickly the year is passing. I have been so busy lately that I have barely had time to sit down and write this editorial, and I suspect many of our volunteers know the feeling. So, from me to you, one more time, thank you.

The future of the shooting sports is in our hands, and I believe that future is bright. With strong clubs, committed volunteers and a growing membership, SSAA Queensland is ready for the road ahead.

Jeff Ross



SSAA Queensland President

THE REPORT

Australia's largest print circulation hunting, shooting and outdoors magazine!

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Letters

Memories from ‘Maggie’ Island

I was browsing through the July edition of *The Report* when the words ‘Maggie’ Island jumped out at me. I stopped browsing and started reading the article that Robet M Walkey had sent in regarding the billiard table that was found to be owned by Walter Lindrum.

I lived on Magnetic Island from 1961-1965. My father Jack Frame was transferred there in the police force. Mom, Dad, brother Michael and I moved into the police house in Picnic Bay. One day, with his trusty Lithgow 1A single shot .22 in hand, Dad said, “Come on, we’ll go out to West Point, and I’ll teach you gun safety and target shooting”. Being the first visit to West Point, we had to do some looking around and we found some buildings in bad states of disrepair, with one large building and several smaller ones.

Inside the large building, we found this very large billiard table, with the only visible damage being a large L-shaped cut in the felt on the top - and an amount of possum droppings from the ceiling. I think the white ants had over the years done a lot of damage – but not to the billiard table.

On the way to West Point, we passed through Cockle Bay and Bolger Bay where there were Brahman Cattle belonging to Keith Melville who owned the butcher shop in Nelly Bay. I got to know him, and I would go to Bolger Bay of a weekend in his ute with a drum of molasses. The cattle would come out from the scrub and follow us back to the trough. Keith would saddle up and bridle ‘Coombie’ for me and I could ride while he did his work there.

Dad reckoned there wasn’t a rock on the island us boys didn’t know about. Back at Picnic Bay, we would quite often meet the ferry with Ann Bowerman, who would take all the cargo to Jack Lane and Terry Carrol’s shop and various other places. One day, Cole Joy, ‘Little Patty’ and Judy Stone turned up and wanted to see all the island, so Ann Bowerman brought the mainline ute down and we all sat in the back, with myself and Ann Bowerman Jr giving them a running commentary all the way to Horseshoe Bay.

They used to have live bands come over from Townsville and play in the Blue Moon Hall above Jack and Terry’s shop - until ‘The Stomp’ dance came out and they had to stop because we were breaking all their fluros in the shop below.

There is so much more I could write about but can’t take up too much room. Now, I’m retired but continue to shoot. Thank you, Robert Walkley for taking me

back to 1962 when I first saw the table. Your story brought back so many great memories that I’ll never forget.

Nigel Frame,
Qld



The Shoot Off!

Full marks on your research in the ‘Shoot Off! Quiz’, some of those questions are extremely difficult!

I saw a question a couple of months ago that claimed the ‘R’ in .22LR stood for ‘Rimfire’, but I always thought it stood for ‘Rifle’. I see in the June edition the same question with a different answer, some clarification would be in order.

I always open *The Report* to the quiz first, well done!

Cheers, Ian M, Yarraman

From the editors:

Hi Ian,

Thanks for the feedback and consider yourself awarded a ‘bonus point’ (as well as a anyone else who noticed that misfire) for the next Shoot Off! Quiz. In the context of rifles and ammunition, LR almost always stands for Long Rifle.

Yep, that’s me!

Dear team, especially, Billy Allen.

I must say I had a chuckle reading the article ‘What your hunting calibre says about you’ (June *The Report*) - especially the portion for .308 Winchester owners.

The article, without flaw, captured me perfectly. Keep up the great work and happy hunting.

Regards, Des H, via email

Shooting and the Great Outdoors

Hello, Team.

I wanted to congratulate you on connecting shooting with the ‘great outdoors’. It’s not exactly shooting, but I enjoy reading the ‘Great Australian Outdoors’ section at the back of *The Report*. After all, you can’t have shooting without the outdoors. Looking forward to the next mag.

Sam, Brisbane

News

Changing your Genuine Reason

Our state office often gets asked how members can change their ‘genuine reason’, with Queensland Weapons Licencing.

Here is what we tell them. To apply to change your genuine reason or add additional categories to your Weapons Licence, you need to:

- Complete a Form 4B - Change of Weapon(s) Category/Change of Condition(s) form, available from QWL’s website or download the Form 4B here:
- Pay the prescribed fee if you are adding a category of weapon.
- Provide all of your supporting documentation (explained on Form 4B – e.g., if you are changing to Sports and Target Shooting, use your SSAA Queensland membership card or a letter of confirmation from joining).
- Attend your local police station to submit the application.



Supporting documents required for the type of licence you wish to apply for can be located on the ‘Applying for a new firearms licence in Queensland’ page.



Licences and firearms in Queensland

As of July 2026, in Queensland there are:

- Issued licences: 235,676
- Licensees: 213,921
- Total number of registered firearms: 1,176,477.

(Taken from Queensland Weapons Licensing.)

We value your feedback and questions.

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FEDERAL'S 6.5 CREEDMOOR + PEAK

By Simon Frederiksen

Federal engineers in the USA have been doing some interesting things with case technology. In January 2025, they released their all-new 7mm Backcountry cartridge, which uses their patented Peak Alloy case. This Peak Alloy handles pressures up to 80,000psi. The result is 170-grain 7mm projectiles hitting more than 3,000fps in a long action, which outperforms other 7mm magnum cartridges. This new cartridge requires rifles chambered in 7mm Backcountry.

Fast forward to June this year, and Federal have now released the 6.5 Creedmoor +Peak. Federal claims this higher-pressure cartridge can be used safely in factory chambered rifles in 6.5 Creedmoor. This makes for an interesting proposition. Effectively, you can turn your Creedmoor into a 6.5 PRC short-action magnum.

MODERN MATERIALS

Around 1870, we saw the commercial production of brass cases for military and civilian use. During the next 140 years, we witnessed the constant development of new calibres, projectiles and the platforms that shoot them. Pressures increased with the development of powders, but the metallurgy of brass cases remained relatively unchanged. During World Wars I and II, when the core materials used to produce brass were in short supply, low-carbon steel was used. Pressures remained below 65,000psi.

With the availability of mass-produced lightweight modern personal body armour during the past 15 years, the US Army started to look at options for defeating these new materials. In 2019, SIG developed the .277 SIG Fury, which uses a hybrid case made up of a stainless-steel case head joined to a brass body. This modern design increased safe pressures to 80,000 PSI and gave the Army impressive performance – 136-grain projectiles at 3,000fps from a 16-inch barrel.

Five different factor loads in the new Peak Alloy case.



FEDERAL'S 6.5 CREEDMOOR +PEAK

With the high-pressure gains from new case materials in the military, it seemed only a matter of time before we started to see this technology filter through to the civilian market. Federal's 7mm Backcountry stunned the market with the Peak Alloy case. Its traditional, non-hybrid case looked less futuristic than SIG's hybrid case but promised to deliver exceptional performance, which it did. Now the 6.5 Creedmoor +Peak uses this patented steel alloy material to open up new performance from an existing calibre.

STEPPING ON THE 6.5 CREEDMOOR

As of the time this article goes to print, the following rifle manufacturers have tested and approved the higher-pressure ammunition in their rifles: Bergara, Christensen Arms, Geissele Automatics, Hill Country Rifles, Nemo Arms, Proof Research, Seekins Precision, Springfield Armory and Weatherby.

I have reached out to Howa, who responded by saying that it has not tested the ammunition. Tikka stated in an interview on the Backfire YouTube channel that it has not tested the cartridge. Ruger are yet to respond. Federal claims the higher-pressure ammunition "should be safe" in all rifles chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor, but recommend checking with the rifle's manufacturer...

How is any extra 18,000psi safe in a standard 6.5 Creedmoor action? Well, Federal says that the added pressure is handled by the inherent strength of the Peak Alloy case. As the powder burns and pressure builds, the case walls expand and lock into the chamber wall.

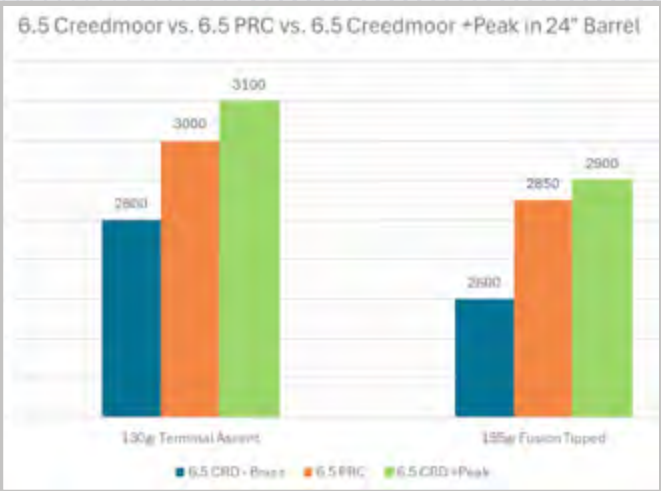
The case head also contains the pressure, so the bolt lugs don't feel the 80,000psi. Traditionally, brass will stretch and flow under greater pressure. Handloaders always look for signs of pressure where the brass case head shows imprinting of the bolt face or extractor marks from the brass deforming under pressure. Federal states that its Peak Alloy does not behave like traditional brass.

What about added recoil? Federal asserts that there is "no noticeable felt recoil". That bit of 'marketing fluff' will need to be verified once we get our hands on some of this special ammunition.

Federal's media pack included an interesting graph comparing three different 6.5 calibre rounds. Each round was loaded with its 155-grain Fusion Tipped projectile, shot from rifles with a 24-inch barrel. As the graph shows, the Peak clocks in with a solid speed advantage over the standard Creedmoor and just beats the 6.5 PRC, which is a short-action magnum. For all you 6.5x55 Swede diehard fans, yes, it's quicker than your OG 6.5 by a good margin.

WHO NEEDS MORE SPEED?

For all the countries around the world that are legally allowed to screw a suppressor on the end of their barrels, this new cartridge makes perfect sense. Cutting four or six inches off the barrel and adding a suppressor will give you the same performance as a standard Creedmoor but in a smaller, quieter package. Meanwhile, here in Australia, we can also shorten down barrel lengths to have more nimble handling rifles at the expense of our ear drums.



Federal's supplied data; interesting comparison.



A fast-looking rifle with some fast-looking chrono data.

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BX-2 TIMBERLINE HD

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BX-3 ALPINE HD

Whether you're hunting in the timber, open terrain, or anything in between, the BX-3 Alpine HD delivers a clear advantage when it matters most. It's built for the hunters who rely on their eyes to spot movement, break down terrain, and stay engaged. That means brighter images in low light, sharper detail across the entire image, and more ground covered with every scan.



It's fully redesigned magnesium chassis keeps weight down while delivering durability and enhanced ergonomics—including an improved armor texture and interchangeable Form-Fit eyecups.

Available in both 10x42 & 12x50.



FEDERAL'S 6.5 CREEDMOOR +PEAK

Keeping your standard-length barrel on your Creedmoor, let's have a look at what an extra 300fps gives you, assuming you are a hunter and you primarily target wild dogs, pigs and smaller deer. If you were to use a four-inch vital zone for a maximum point-blank range, the 155-grain Fusion Tipped projectile with a G7 BC of 0.307 will allow you to zero your rifle at 200m. At 100m, the projectile will be 1.9 inches high and at 230m it will be 2 inches low. Compare this to the same projectile going at a normal Creedmoor speed of 2600fps; you would need to zero the rifle at 180m. At 100m the projectile will be 1.9 inches high and at 210m it will be 2 inches low. If you were to stretch it out to 300m, the faster Creedmoor would drop a total of 9.4 inches, where the standard Creedmoor would drop 12.1 inches. Energy at 300m is substantially higher, with the Peak ammunition delivering 2,040ft-lbs compared to 1,612ft-lbs. For some people, this might be a big deal.

An interesting alternative view of this new, faster Creedmoor is how it compares to the NATO Potato, the legendary .308 Winchester. Looking at data from the Federal's .308 Power-Shok 150-grain soft point, the old .308 has about the same velocity at the muzzle but bleeds off speed quicker. At 200m, the .308 is 300fps slower and has

637ft-lbf less energy. On paper, the 6.5 Creedmoor +Peak could make most ardent .308 fans consider not talking crap about the Creedmoor.

FACTORY LOADS AND HANDLOADING

Federal will be offering five different factory loads:

- 127-grain Barnes LRX @ 3,100fps
- 130-grain Terminal Ascent @ 3,100fps
- 153-grain Gold Medal Sierra Tipped MatchKing @ 2,900fps
- 155-grain Fusion Tipped @ 2,900fps
- 156-grain Berger Elite Hunter @ 2,900fps.

This looks to be a nice spread of options to cover a range of applications. NIOA, who import Federal ammunition, has not confirmed Australian pricing or when we are likely to see the product.

For the handloaders, these cases can be reloaded with some caveats. Reading the 7mm Backcountry reloading data published by Federal, it states that only the nickel-plated cases can be reloaded. It seems that there are two types of case finish. The cheaper factory ammunition options use the zinc-nickel plated cases, which are not to be reused. Federal also advises not to trim or deburr or anneal cases. If the case length is over

length, it will need to be disposed of. Trimming and deburring will remove the nickel coating and expose the case to corrosion, which is bad when subjecting the case to 80,000psi.

Federal also states that these higher-pressure cases won't show traditional pressure signs

and to strictly follow the Federal published data using its listed powders. One question I have not managed to get an answer on are primers. What type of primer can handle the higher pressure? Surely standard and magnum primers would fail under the pressure. This brings up another issue for Aussie handloaders. American handload data does not include powders we use here in Australia, which means referencing powder-equivalent tables. I would not hold your breath for ADI to publish data for the Australian reloader.

"The future is exciting and we should all look forward to seeing what develops."

FUTURE OFFERINGS

The idea of having a safe option to take your standard rifle to magnum performance seems like science fiction. If you look at the technical evolution of other sports, it's reasonable that we are due for some breakthroughs. I personal like seeing industry developing new technology to create more options for consumers. Federal has hinted at other popular calibres getting the +Peak treatment. Surely the .223 and .308 are on the radar. Turning your standard .223 into a .22-250 or the .308 into a .300 Win Mag would be fine with me. The future is exciting and we should all look forward to seeing what develops.

Editor's Note: We are reliably informed that the new Federal +Peak ammunition will be available to Australian shooters by early 2027 at the latest. ☺



Some fast velocities for the 130-grain offering.



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STRETCH YOUR RIFLE'S LIMITS!

WITH AN ELEMENT HELIX 1500 OR TITAN 3K RANGEFINDER

By Rob Mori (@Hunt.Aus)

ELEMENT HELIX 1500

In a market crowded with overly complicated equipment, the Element Optics Helix 1500 Rangefinder stands out not by excess, but by refinement. Designed with what a hunter really needs in mind, it blends compact portability with genuinely advanced ballistic capability, which has fast become an increasingly important combination for those who demand both mobility and precision in the field.

BUILT FOR REAL-WORLD HUNTING

The Helix 1500 isn't just about impressive numbers, though hitting targets out to 1,500 metres certainly proves it means business in the field. What really sets this rangefinder apart is the brain inside it. Instead of

When you want to be prepared for anything, this is the perfect pairing.



just giving you a flat distance, its built-in ballistic chip does the number crunching for you instantly while calculating a precise firing solution by factoring in the incline, weather conditions and even spin drift.

When paired with Bluetooth connectivity, users can sync their custom ballistic profiles from a mobile app directly to the device. This means your dope is not just theoretical... it's tailored, field-ready data that is displayed instantly for you through the optic.

The dual colour T-OLED display is another standout. It keeps your view perfectly clear in dim light or harsh glare. Put simply, you won't have to fumble with settings when it really matters most.

Additional features include:

- 6x magnification for target acquisition
- adjustable diopter for user-specific clarity
- weather-resistant construction suited to even the harshest conditions
- CR2 battery power, which keeps things simple and field serviceable.

Where the Helix 1500 really proves its worth is beyond the spec sheet. Its credentials are found in the field. By feeding ballistic data straight into your range reading, it completely kills the guesswork, which is a massive benefit when you are shooting across steep valleys or stretching your distance. Instead of calculating holdovers separately, the shooter receives all this information immediately after ranging.

This translates to faster shot execution and greater confidence when time is limited.

The field of view (11.36m at 100m) combined with 6x magnification hits the sweet spot,

which is well and truly wide enough for target acquisition in mixed environments yet sufficiently magnified for precision.

Importantly, the unit's responsiveness and clarity also make it particularly well suited to walk and stalk hunting, where quick readings and minimal movement can be the difference between success and a blown opportunity.

THE ADVANTAGE OF SIZE AND WEIGHT

The best thing about the Helix 1500 is just how incredibly light and compact it is. Weighing a measly 150 grams and measuring around 100mm long, it easily slips into a jacket pocket or chest rig without weighing you down. For a hunter, less bulk means everything when you are on the move.

The things that matter most in my opinion are:

- Less weight means reduced fatigue during long hunts in challenging terrain.
- Faster deployment, as it can be carried in more accessible positions.
- Minimal interference with other gear, such as binocular harnesses or slings.

In practical hunting scenarios, weight savings compound quickly. When every gram matters, particularly in backcountry or alpine environments, the Helix's compact footprint becomes so much more than a convenience, it becomes a strategic advantage.

FINAL VERDICT

The Element Optics Helix 1500 is a very well-designed tool that aligns with the needs of hunters. It doesn't attempt to compete purely on maximum range or anything like that. Instead, it gives you the ultimate trio: advanced ballistic data, rugged field usability, and a design that won't weigh you down. If you are a hunter who needs to move fast but refuses to compromise on accuracy, the Element Optics Helix 1500 Ballistic Rangefinder is an incredibly smart choice. It completely strips away all the unnecessary bulk and manages to combine a minimalist design with high-tech features that really matter. I would go as far as saying it is virtually tailor-made for those who cover serious ground, adapt on the fly and need flawless data the second a target steps into view.

Fits even the smallest pocket.



\$749

TITAN 3K RANGEFINDER

The Element Optics Titan 3K Rangefinder is a serious tool for those who like to push beyond conventional distances. Built with advanced ballistic integration in mind and extended ranging capability, it's not a piece of kit designed for casual use; it's aimed squarely at hunters and shooters who demand ultimate precision when it matters most.

FEATURES THAT GO BEYOND DISTANCE

The specification that is built into the name is hard to ignore; the Titan 3K is built to range targets with pinpoint accuracy all the way out to 3,000 metres, which places it firmly into the extreme long-range category. That said, what really sets it apart though isn't just its phenomenal reach, it's what it does with that data.

At the heart of the unit is its ballistics chip, which drops a real-time firing solution straight into your viewfinder. By factoring in your incline, the weather, and even spin drift, it completely kills the need to use the old multi-step hassle of ranging a target, checking a ballistic app on your phone, and then dialling your turret. Thanks to its built-in Bluetooth capabilities, you can simply preload your specific rifle and ammo profiles right through the Element Optics Ballistics app. Once you step out into the field, all that data is already saved onboard and ready to go when it matters most and time is of the essence.

Below are a few other features that make this unit stand out in a crowd:

- 7x magnification for improved target identification at distance
- dual colour T-OLED display, ensuring optimal visibility across varying light conditions
- tripod compatibility for added stability during long-range ranging
- USB-C rechargeable 18650 battery, offering extended runtime and field convenience
- weather-resistant construction for durability even in harsh conditions.

STRETCH YOUR RIFLE'S LIMITS!

STRENGTHS IN THE FIELD

The ability to get an immediate ballistic call, which is displayed in mils or MOA depending on the user's preference, complement the shooting process dramatically. Out in the field, this means less time between spotting your target and taking the shot. By managing to combine high magnification with its field of view (12.23m at 100m), it gives you the best data possible to achieve spot-on precision with a clear look at your surroundings. Balance like this makes all the difference, especially when you are trying to pick up smaller targets across larger areas or at long range.

Additionally, the inclusion of a tripod mount isn't just a handy feature on paper, it becomes a genuine advantage when pushing the limits of the unit's range, where stability directly impacts accuracy.

SIZE, WEIGHT, AND PRACTICALITY

Unlike compact units such as the Helix 1500, the Titan 3K adopts a larger, more substantial form factor that is not by accident but most definitely by design.

At approximately 362 grams and 126mm in length, it's still highly portable, but clearly built to prioritise performance and battery capacity over ultra-lightweight minimalism.

The size of the Titan 3K brings several practical benefits:

- improved ergonomics, especially when used in a horizontal orientation
- larger internal components, supporting its extended ranging capability
- greater battery capacity, allowing extended sessions without concern for power.

While it may not disappear into a pocket like the Helix 1500, it carries comfortably in a bino harness or pack and rewards the user with significantly enhanced capability.

IN SUMMARY

The Element Optics Titan 3K is far from a general-purpose rangefinder; it's a specialised instrument built for hunters and shooters operating at the far end of the distance spectrum.

What makes this unit special is how it pairs serious long-range reach with built-in ballistics computing. You get fast, clear data right when you need it most. Whether you are constantly pushing your distance or simply want future-proof gear, the Element Optics Titan 3K gives you a great mix of advanced tech, simple operation and rugged reliability in the field. Simply put, it doesn't just tell you the distance, it tells you exactly where to hold.



THE BOTTOM LINE WHEN COMPARING THE HELIX 1500 AND THE TITAN 3K

When you look at them side by side, the Element Optics Titan 3K and the Helix 1500 aren't rival pieces of gear. They are teammates designed for completely different hunting styles. The common denominator is the focus on super intelligent onboard ballistics, reliable Bluetooth connectivity and simple usability. Whether

you are glassing a distant gully or making a split-second call on a target that just presented itself, both rangefinders give you the data that matters to you at the press of a button. Put simply, the speed and quality of the data quickly turns straight into confidence when you settle behind your rifle.

At the end of the day, choosing between them comes down to how you wish to hunt. If you want to push the absolute limits of distance and precision, grab the Titan 3K. On the other hand, if you want a featherlight and highly capable companion for your everyday pack, go with the Helix 1500. 🎯

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SCAN FOR INFO

Cape York Hunting Lodge offers a variety of accommodation options, including these hunting lodges.

CAPE YORK HUNTING LODGE

Veterans, Values and the Frontier of FNQ Hunting

By any measure, Cape York is one of Australia's last true hunting frontiers. Vast floodplains, paperbark swamps, winding creek systems and spear grass flats stretch toward the gulf and the peninsula, holding healthy populations of feral pigs, scrub bulls and other introduced game that challenge even seasoned hunters. It is country that rewards preparation, discipline and respect.

The newly opened Cape York Hunting Lodge, operated by Hunt NQ and owned in partnership with Koolburra and Fairview Stations, is a veteran-run enterprise bringing a distinctive ethos to Far North Queensland's guided hunting scene.

This is not simply another outfitter in pig country. It is an

operation built on service, structure and clearly defined values - principles forged long before the first client ever chambered a round.

A VETERAN-LED VISION

Mick from Hunt NQ explains the lodge's origins plainly. "The owners of Koolburra and Fairview Station and I have had a long-standing relationship," he says. "When the station approached me about starting a guided hunting business, it was envisioned as a small veteran-run operation - offering a handful of visitors the opportunity to add a guided hunting experience to their stay."

What began as a modest concept has grown rapidly. "During the past year, we've experienced exponential growth. Interest



By Peter Jackson

expanded far beyond what we anticipated. We're now welcoming experienced hunters and newcomers alike."

That growth prompted the expansion across both Fairview and Koolburra Stations, dramatically increasing the hunting footprint while maintaining the operation's founding integrity.

"We're also planning to open a multipurpose range facility this year, with targets out to 2000 metres," Mick adds - a serious statement of intent for long-range shooters. For SSAA members, that structured progression - measured growth, infrastructure investment and disciplined planning - will sound familiar.

PRIME COUNTRY, DIVERSE TERRAIN

Access to nearly a million acres of private land provides extraordinary variety. "The terrain is diverse," Mick explains. "Open grasslands, dense woodlands, wetlands, rivers and waterfalls - all characteristic of Cape York."

This biodiversity supports feral pigs, scrub bulls, feral cats and wild dogs, alongside crocodiles and prolific birdlife. It is country that offers both challenging pest control and genuine wilderness immersion.

What makes it unique, Mick says, is the combination of untouched Cape landscapes and local knowledge provided by experienced guides who know how animals move across seasons and terrain.



Pest control on the Cape is both challenging and rewarding.

"Hunt NQ offers guided bow and rifle hunting targeting feral pigs, cats, dogs and scrub bulls."



Knowledgeable guides helped this bunch ensure a successful hunt.

THE HUNT NQ APPROACH

Hunt NQ offers guided bow and rifle hunting targeting feral pigs, cats, dogs and scrub bulls. "Each species takes different tactics," Mick says. "But regardless of experience or skill level, the guides are there to help clients get rounds on target."

Night hunting has become increasingly popular, with thermal and night-vision optics allowing hunters to target pigs and cats during peak activity periods. "We try to accommodate any style of hunting a client wishes to use." That adaptability extends to training. All hunters confirm zero on arrival at the range - not just as a formality, but as an assessment tool.

"Our guides are all ADF veterans with decades of field and hunting experience. Some are former snipers and can provide long-range coaching," says Mick. Terrain and engagement distances are matched carefully to skill level and equipment - a practical, safety-driven approach.

CAPE YORK HUNTING LODGE

SAFETY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Military training is evident in the lodge's safety systems. "Through our military backgrounds, we've had years of trauma first aid training and emergency response experience," Mick explains. "We operate with Starlink satellite communications, personal locating beacons, and we have access to two remote airstrips for medical evacuation if required." All guides are trained military Range Safety Supervisors. "You're shooting and hunting with the closest thing to experts we can find."

For SSAA readers, that level of preparation reinforces confidence. Responsible firearm culture and layered risk management are not optional extras; they are foundational.

ACCOMMODATION AND CUSTOMISATION

Cape York Hunting Lodge caters to varying comfort levels. Accommodation ranges from air-conditioned ensuite cabins and rooms to powered and unpowered caravan sites, remote private campsites and a powered mustering camp suitable for larger groups.

Packages are fully customisable. Fairview and Koolburra Homesteads sit just 45 minutes apart, allowing guests to combine hunting with barramundi fishing, property tours or tag-along adventures guided by Hunt NQ veterans. Tag-along tours are particularly suited to families or non-hunters wanting to experience the Cape landscape while others pursue game.

ETHICAL AND SUSTAINABLE HUNTING

The lodge maintains a clear conservation focus. "We only target feral species," Mick states. "Removing these animals reduces the damage they cause." In a region where feral pigs and scrub bulls impact pasture, waterways and native ecosystems, ethical pest control is both a sporting challenge and environmental contribution.

TIMING AND LOGISTICS

The ideal window to visit runs from May through November - Cape York's dry season.

Guests can self-drive via sealed roads, fly into Cairns or Cooktown for arranged transfers, or arrive via private or charter aircraft. Both stations have private airstrips. Cooktown is roughly two hours away; Cairns approximately three and a half. The accessibility surprises many southern visitors.

MORE THAN A COMMERCIAL VENTURE

What ultimately separates Cape York Hunting Lodge is its deeper mission. This is a business built by veterans creating opportunity for veterans - through employment, mentorship and structured outdoor pursuits that provide purpose beyond service life.

Around the fire at day's end, conversations move easily between ballistics, wind calls and shared experiences - military and civilian alike. Camaraderie comes naturally.

For those considering a northern expedition, the lodge represents more than trophy potential. It represents discipline applied to hunting, safety integrated into every step and pest control aligned with landholder needs. Cape York remains demanding country. Success is earned. But under veteran leadership - where preparation, patience and precision are not slogans but lived habits - hunters can approach the peninsula with confidence.

Some lessons learned in uniform carry forward seamlessly into the bush. On Cape York, those lessons may be the greatest asset of all.

Note: See page 76 in our GAO section for a story on Koolburra and Fairview Stations. ☺

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The remoteness of the Cape makes it easy for the feral pigs to get quite large.



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If the shooter is not capable of shooting well, the handgun will not function as designed or intended.

BECOMING A GLOCK ARMOURER

By Ridge Hochstettler – US Deputy Sheriff

Being a hunting country boy in America just comes with certain assumptions. Such as, guns and shooting are as much a part of your lifestyle as getting a morning cup of coffee. I was an adult before I shot a handgun though. We didn't use them to hunt, and my dad wasn't comfortable with them.

In my early adult years, I was working as a Corrections Officer at the local jail and decided to take the next step in my career and become a law enforcement officer. I asked one of my co-workers, who had already made the transition, what kind of handgun I should buy. He gave me one of the best pieces of advice about selecting a handgun

that I have ever heard. He said, "Go to your local gun shop and have the store owner hand you different handguns with your eyes closed - unloaded of course. Whichever one feels best in your hand, start there. From there you can begin grading based on functionality, customisation, performance and finally price." It just so happened that I liked the Glock the best.

It was a convenient fact that my department, where I planned on staying, also issued them as our duty pistols.

I learned to shoot it pretty well. I won the Top Gun award in my academy and even beat the instructors and local police officers in some fun shooting drills for time and accuracy. It is kind of

like learning to spell and write in school. I had a rudimentary knowledge of how to shoot a handgun – like using about half of the alphabet to make a limited number of words and only in print. During the next two years of my career, I would win the Top Gun award at my agency and prove myself to be a capable shooter. At this point, I would say I could shoot a handgun well – comparable to spelling using the whole alphabet, but only four- or five-word sentences and only in print.

From there, I would join our Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. I got completely blindsided by the new education I was receiving on how to use that piece of metal and composite on

my hip. Now, I had to 'write in full sentences' and somewhere I learned 'cursive from someone writing in calligraphy'. It took time but eventually I proved myself capable again at the new standard and added a red dot optic on my Glock. What is the reward for hard work? Like my high school basketball coach said: more work.

Off to Glock Armourer school I went. Glock is a unique company in the firearms world. It is still a family-owned company and Mrs Glock still visits the factories regularly, from what I am told. It still has the factory in Austria, but there is also one here in the USA. For eight hours I was schooled by one of Glock's employees about Glock Gen 1-5 and their differences; how to recognise one by certain features and pin placement; how to disassemble, exchange broken or worn parts, clean, inspect functionality and upgrade and add on parts. If you could handle this, you completed the day with a practical and written test. You had to disassemble the Glock handgun issued by the

instructor in a certain amount of time and then reassemble it.

At the end of both stages, the instructor would inspect and function check the handgun. Once you passed the practical, you got to take the written test. Passed that too? Congratulations, you are now a Glock armourer! That's a fancy title to say you are expected to maintain your own handgun, but also those of the other officers/deputies at the department.

The instructor talked a lot about the handgun itself. However, he kept coming back to one variable: the shooter. I can function check, maintain, clean and make a Glock work wonderfully. But if I am incapable of shooting it well, the handgun will not function as designed or intended.

"If the handgun is clean and the ammunition is of a high quality, the shooter is most likely the failure point."

Where I work, being an armourer is the first step before becoming a range instructor. Now that I instruct the whole process, including practical application as a Close Quarters Battle (CQB) instructor, I try and program good habits and proper techniques from day one. The Glock failed to cycle and had a double or misfeed? It does happen but not often without a reason. If the handgun is clean and the ammunition is of a high quality, the shooter is most likely the failure point. In this specific instance, the shooter most likely limp wristed the gun and didn't provide enough force behind the gun for Newton's laws to kick in, causing the force it takes to cycle the gun to go off into an unintended direction.

Especially with the additions of optics and lights being more regular, the fundamentals of shooting have fewer tolerances without the tool showing a deficiency in the shooter.

I personally do not have an excess of spare time to go and compete, but I think all firearm owners should try competing at some point – especially those in the military and law enforcement. It is a pressure test that helps highlight deficiencies in the gear, firearm and shooter. That way, no matter the reason, you the shooter can now correct the identified issue.

It is up to the shooter to be as familiar with their firearms as possible. That, with practice, will help improve performance.

BECOMING A GLOCK ARMOURER

My mates and I set up our own competitions at training regularly. If you are the poor unfortunate soul who has a bad day or comes in last, generally the handgun or equipment isn't the only thing about to let you know you messed up. My law enforcement and military mates keep each other in check with strings of jeers, insults and expletives that could make even the harshest human blush.

Hopefully during the next couple of years, I will be able to go to the Glock factory and take the master armourer class, which includes multiple days of assembling, learning, disassembling, troubleshooting and more learning. One section of the course is a review and demonstration of all of the most unique, rare or catastrophic problems that have been sent back to Glock during the past couple of decades.

Whether you have a firearm for professional, hunting or recreational use, I encourage everyone to become as self-



Gaston Glock founded his company in 1963. It wasn't too long before Glock handguns took over the US law enforcement industry, with the company continuing to refine its product line to service a variety of needs.

sufficient with their chosen tool as possible. Get more comfortable with working on and maintaining your own gear.

That is part of the reason I personally like Glock so much. When you take one of its classes, it is hosted and instructed by

a Glock employee - not some random guy or gal off the internet or social media. Additionally, if you can work on a Glock chambered in 9mm, you can work on the .22, .380, .45, .40 and 10mm. They all run the same system and engineering. 🇺🇸



Ridge has been a Deputy Sheriff in the USA for the past 12 years, giving him ample experience with his handgun.

“What is the reward for hard work? Like my high school basketball coach said: more work.”



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INTERNAL BALLISTICS

PART 2 - CHAMBER AND BORE

By Ben J. Anderson

Internal ballistics, the first phase of three including external and terminal, concerns itself with the process of getting a projectile moving. It presides over powder ignition through the bullet exiting the muzzle, a span measured in fractions of fractions of seconds. Really, it's a study in pressure. Generating, harnessing, maximising, while avoiding excessive pressure. Two sides exist to the internal ballistics coin: ammunition and the firearm itself, but they work hand in glove. Or should we say, cartridge in chamber. Having previously discussed ammunition, we will close off Internal Ballistics by looking here at the firearm itself.

As far as the gun is concerned, it's the internal bits, specifically chamber and bore, that are crucial to internal ballistics. Stock type, optic, how many positions the safety or stages the trigger has,

cerakote colour or how big your bolt knob is really aren't of concern for generating and harnessing pressure. The chamber (where the pressure is generated) and the barrel (where that pressure is funnelled), are what's really of interest, and we will address them in that order. While some of what we'll discuss relates to shotguns, much won't, so for writing's sake, we'll set them aside.

What's the chamber?

The chamber is in effect a negative or mould of the case's dimensions, holding the case together during the violent act of firing. The chamber and case work like a pond and its liner. If you dug a koi pond in your yard, the hole would supply the ridged structure, doing the heavy lifting, but would leak water into the ground. The pond's membrane, while much weaker and unable to contain the water's weight above

ground, when supported by the hole, seals it up. The cartridge case seals up the chamber, making it gastight, but without the chamber would burst. And the chamber on its own isn't gastight, but supports the case, stopping it rupturing in catastrophic fashion.

At the rear of the chamber opening is the bolt face, or breach face, depending on the type of action. Technically, it's not part of the chamber, but essential is supporting the case. For this discussion, action type doesn't matter, except to say there needs to be a surface that locks shut, holding the case in.

Then we have the walls of the chamber proper, and if bottlenecked, shoulder and neck as well. These dimensions match the shape of the cartridge, but are ever so slightly larger, a 'goldilocks' amount, allowing you to chamber a round but without excessive room.



SAAMI spec

Now's a good time to mention SAAMI: the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, founded in 1926. It is recognised as the leading organisation for setting standards in the firearms industry. It creates and publishes voluntary industry specifications to "facilitate safety, reliability, and interchangeability of firearms, ammunition, and components."

A SAAMI-approved cartridge means there is a reference that manufacturers, gunsmiths and handloaders can work to. Outside of 'SAAMI spec' is the wild west of wildcatting, where anything goes as tinkerers, enthusiasts and professionals alike modify and experiment. But once SAAMI approved, a cartridge will have agreed upon dimensions and tolerances for both case and loaded ammunition size and maximum pressure. Additionally, the dimensions and tolerances for the chamber itself and acceptable barrel twist rates are defined. These give manufacturers the guidelines to work to so when you buy a firearm and the ammunition it's chambered for, you'll be confident that it will fit and function effectively, and more importantly, safely.

"A SAAMI-approved cartridge means there is a reference that manufacturers, gunsmiths and handloaders can work to."

The headspace headache

Returning to our goldilocks chamber, headspace is a crucial consideration. It's a measurement of length - that varies in its measuring point for different cartridge categories - that essentially is a window of function. Insufficient headspace will not allow the firearm to go into battery, meaning close properly, because the cartridge won't fit lengthwise. Excessive headspace though can also be a problem. On the milder side, you might get reduced consistency and accuracy, primers starting to back out of the case, or even misfires as the firing pin pushes the case forward just enough to light strike the primer without setting it off. Because the case isn't held securely enough, with too much room to expand, stretching can make for difficult extraction or even a stuck case. Worst still, cases can rupture and release tens of thousands of PSI intended for bullet pushing back through the action and into the firearm, damaging it and even causing injury or death to the shooter.

But when everything goes right, as it does the vast majority of the time - especially shooting factory ammunition - the correct amount of pressure is produced and directed in the right direction, driving the bullet out of its case to begin its journey.

Tickle in your throat

Jumping free of the case, the bullet enters the throat, and while not the chamber, it's not bore yet either. The throat comprises two parts, first of which is the freebore. This is a section of barrel wider than the calibre and without rifling, meaning the bullet is unsupported. After the freebore comes the 'leade' (or lead), a cone of sorts, that begins to funnel the bullet into the bore.

Throat dimensions, how generous their length and diameter are, and leade angle specifics, relate to both pressure and accuracy. A bullet with too much room for activities in the freebore can 'bounce' around and get slightly skewwhiff, leading to inconsistency when engaging with the rifling, meaning bullet flight will be less consistent. However, insufficient freebore leaves little room for error or safety margins when building pressure, leading to potential pressure spikes.



Far from boring

We come now to the home straight of internal ballistics, the bore. The bore has a big part to play in how the pressure is harnessed to accelerate the projectile, providing its muzzle velocity, as well as give it its stabilising spin and direction, making the bore critical to the ballistics phrases that follow. But we are getting ahead of ourselves and need to finish off our current topic.

The diameter of the bore and bullet are linked, and together they relate to pressure. Imagine taking a big breath, filling your lungs, and then blowing with all your might through the metal tube off your vacuum. You'd no doubt push your entire lung volume out quickly, but with minimal pressure. Imagine the same again, but this time through a hollowed-out ball point pen. The volume of air you could deliver for a given time would plummet, but the pressure of that air would spike sky high - probably enough to rupture an ear drum!

The narrower the calibre of the bullet, case mouth and bore, the higher the pressure rises for a given volume of gas. That's why cartridges of a near identical capacity and design but different calibres see the larger exhibit higher muzzle velocities when the same or similar bullet weights are used. If pressure is capped, the larger bore can deliver

more volume of gas than the smaller calibre can at the same pressure.

Length of the bore, or barrel, also plays into how fast that pressure can push the projectile. The longer the barrel for a given cartridge, the more time the bullet is able to be accelerated for, resulting in increased velocity by the time the muzzle is reached.

You spin me right round baby

The bore is where we also find the rifling. This is made up of lands and groves that spiral their way out to the muzzle. The lands, or high bits, engrave into the outer surface of the bullet, and force the projectile to corkscrew as it travels down the barrel. Though having an impact on pressure, the sole purpose of the rifling is to impart spin that stabilises the bullet after leaving the muzzle. Rates of twist described as a ratio, like 1:7 or 1:12, refer to how many inches of barrel it takes for one full rotation. The shorter the distance to achieve a rotation, the faster the twist rate is said to be. Twist rate, velocity, bullet weight and length all need to be factored in for the goal of gyroscopic stabilisation to be achieved, a key element of external ballistics that will be addressed further there.

The crown is the very last impact the firearm has on the projectile before it's off on its own, into the realm of external ballistics. Crown refers to where the rifling and bore ends and is crucial for consistency and accuracy. Different styles of crown exist, but the key is the rifling terminates in a clean and consistent way and gas escaping around the bullet is even and symmetrical. Even minor damage to rifling at the crown, or biases in escaping gas, can seriously impact accuracy, no matter how good the process up to that point has been.

Conclusion

All these factors, both from this discussion and the previous one on ammunition, combine to make up internal ballistics, the topic of getting a bullet moving. All things being equal, tweaking even just one element on its own is enough to make significant changes to the delicate balancing act of this pressure-harnessing equation. But for all its complexity and detail, it really is just the first leg of the ballistic relay. Indispensable, nonetheless, on its own is of little practical use, and so we pass the baton downrange to external and then terminal ballistics. ☺



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ZEROING YOUR SCOPE IN 10 SHOTS

By Rachael Oxborrow

Resetting a rifle that has been in the cupboard for too long, or getting a new one up to speed on the range doesn't have to be a mission. It can be done in about 10 shots and 30 minutes and then you can spend your time getting your settings right and practising.

Assuming bore sighting has been done and your barrel is clean, the safest place to start - and which will use the fewest number of projectiles - is to set up a target at 25 metres and fire your first shot. This first shot most likely won't be in the centre and that doesn't matter, we will get there.

Measure how many millimetres the shot has landed from where you want it to be. For example, you could be 50mm low and 25mm to the right.

Now, remembering that scopes are calibrated for 100 metres, you will need to convert your adjustment. 25m is $\frac{1}{4}$ of 100m, so you will need to multiply the measured error by four to determine the equivalent correction required at 100m.

Using the example above, you're going to be correcting for the equivalent of 200mm in elevation and 100mm in windage at 100m. If you then fire another shot, you should be getting close to what you need. Take your target out to 50m and repeat the process. At this distance, your primary focus should be on adjusting your windage.

A rifle that is shooting left or right at 50m will still be left or right at 100m, whereas elevation can vary depending on your calibre, ammunition and intended zero distance.

Once you are satisfied your shots are tracking straight, move your target out to 100m. This graduation of distance and significant number of clicks to alter the scope's sights can seem like a lot of fiddling, but it is going to save you time and be a lot safer than starting at 100m and potentially missing the target altogether.

At 100m, there are a lot of approaches you can take, including firing individual shots and continuing to adjust as we have, or firing a three-shot group and measuring the error from the centre of the group. If you've had good results so far with your adjustments at each distance, the three-shot group is likely your most efficient approach.

Getting the rifle set up with a new scope or reviewing a scope needs to be done from a bench or other surface to ensure stability.



"Before heading to the range, check that your bases, rings and action screws are properly secured."



The initial process to get a scope ready for intensive sighting in should take less than half an hour and require fewer than 10 shots.

The goal here is to have your shots reliably on the mark in preparation for some more intensive sighting in. There are some caveats to the advice above. The origin of your scope will determine whether its adjustments are measured in Minutes of Angle (MOA) or Milliradians (MRAD), while some scopes may also be calibrated in inches rather than centimetres.

Likewise, the calibre of your rifle, the ammunition being used and your intended zero distance will influence exactly where you want your shots landing at 100m.

It is also important to sight-in using the same ammunition you intend to use at the range or in the field. Different brands, projectile weights, and bullet designs can produce noticeably different points of impact, even when fired through the same rifle.



Bit by bit...getting closer to the exact centre.

Before heading to the range, check that your bases, rings and action screws are properly secured. Many accuracy issues are caused by loose mounting hardware rather than a problem with the rifle or scope itself.

When sighting-in, shoot from the most stable position available. A shooting bench, bipod, bags, or

a solid rest will help remove as much shooter error as possible and allow you to focus on the rifle's performance rather than your own.

Barrel temperature can also influence results. While a hunting rifle is often fired from a cold barrel, target shooters may be more concerned with how the rifle performs over a string of shots. Understanding how your rifle behaves as it warms up can help you make more informed adjustments.

Finally, think about how the rifle will be used. A hunting rifle may be sighted-in differently to a rifle used for target shooting, and different disciplines may favour different zero distances. The method aforementioned is designed to quickly and safely get you on paper and close to your desired point of impact, but your final zero should always reflect your intended use. 🎯

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CONDITIONS AND EXCESS APPLY.

By Sam Talbot

Nestled among the bushland of Queensland's Southern Downs, SSAA Inglewood offers members more than just a place to shoot. With abundant birdlife, wallabies and a relaxed atmosphere, the branch has earned a reputation as a welcoming destination where visitors can enjoy not only their shooting, but also the outdoors.

The branch was established more than 20 years ago by the late Tom Donald, whose contribution to the club remains an important part of its history. A range at the facility has been dedicated in his honour, recognising the role he played in creating what has become a valued shooting range.

The branch has about 140 members and caters to the most common types of shooting. Facilities include a 300m rifle range, 50m pistol range, clay target shooting and Western Action disciplines. The club attracts a mix of members, including women and junior shooters, and regularly welcomes visitors from Brisbane and other areas who are looking to spend a few days enjoying the branch.



SSAA President Jeff Ross and SSAA Inglewood President Kelvin Randall on the range.



Operating off the grid, the site features several practical 'bush innovations' developed over the years, including an open-air clubhouse, bush kitchen, shaded seating areas, campground, showers and amenities, which provide everything visitors need for an enjoyable stay. The peaceful

setting makes it just as appealing for those wanting to relax and take in the surrounding wildlife as it is for those spending time on the firing line.

Accessibility is also a priority. The club currently caters for limited-sight shooters and has wheelchair-friendly access throughout much of the facility. Club President Kelvin Randall is a passionate advocate for adaptive shooting and hopes to one day compete at the Paralympic Games.

Looking to the future, the branch hopes to upgrade its amenities, particularly the female toilets and disability access facilities, while also extending the existing 200m range. The committee is keen to attract more shooters and would like to host additional events in the years ahead, as it did for the 2017 State Muzzleloading Championships.

Perhaps the most unique and impressive part of Inglewood – as well as maybe of any shooting range – is the working trainline Kevin is currently developing to travel throughout the grounds.

For those seeking a friendly country shooting club, SSAA Inglewood offers a step back in time, combining practical facilities, genuine hospitality and a strong connection to the bush. ☺

Inglewood has an innovative range to cater for limited sight shooters.

Willing to LISTEN

By Ken Payne

I was on a hunting trip with some friends and, while sitting around during the heat of the day, commented on how nice it was not to be distracted by a mobile phone (due to lack of reception). Away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and just talking with likeminded people gives you opportunities to have heart-to-heart discussions, sometimes one on one or as a group, quite often sitting around the bush TV (campfire). Most times the conversations are about work or a personal issue from someone who just needs someone to talk to; they're not necessarily asking for advice – they just need to 'talk things out', as sometimes their friends are too close to an issue to discuss it with them. In these cases, the most important thing is to keep the confidence of the discussion to which the person gave it.

An issue that came to mind was that of a friend of the family, whom we will call Don. He rang to have a chat the arvo before I left home to go hunting.

Basically, Don was in his early 70s, isolated and lonely, having split up with his girlfriend, and due to where he lives, his grown kids live several hours away. He had a liking for table tennis and dancing but unfortunately so did his ex-girlfriend, as that was where he met her. He believed if he went back to those venues, he would see her laughing and chatting to others and this would cause him angst, so he was staying at home on his own, painting rooms and feeling lonely.

Like many his age, Don is a bit 'tech challenged' so while I was talking to him, I was doing a search on social activities in the area and found out there was a new table tennis club only about four kilometres from his house in one of the new estates popping up about the place. The change in his voice was noticeable as he asked for the address and contact details; he was adamant that he was going to ring and see about going to this new club.

This made me realise how lucky I am that my home life and my group of friends, family and SSAA members who I know from the SSAA competitions that I attend give me a variety of people to mix with; not all are so lucky. So, whether on a hunting project or in your day-to-day life, there is a basic check we should all be doing - and that is to ask, 'Are you ok?'.

This year, R U OK? Day is Thursday, 10 September 2026. Be a good mate and be willing to listen. ☺

A CONVERSATION CAN CHANGE A LIFE

R U OK? inspires and empowers everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and start a conversation with those in their world who may be struggling with life.

You don't need to be an expert to reach out – just a good friend and a great listener.

Use these four steps and have a conversation that could change a life:

1. Ask R U OK?
2. Listen
3. Encourage action
4. Check in.

Visit: ruok.org.au



BE A MATE

- IT'S WORTH IT

Diggin' the Diana XR200

A highly capable and flexible platform

By Nathan Besh

The Diana XR200 is not just an air rifle, but a flexible platform that has the ability to do many different jobs and do them well - depending on what you need.

For this review, *The Report* was given both the XR200 Premium (Timber) in .177 calibre, and the XR200 in OD green (Polymer) in .22 calibre. The .177 was configured for lower power 10m target shooting and the .22 setup for higher power.

The quality and finish on both rifles were of a high standard; all components were well finished, and the fitment was spot on. I am normally a timber guy, as I don't like the 'cheap plastic' feel of some polymer stocks. However, I was impressed with the OD Green stock. It felt solid and did not sound like a thin hollow shell; yet it was light and I would trust that it would hold up under harsh conditions if required. The moulding marks were clean, and the black grip inlays appeared to be real rubber, not the fake plastic that perishes and goes sticky after a few years. If you needed the durability and low maintenance option of a polymer stock, then it is the best choice - and you are not sacrificing anything by not going timber.

Both rifles felt substantial in the hand, with the premium timber stock seeming a little larger up front. Both were very comfortable and ergonomic to use; however, be careful with the OD Green scope height, as the cheek rest has limited adjustment compared to the timber stock. You will need to find the balance between low profile scope rings that clear the magazine and provide a good cheek weld if needed.

Both rifles were fitted with standard triggers - and there is an Olympic version as an upgrade. The triggers have adjustments for first-stage travel, let-off point and weight. It was easy to adjust and a delight to use, smooth and crisp.

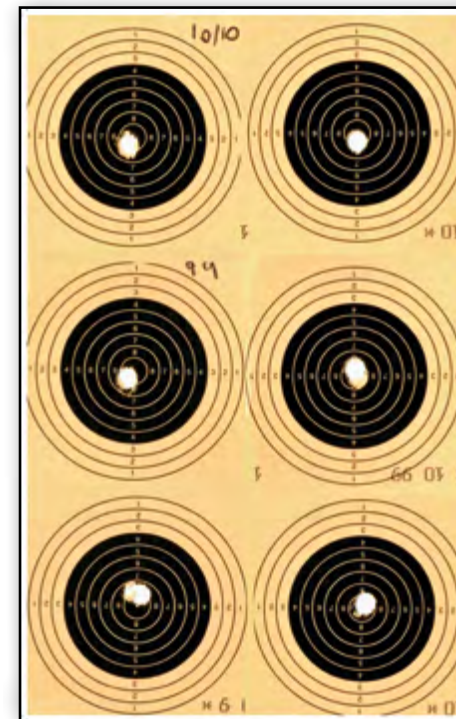
Looking superb and a very durable configuration in the polymer stock for rugged conditions.

Comfortable from any position and well balanced.

One somewhat odd feature was the dry-fire mode; by switching the safety on then off, you can practice your trigger discipline. This was helpful to set it up, and also for new shooters at our club to experience and get confidence quickly in the trigger.

Unlike powder burners, air rifles typically require some work to get setup perfectly for your particular use-case; it is basically our version of handloading. This normally requires adjustment of the regulator pressure and the hammer spring. After these adjustments your kit will then deliver consistent speeds and power every shot - to the point where it is not uncommon for performance to exceed top rimfire ammunition in terms of velocity consistency. Some air rifles have external controls to perform these functions but are typically more than double the price!

Diana appears to have focused and spent the money on quality components - Lothar Walther barrel, Altaros regulator, adjustable trigger -



10m Air from a bench, each target is two shots - incredible performance and really highlight the capability of the platform.



At the 50m range, showing potential - once dialled in with the right power and pellet, expect 9s all day very easily.

DIGGIN' THE DIANA XR200

instead of adding external dials and adjustments. This is a robust approach that can deliver all the performance you need, in a much less complex setup. The downside is making any power adjustments will take a bit longer and require some level of teardown.

The regulator in the Premium .177 was set to about 110Bar, which seemed perfect for pellets around the 7-10-grain range. The regulator in the OD Green .22 was set much higher, at about 200Bar. This delivered immense power - requiring 26-grain projectiles to keep it below 900fps and would require perhaps a 250Bar

fill to get a good consistent shot string; however, when filled to 200Bar, it lost 60fps over 10 shots. Reducing the regulator to about 150Bar would potentially be closer to the sweet spot for 20-grain projectiles, which provides a much greater selection of pellets to choose from.

The hammer springs in both seemed extremely overpowered for the job. This resulted in a



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the choice of the Queensland Shooter





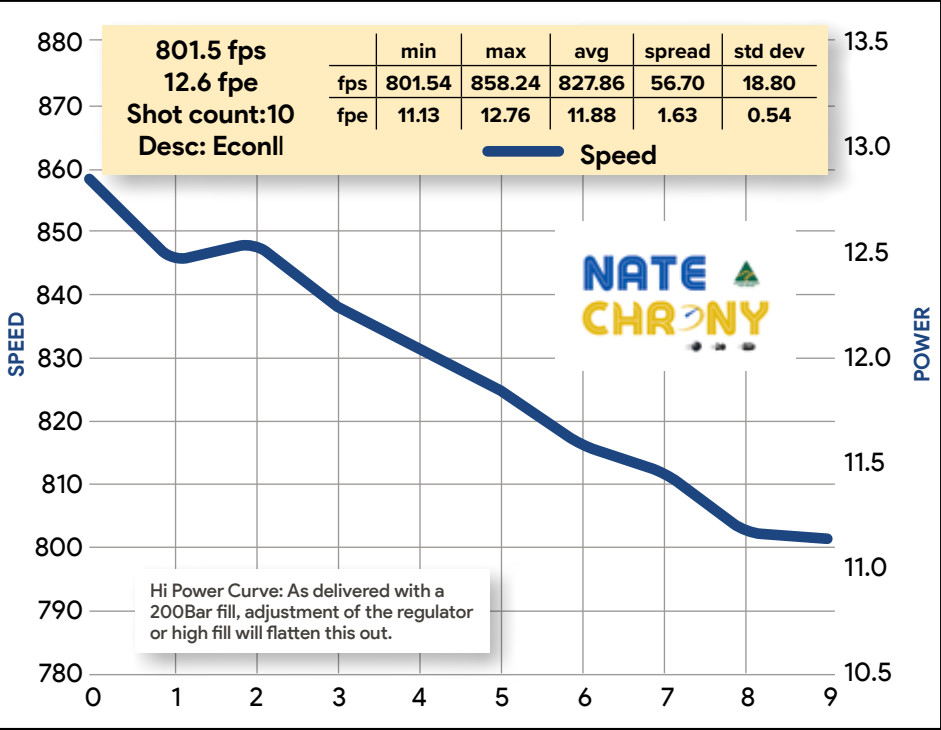
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“Diana appears to have focused and spent the money on quality components - Lothar Walther barrel, Altaros regulator, adjustable trigger...”



lot of force required to cock the rifle, and a decent amount of jarring when fired. I would also be concerned about long-term durability of internals with this spring fitted. Replacing the stock spring with the legendary C730 from the local hardware store delivered identical power output, but significantly reduced the cocking effort, made the action a lot smoother, and would no doubt reduce the stress on the internal components.

Some of the other small design features really made the rifles easy to use and own. The fill port, being a standard quick disconnect, was a welcome change - no more o-ring replacements and it is much easier to fill up anywhere you go.

The two-shot magazine was a great solution as an alternative for single loading, with supplied magazines having capacity for even the largest slugs or pellets. The ability to change calibres was also a unique feature, which can make them ‘future-proof’ and a good long-term investment.

There was one issue with the delivered rifles: one of the rifles had the magazine retaining magnet sitting proud. This made magazine loading extremely difficult and would need to be resolved via a warranty process.

A few (post-warranty) modifications could also provide a bit of extra usefulness. First off, making the hammer spring removal and not require trigger removal; this could be done by drilling the access hole in the trigger a little larger. As a manufacturer myself, I’m paranoid about durability and rust – I do everything to avoid being responsible for introducing any rust into a safe.

With the advances in engineering polymers, the substitution of steel parts with polymers or anodised aluminium should be done where possible to reduce maintenance and risk. The heavy steel end cap over the fill port could be changed to another material, and some small fasteners, such as the magazine screw, could be changed to stainless materials.

So how did they shoot?

Out of the box, both needed some adjustments to get them performing to their best. As above, this is very much a common occurrence with air rifles. I did not have a wide selection of very heavy pellets in .22 calibre, so I was not able to dial it in and did not adjust the regulator; however, it did show some promise out at 50m.

I performed the hammer spring change in the .177 in less than five minutes (which was fully detailed in the supplied manual), spent less than \$10 and turned it into an absolute tack driver at my local club. I was able to achieve multiple single-hole targets, easily keeping up with rifles costing more than twice the price.

Final verdict

Quality components throughout, which can deliver extreme performance, you just need to spend a little time tuning and adjusting the platform for your specific use case. ☺



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HUNTSMAN OPTICS



BONDI & THE POLITICS OF FIREARMS

Reforms introduced after the Bondi terrorist attack were supposed to reduce the number of firearms in the community. Instead, they appear to have achieved exactly the opposite. Rather than reducing demand, they triggered a surge in firearm licence applications, as licensed shooters looked for lawful ways to restructure firearm ownership before proposed ownership caps took effect.

In New South Wales, firearms licence applications increased by almost 50 per cent and applications for the collector licence category, which is not subject to the proposed ownership limits, reportedly increased by about 7,000 per cent within weeks. In the ACT, licence applications also increased sharply yet Permits to Acquire firearms did not. Police concluded the increase was largely driven by additional family members becoming licensed for firearms already in circulation.

That outcome should surprise anyone. Laws built on the assumption that people who

obey existing firearms laws will simply own fewer firearms, ignore a basic reality. Law-abiding people adapt to the rules governments create and criminals, by their very nature, do not.

Before deciding whether these reforms are the right response, it is worth asking a more fundamental question. What evidence is there that simply reducing the number of legally owned firearms will improve public safety?

Australians have a long history of firearm ownership for primary production, pest animal control, recreational hunting and target shooting. Today, there are more than four million legally owned firearms held by just more than 900,000 licensed firearm owners.

Those figures are often presented as evidence that Australia is becoming less safe. The long-term data suggests otherwise. As lawful firearm ownership

has increased, firearm homicide, firearm suicide and armed robbery involving firearms have all continued to decline. That does not prove there is no relationship between firearm ownership and public safety, but it does demonstrate that the relationship is far more complex than simply counting the number of legally owned firearms.

These figures were released by the Department of Home Affairs alongside the Albanese Government's announcement of a National Gun Buyback and nationally consistent reforms, including ownership caps, restrictions on so called open-ended licences, Australian citizenship requirements, accelerated implementation of the National Firearms Register and greater use of criminal intelligence in firearms licensing decisions.

If Australia's firearm safety outcomes have

continued to improve while lawful ownership has increased, what evidence demonstrates that simply reducing the number of legally owned firearms will produce further improvements?

The Bondi attack also exposed a more important issue than the number of firearms in private hands. If Australia already has one of the world's most comprehensive firearms licensing systems, how were the perpetrators able to gain access to firearms in the first place? That question goes to the heart of whether the current reforms are addressing the problem they seek to solve. If intelligence sharing, licensing decisions or risk assessment processes fail to identify or respond to a genuine threat, then strengthening those systems should be the priority.

Introducing additional restrictions on hundreds of thousands of Australians who have already demonstrated their suitability to hold a firearms licence does little to explain how those existing safeguards failed. Australia's own law enforcement and criminology agencies make a similar distinction. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's

(ACIC) *Illicit Firearms in Australia* report identifies organised crime groups, outlaw motorcycle gangs, drug traffickers and extremist networks as the principal users of illicit firearms. It acknowledges significant gaps in Australia's understanding of the illicit firearms market and identifies theft, illegal importation, illicit manufacture and legacy grey-market firearms as the principal pathways through which firearms become illicit. What it does not conclude is that increasing numbers of lawfully owned firearms are, in themselves, driving criminal firearm use.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) reaches a similar conclusion. Its research consistently shows that those responsible for serious firearm offending are fundamentally different from Australia's licensed firearms community. The AIC's National Homicide Monitoring Program found that almost nine in ten offenders who committed homicide with a handgun were not licensed firearm owners, while 98 per cent were using unregistered handguns.

Those findings reinforce an important distinction in Australia's firearms debate. The overwhelming majority of those responsible for the most serious firearm offences were already operating outside Australia's firearms licensing and registration system.

State governments have also taken different approaches. Victoria rejected the proposed ownership cap while supporting stronger action against trafficking, illegal firearms and organised crime. Queensland strengthened Firearm Prohibition Orders, expanded the use of criminal intelligence and introduced additional mental health reporting. Western Australia had already implemented extensive limitations before Bondi, including ownership caps, expanded police powers and stronger licence disqualification provisions. Even among governments committed to stronger firearms laws, there is no universal agreement that reducing the number of legally owned firearms is the reform most likely to improve public safety.

None of this is an argument against firearms regulation, rather using regulation as a direct reaction to a tragic event where firearms are used. Australia's licensing system, registration requirements, secure storage laws and

ongoing suitability assessments all play an important role in protecting the community. The question is whether future reforms should focus on counting firearms or identifying risks.

If Bondi demonstrated anything, it was that systems designed to identify dangerous individuals must work better. Intelligence must be shared more effectively, and licensing authorities must have access to timely information. Police must be able to intervene when genuine risks emerge, and any reforms must be directed at the people most likely to cause harm.

Good public policy should be driven by evidence rather than perception, and it should address demonstrated failures rather than assumed ones and focus on the behaviour that creates risk rather than on the people who already comply with the law. If the lasting legacy of Bondi is simply fewer firearms owned by licensed Australians, while the systemic failures that allowed the attack to occur remain unresolved, Australia risks learning the wrong lesson. 🚫

"What evidence is there that simply reducing the number of legally owned firearms will improve public safety?"

JURISDICTION	TREND FIGURE
ACT	Applications rose from about 137 per month to 188 per month after Dec 2025. Police indicated permits to acquire had not increased, suggesting firearms were being distributed among licensed family members.
Northern Territory	Not committed to buyback in current form.
NSW	Applications up nearly 50% with an average of 2,437 per month from Jan-Mar 2026 compared to 1,670 per month Apr-Dec 2025.
Queensland	Rejected most elements of the buyback. Strengthened Firearm Prohibition Orders, intelligence and mental health reporting.
South Australia	Not committed to buyback in current form.
Tasmania	The state government has backflipped on buybacks and caps and final outcomes are yet to be agreed upon.
Victoria	Rejected the proposed firearm ownership cap. Premier Jacinta Allan saying focus needs to be on criminals and illegal firearms. Reforms related to trafficking, licensing, police powers and intelligence accepted.
Western Australia	Reforms in place before Bondi attack, including ownership caps, police powers, licence disqualification and citizen requirement.

ELITE HUNTER

PRECISION MEETS PERFORMANCE FOR LONG-RANGE HUNTING

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
24556	6mm (0.243)	108gr	BT	0.559	1:8"	
25586	.25 Cal (0.257)	133gr	BT	0.613	1:8"	
26552	6.5mm (0.264)	140gr	BT	0.606	1:8"	
26550	6.5mm (0.264)	156gr	BT	0.679	1:8"	
27575	.270 Cal (0.277)	170gr	BT	0.662	1:9"	
28554	7mm (0.284)	175gr	BT	0.656	1:10"	
28550	7mm (0.284)	195gr	BT	0.755	1:9"	
30554	.30 Cal (0.308)	180gr	BT	0.576	1:12"	
30555	.30 Cal (0.308)	205gr	BT	0.631	1:11"	
30551	.30 Cal (0.308)	217gr	BT	0.702	1:10"	
30560	.30 Cal (0.308)	245gr	BT	0.807	1:9"	
33554	.338 Cal (0.338)	250gr	BT	0.685	1:12"	
33556	.338 Cal (0.338)	300gr	BT	0.814	1:10"	

VLD HUNTING

ENGINEERED FOR MAXIMUM DOWNRANGE PERFORMANCE

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
24524	6mm (0.243)	87gr	BT	0.427	1:10"	
24527	6mm (0.243)	95gr	BT	0.467	1:9"	
24528	6mm (0.243)	105gr	BT	0.545	1:8"	
24530	6mm (0.243)	115gr	BT	0.568	1:7"	
25513	.25 Cal (0.257)	115gr	BT	0.483	1:10"	
26503	6.5mm (0.264)	130gr	BT	0.562	1:8"	
26504	6.5mm (0.264)	140gr	BT	0.600	1:8"	
27501	.270 Cal (0.277)	130gr	BT	0.462	1:11"	
27502	.270 Cal (0.277)	140gr	BT	0.504	1:11"	
27503	.270 Cal (0.277)	150gr	BT	0.518	1:10"	
28503	7mm (0.284)	140gr	BT	0.500	1:11"	
28501	7mm (0.284)	168gr	BT	0.618	1:10"	
28502	7mm (0.284)	180gr	BT	0.673	1:9"	
30508	.30 Cal (0.308)	155gr	BT	0.464	1:14"	
30510	.30 Cal (0.308)	168gr	BT	0.498	1:13"	
30512	.30 Cal (0.308)	175gr	BT	0.518	1:13"	
30513	.30 Cal (0.308)	185gr	BT	0.558	1:12"	
30514	.30 Cal (0.308)	190gr	BT	0.566	1:12"	

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
30515	.30 Cal (0.308)	210gr	BT	0.625	1:11"	

CLASSIC HYBRID HUNTER

ACHIEVE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF PRECISION IN YOUR FACTORY RIFLE

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
24570	6mm (0.243)	95gr	BT	0.434	1:10"	
26571	6.5mm (0.264)	135gr	BT	0.584	1:8"	
27570	.270 Cal (0.277)	130gr	BT	0.490	1:10"	
27571	.270 Cal (0.277)	140gr	BT	0.528	1:10"	
28571	7mm (0.284)	150gr	BT	0.505	1:11"	
28570	7mm (0.284)	168gr	BT	0.566	1:10"	
30570	.30 Cal (0.308)	168gr	BT	0.489	1:13"	
30571	.30 Cal (0.308)	185gr	BT	0.533	1:12"	

VARMINT

PRECISION AND PERFORMANCE FOR SMALL GAME

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
17308	.17 Cal (0.172)	25gr	FB	0.152	1:10"	
20303	.20 Cal (0.204)	35gr	FB	0.179	1:14"	
20304	.20 Cal (0.204)	40gr	BT	0.227	1:12"	
22303	.22 Cal (0.224)	40gr	FB	0.151	1:15"	
22309	.22 Cal (0.224)	52gr	FB	0.201	1:14"	
22311	.22 Cal (0.224)	55gr	FB	0.209	1:14"	
22312	.22 Cal (0.224)	60gr	FB	0.271	1:12"	
24321	6mm (0.243)	80gr	FB	0.300	1:12"	
24323	6mm (0.243)	88gr	H BC FB	0.380	1:10"	

OTM TACTICAL

BATTLE-TESTED. COMPETITION-PROVEN.

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
22101	.22 Cal (0.224)	77gr	BT	0.374	1:8"	
26195	6.5mm (0.264)	130gr	AR BT	0.560	1:10"	
30105	.30 Cal (0.308)	175gr	BT	0.512	1:13"	
30107	.30 Cal (0.308)	185gr	J LR BT	0.552	1:12"	
30112	.30 Cal (0.308)	230gr	BT	0.710	1:10"	
33107	.338 Cal (0.338)	250gr	BT	0.682	1:12"	
33109	.338 Cal (0.338)	300gr	BT	0.822	1:10"	

VLD TARGET & ELR SOLIDS

VERY LOW DRAG SECANT OGIVE BULLETS

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
22418	.22 Cal (0.224)	70gr	BT	0.374	1:9"	
22421	.22 Cal (0.224)	75gr	BT	0.421	1:8"	
22422	.22 Cal (0.224)	80gr	BT	0.455	1:8"	
22423	.22 Cal (0.224)	90gr	BT	0.534	1:7"	
24427	6mm (0.243)	95gr	BT	0.467	1:9"	
24429	6mm (0.243)	105gr	BT	0.517	1:8"	
24430	6mm (0.243)	115gr	BT	0.563	1:7"	
26403	6.5mm (0.264)	130gr	BT	0.562	1:8"	
26401	6.5mm (0.264)	140gr	BT	0.593	1:8"	
28401	7mm (0.284)	168gr	BT	0.628	1:10"	
28405	7mm (0.284)	180gr	BT	0.683	1:9"	
30410	.30 Cal (0.308)	168gr	BT	0.507	1:13"	
30413	.30 Cal (0.308)	185gr	BT	0.543	1:12"	
30415	.30 Cal (0.308)	210gr	BT	0.621	1:11"	
37379	.375 Cal (0.375)	379gr	BT	0.951	1:8"	
37407	.375 Cal (0.375)	407gr	BT	1.022	1:8"	

TANGENT TARGET

THE BENCHMARK FOR PRECISION

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
22408	.22 Cal (0.224)	52gr	FB	0.235	1:14"	
22410	.22 Cal (0.224)	55gr	FB	0.254	1:14"	
22419	.22 Cal (0.224)	69gr	BT	0.337	1:9"	
22420	.22 Cal (0.224)	73gr	BT	0.348	1:9"	
22427	.22 Cal (0.224)	80.5gr	F BT	0.441	1:8"	
24407	6mm (0.243)	64gr	BR C	0.231	1:14"	
24408	6mm (0.243)	65gr	BT	0.281	1:13"	
24411	6mm (0.243)	68gr	FB	0.255	1:13"	
24425	6mm (0.243)	90gr	BT	0.409	1:10"	
24428	6mm (0.243)	105gr	BT	0.494	1:8"	
24431	6mm (0.243)	108gr	BT	0.522	1:8"	
26402	6.5mm (0.264)	120gr	BT	0.468	1:9"	
26409	6.5mm (0.264)	140gr	LR BT	0.593	1:8"	
30421	.30 Cal (0.308)	115gr	FB	0.289	1:19"	
30407	.30 Cal (0.308)	150gr	FB	0.393	1:15"	

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
30416	.30 Cal (0.308)	155.5gr	F BT	0.473	1:13"	
30420	.30 Cal (0.308)	175gr	LR BT	0.512	1:13"	
30418	.30 Cal (0.308)	185gr	J LR BT	0.555	1:12"	

HYBRID TARGET

THE ULTIMATE CHOICE FOR LONG-RANGE PRECISION

PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
24433	6mm (0.243)	105gr	BT	0.536	1:8"	
26414	6.5mm (0.264)	140gr	BT	0.607	1:8"	
27401	.270 Cal (0.277)	150gr	BT	0.566	1:10"	
28407	7mm (0.284)	180gr	BT	0.680	1:9"	
28408	7mm (0.284)	184gr	BT	0.695	1:9"	
30417	.30 Cal (0.308)	200.20x	BT	0.640	1:11"	
30426	.30 Cal (0.308)	155gr	BT	0.478	1:12"	
30425	.30 Cal (0.308)	168gr	BT	0.515	1:12"	
30424	.30 Cal (0.308)	185gr	BT	0.576	1:11"	
30427	.30 Cal (0.308)	200gr	BT	0.616	1:11"	
30429	.30 Cal (0.308)	215gr	BT	0.691	1:10"	
30430	.30 Cal (0.308)	230gr	BT	0.717	1:10"	
37401	.375 Cal (0.375)	410gr	BT	0.928	1:11.5"	

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PART #	CAL (DIA)	WEIGHT	PROFILE	G1 BC	MIN TWIST	
22485	.22 Cal (0.224)	85.5gr	BT	0.524	1:8"	
24485	6mm (0.243)	109gr	BT	0.568	1:8"	
24486	6mm (0.243)	120gr	BT	0.657	1:7.5"	
25485	.25 Cal (0.257)	135gr	BT	0.650	1:8"	
26485	6.5mm (0.264)	144gr	BT	0.655	1:8"	
26486	6.5mm (0.264)	153.5gr	BT	0.694	1:8"	
28485	7mm (0.284)	190gr	BT	0.751	1:9"	
30485	.30 Cal (0.308)	208gr	BT	0.689	1:10"	
30486	.30 Cal (0.308)	220gr	BT	0.717	1:10"	
30487	.30 Cal (0.308)	245gr	BT	0.846	1:9"	

BT: Boat Tail | FB: Flat Base | F BT: Fullbore Boat Tail
LR BT: Long-Range Boat Tail | AR BT: AR Hybrid Boat Tail
BR C: Bench Rest Column | OTM: Open Tip Match
J LR BT: Juggernaut Long-Range Boat Tail
H BC FB: High Ballistic Coefficient Flat Base



THE STEYR

MANNLICHER ZEPHYR II

.22 MAGNUM

By Brad Allen

When I was a boy, my old man arrived home one day with a well-used Mannlicher Schoenauer 'Full Wood' in 6.5 x 54. With its rotary magazine and 'spoon handle' bolt, it was one of the slickest actions I've ever cycled and was unlike any hunting rifle I'd ever seen and in its own right, a thing of beauty. Throughout the years I've noticed with interest quite a few 'full wood' hunting rifles, mostly in gun shops and more recently for sale on gun sales websites.

Recently, a couple mates purchased rifles that were a little out of the ordinary, both being 'full wood' hunting rifles. Geoff bought a lightly used full wood Sako L461 carbine in .222 Rem, a beautiful little rifle with excellent handling and balance. Paul bought an older,

but near new Brno 'full wood' Model 2 .22lr. After handling these two beauties, it didn't take long for the 'I want one' juices to start flowing and it was almost a foregone conclusion that I too would now have to acquire one of these unusual pieces of firearms artistry for myself.

As luck would have it, within a few weeks I saw several advertisements for 'full wood'

Steyr Mannlicher Zephyr II rimfires on one of the websites. My youngest son Morgan's first hunting rifle was a Steyr Mannlicher stainless synthetic Pro Hunter in .30-06 that shot and handled like a dream, so my interest was sparked and I immediately knew that I had to have one! At my age (60+), when 'needs verse wants' arrives, wants usually win out. So, with my old Savage .22 Magnum in hand,



Notice the Zephyr's elegant Bavarian cheekpiece, fish-scale chequering and black rubber recoil pad.



The Zephyr's flat 'spoon handle' bolt and tang safety.

I headed off to my local firearms dealer, prepared to do a 'like for like' swap, with the mandatory cash adjustment of course. The 'like for like' swap is an advantage we are allowed in Queensland without the need to apply for a Permit to Acquire.

In typical Steyr Mannlicher fashion, the Zephyr II rimfire is a truly beautiful piece of hunting rifle ordinance weighing in bare at 2.87kg or 6.34lbs. The full wood, oiled walnut stock is typically European in shape, with its black rubber recoil pad, straight comb, Bavarian cheekpiece, pistol grip swell, fish scale chequering and slender fore end that tapers through to a 'Schnabel tip' at the muzzle of the cold hammer forged 500mm or 19.7inch barrel. Overall length

is 995mm or 39.2inches. As with most Steyr rifle barrels, the hammer forging spirals are visible around the full length of the barrel.

The rifle is furnished with a sturdy set of fixed steel sling swivels and, although unlikely to be used for hunting with my old eyes, it also has a set of very usable open sights to complement the look. The safety is extremely positive in operation, mounted on the tang for both right- and left-hand operation, with SAFE to the rear (white dot exposed) and FIRE forward (red dot exposed).

Unlike most timber stock rifles, the metal work of the Steyr Zephyr II is not blued. The finish on the barrel and action has an attractive matt black appearance. This is Steyr's exclusive surface

treatment called 'MANNOX', a plasma nitrated finish that is used on Steyr's military firearms, such as the Steyr Army Universal Gun (AUG), which they say is 'abused' by militaries worldwide. Consequently, such a tough protective metal finish should serve the rifle well, protecting it from wear, moisture and my particularly salty sweaty paws. I've left surface rust spots on more than one rifle throughout the years just from touching them.

With several spare scopes in the cupboard, it didn't take long to select a trim Leupold VX3 2.5-8x36mm, which was then mounted onto the rifle's 11mm dovetails with a set of one-inch mounts. This Leupold is on the smaller side of 'full size' rifle scopes and perfectly complements the size, weight and balance of

Steyr Mannlicher Zephyr II's 'full wood' stock.

A silver Steyr Arms pistol grip inlay is a nice touch.

“At the range, I was suitably impressed with little rifle’s function and accuracy.”

Brad’s Zephyr II with Leupold VX3 2.5-8×36 scope. A well-balanced outfit.

the Zephyr II, with 8x being plenty of top end power for any shot one would be prepared to take with a .22 magnum. All Zephyr IIs use reliable CZ rimfire magazines and the rifle comes with a plastic CZ magazine designated for both .22WMR and .17HMR rounds. This enhances the availability of aftermarket mags and, to date, the feeding and ejection of rounds and empty cases have gone without a hitch.

Out of the box, the Zephyr II exudes the quality Steyr rifles are renowned for and, although a light rifle at only 2.87kg/6.34lbs, it shoulders and points well and holds steady from the offhand position. With ‘low’ mounts, the scope aligns perfectly with a good cheek weld to the stock comb. The computer-cut, fish-scale checkering on the pistol grip and fore-end is typically European and may not be to every one’s taste; however, it is well executed without any over runs and affords the user a positive grip on the rifle. The pistol grip is finished off with a tastefully inletted silver ‘Steyr Arms’ logo.

The smooth plastic butt pads found on many rimfire rifles don’t assist accurate shooting in any way. Even though the black rubber recoil pad of the Zephyr II doesn’t have to soak up any recoil from the meek .22 Mag round, its comfortable and grippy and it aids immensely by stopping the butt from sliding around

on the shoulder while sighting, definitely a practical addition. With its Bavarian cheekpiece and right-hand pistol grip swell, it’s quite clear that this is a right-handed rifle, and a left-handed shooter would find it uncomfortable

long term. Having said that, due to prevailing circumstances/conditions, I take left-handed shots while hunting fairly regularly, probably about two out of every ten, so for those 20 per cent of shots, I can tolerate that slight discomfort with the Zephyr II.

The trigger of the Zephyr II is non-adjustable but has a very nice two-stage pull, which is something that I particularly don’t mind. After taking up the initial first stage of the trigger pull, the trigger breaks crisply at about 2lbs, which is just about perfect for a hunting rifle. Unlike many rifles nowadays, the trigger guard is made from steel and finished in matt black MannoX.

The bolt is rear locking, as are most rimfire rifle actions, with duel-opposed extractors for positive extraction of fired cases. The Zephyr II also sports the iconic Steyr Mannlicher ‘spoon handle’ style bolt, which is fairly flat with no ‘ball’ at the end of the handle, as with most other bolt action rifles.

The spoon handle bolt is definitely different, sitting close to the stock when closed and is only made by a handful of European makers, but especially Steyr. Love it or hate it, it sets Steyr rifles part from most others at a glance, and I definitely find it appealing. The bolt is removed by depressing the bolt guide at the left rear of the receiver.

So far, so good, but there is one (only one) thing that Steyr could have done better – and that is the magazine release. The release protrudes about 5mm out of the front of the magazine recess, just in front of the magazine. It is easy to use and releases the magazine positively and easily – but that’s the problem. Even while sighting the Zephyr II in from the bench, it became apparent that it would be very easy to

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THE STEYR MANNLICHER ZEPHYR II .22 MAGNUM

bump the magazine release while hunting and lose the magazine. The solution would have been to have the release recessed at the point where it emerges from the magazine well, much like older Brno rimfires. This would then protect the release from being unintentionally bumped or activated. However, being aware and mindful of this potential problem will hopefully negate the loss of a magazine while hunting, fingers crossed!

At the range, I was suitably impressed with little rifle's function and accuracy. Thankfully, it shoots quite well with Winchester 40grn jacketed hollow points, as I was lucky enough to pick up a near lifetime supply of them some years ago, at the right price. It's always a bonus when you can shoot as many rounds as you would like without



The only potential issue, the protruding magazine release catch.



The recessed magazine release of the Brno Model 2, which is how the Zephyr's magazine release should be.

having to worry about cost! As we slide into winter, I'm looking forward to getting out into the bush to 'blood' the Zephyr II and harvest a few young meat goats, take some foxes and maybe another session at the range to see what other ammo she might like.

I understand that not all hunters are as smitten with 'full wood' hunting rifles as I am, and although not as pleasing to the eye (my personal opinion), the Zephyr II also comes in a normal short fore stock version with no open sights in 17HMR, .22WMR and .22lr. At the time of writing, prices for Steyr Mannlicher Zephyr II's varied widely from about \$1100 and upwards, so check around to find the best price. Who knows, you too may just fall in love with this 'full wood' hunting rifle like I did.

Enjoy the hunt! 🍷

Starlink Mini

Linking the bush to the internet

By Ted Springs

For many shooters, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts, getting away from mobile reception is part of the appeal. For better or worse now though, staying connected in remote areas has never been easier. So, whether you are heading off on a weekend hunt, exploring the outback or spending weeks caravanning around Australia, having a reliable way to communicate can provide valuable peace of mind.

One product that has been gaining lots of attention during the past few years is the Starlink Mini, a compact satellite internet system that provides high speed internet almost anywhere with a clear view of the sky. The Starlink Mini is about the size of a laptop and combines the satellite dish and Wi-Fi router into a single unit, making it easy to pack and simple to set up – much different to your home Starlink. Generally, it can be up and running in a few minutes.

Unlike satellite phones or emergency beacons, the Starlink Mini provides full internet access. Users can

browse the web, send emails, make video calls and access cloud-based mapping and weather services. The system is also quite portable, drawing relatively little power compared with earlier Starlink hardware, making it well suited to vehicles, caravans, camper trailers and portable power stations.

You can find the Starlink Mini hardware for about \$400. However, the subscription for the roaming internet plans range between \$85 and \$210 per month. There are bundle options available as well, which can reduce the price.

The Starlink Mini is an impressive option and the right fit for many people, but it's not the only solution for those wanting internet access in remote areas. Personal Locator Beacons remain the benchmark for emergency rescue, while satellite messengers and satellite phones provide reliable communication without the need for a full internet connection.

The right choice ultimately depends on how you travel, but for those wanting to stay connected with a lot of internet speed and data, the Starlink Mini may be the right option. ☺



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Instinct 3's sturdy construction, makes heading out bush worry free.

MEET THE FAMILY GARMIN INSTINCT 3

By Brendan Jones

Garmin's Instinct 3 line of rugged smartwatches provides unique integration capability to sporting shooters. As long as you plan on taking your wrist with you, a sporting shooter can bring any old smartwatch along on their adventures. But of course, not all smartwatches are created equal when it comes to venturing outdoors. With a core brand tagline 'Engineered on the inside for life on the outside', Garmin's smartwatches are designed with the outside in mind.

The Instinct 3 family

The Instinct 3 is a product family that has something for everyone. Family resemblances include a fibre-reinforced polymer frame, metal-reinforced bezel, and water-resistance rating of 10 ATM (100 metres), allowing it to achieve a MIL-STD 810 ruggedness rating. They also share:

- dual red/white LED torch
- advanced GPS sensors
- heart rate, sleep tracking, and other health features
- training applications
- contactless payments
- Garmin ecosystem and app connectivity
- smartphone notification mirroring.

But beyond these common traits, the Instinct 3 family branches with screen type (MIP/AMOLED/Solar), size (40/45/50mm) and niche functionality feature sets – resulting in a price range of \$549 for the Instinct E and topping out at \$1099 for the Instinct 3 50mm AMOLED Tactical.

While Garmin introduced the first ever wrist-based GPS trainer in 2003, ruggedised wearable smart-tech is of course now offered by other brands. But what the Instinct line offers the sporting shooter that others can't is native integration with a host of Garmin's other products.

Ecosystem integration

Garmin's Xero C2 chronograph represents one of these symbiotic integrations. Compatible with all the Instinct 3 models, shooters can set and forget this industry-leading chrono, with real-time results mirrored to the wrist, and the ability to control the device remotely for starting, stopping and resuming sessions.

Considered the gold standard of dog tracking over many years and product models, Garmin's current handhelds like the Alpha line can mirror to the Instinct watches, displaying dog distance, direction and status

(treed/pointing) on your wrist. Having the handheld tracking unit safely stored in a pocket, pouch or backpack not only leaves hands free for other important tasks, but reduces the risk of forgetting it on the ute roof or next to a gate in the dark (which happens far more than it sounds like it should).

Speaking of gold standards, the Garmin inReach (satellite communicator) products also pair with the Instinct family. Having your inReach within, well... reach, is always a balancing act between urgent accessibility and not losing it. But with watch integration, a safely stowed inReach deep in your backpack or UTV glovebox can still be triggered remotely in an emergency. After a tumble off the hiking track down a slope, or a buggy roll over, laying a hand to your inReach might be out of the question, while touching your wrist could save your life.

Lastly, we'll mention the new Xero L60i laser rangefinder that boasts onboard GPS mapping functionality. When combined with compatible Instinct 3 watches (not all models), a ranged and geo-located target can be transmitted to the wrist, allowing you to use the watch to navigate to the waypoint of interest with your expensive rangefinder safely stowed.

Wrapping up

Smartwatches are more common and capable than ever, but truly rugged outdoor-focused examples less so. The Instinct 3 line from Garmin represents smartwatches that span both worlds. Not only functional for day-to-day 'inside' city life, but designed for the outside pursuits, whatever *outside* means to you.

A Garmin Instinct 3 50mm AMOLED was loaned to The Report for the purpose of this review. It, along with the entire Instinct family, other Garmin watches and non-watch tech are available from the Garmin Australia website and through their dealership network: garmin.com/en-AU

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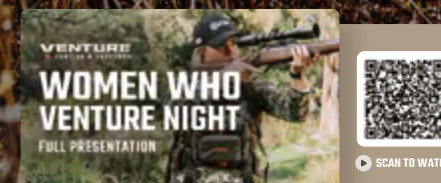
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UNEXPECTED DOUBLE

By Joe Norris

Years ago, I received an invitation to hunt red deer in the Brisbane valley, something that just doesn't happen, so we excitedly made plans to go south.

My daughter, Jessica, was to be my hunting partner for the trip, which made it extra special, as she had wanted to hunt deer for a long time, but we just couldn't get the time off together to go or find somewhere to hunt. While she had hunted plenty of pigs with me and even used to, on occasion, come with me when I was commercially shooting roos for both skins and pet meat, she had yet to see a wild deer. Of course, if we saw a deer, it would be hers to shoot and I would just tag along.

After the nine-hour drive south, we arrived and met the property owners. We had been prepared to camp somewhere and were very pleasantly surprised to find that they had a spare house on another part of the property that we could use and so we were able to stay relatively dry, as the weather was not co-operating with us. Showers and heavy dew were the order of the day, so to have a dry camp was very welcome.

While we were talking to the property owners, they said that the deer were raiding their Lucerne paddocks during the night and

retreating to the river or the hills during the day. They suggested that we try to intercept them at first light as they left the paddocks. With this in mind, we checked out how to get there and planned a stalk for the morning.

Early the next morning, we were in place well before daylight and parked about a kilometre from the paddocks so that we wouldn't spook any deer before daylight. As we waited for the dawn to start

to break, we watched as a thick fog slowly crept across the lower country towards us in the dim pre-dawn light. There wasn't really any choice, so we decided to try to get into position anyway in case the fog lifted enough for us to actually see a deer. Creeping slowly along a fenceline that separated the crop paddock from a ploughed one that boundaried the river, we made our way to the spot chosen the previous day. This fence provided the only

real cover because of the tall green Panic Grass growing through the wire, making almost a wall of grass.

The light was improving every second and the fog that looked to be impenetrable earlier was beginning to slowly lighten up and we found that we could make out dim shapes in the gloom. As we neared the spot that we had previously selected to wait for our shot, we started to see the unmistakable shapes of deer as they jumped over the fence we were waiting at and it appeared that we were too late. Jessica settled herself in beside a post so she had a rest and we continued to wait in case more appeared out of the paddock. All the time the light was improving, and the fog was becoming easier to see through. Just when I thought we had missed out, another group of deer came up to the fence and effortlessly jumped over into our side before making their way to the riverbank.

There were about six deer in the group, with most being hinds or spikes but one was a young eight-point stag that was a very unusual

colour. He was that pale that he looked almost blond, and I could see that Jessica was keen on trying to take him. I held my breath as she tried to get a steady rest on the post and I told her to only shoot if she was sure of her shot because we could always come back tomorrow. Jess struggled to get stable, as the fence didn't allow her to get completely behind her rifle and so she had to shoot from an awkward angle. I jumped when the shot went off so didn't see the impact of the 150gn bullet from her .308, but I didn't hear the tell-tale thump that would indicate a hit. The deer all jumped the far fence into the river system and thick scrub, showing no signs of a hit.

We walked over and carefully searched for any blood or hairs that would indicate a hit but found none. Jess was devastated and kept saying that he was 'the one' and she wanted to keep hunting for him. I convinced her to give them time to settle down while we went and had breakfast at the house. Once on the veranda of the house, we found that we could look out over the area we were hunting, but from the opposite side of the river, so we had a cup of

tea and some bacon and eggs while overlooking the river flat.

I had just gone to get another cup of tea when Jess called to me in an excited whisper and said "Dad, they are back, the deer are back". I couldn't believe it; the whole mob had emerged from the safety of the river scrub and were feeding out in the open on the tall grass of the river flats on our side of the river. Jessica went and got her rifle and because we could not see the deer from anywhere else but the elevated position of the house veranda, she decided to try to shoot the blond stag from there. The deer were more than 250 meters from us but by taking a rest on the



Jess and her blond red stag.



The size of the stag is quite dramatic here, as Jess stands next to him.



The rusa head with a Coke can to show how thick the main beams are.



Looking back to the veranda from where Jess took her shot.

UNEXPECTED DOUBLE



Jess's shot was true, destroying the deer's heart and stopping it in its tracks.

BBQ on the veranda, she said she was comfortable and confident that she could make the shot. I knew she could shoot so I watched through my binoculars as she prepared to take the shot. The stag was feeding and when he turned broadside to us Jess's Remington model 700 in .308 Win barked for the second time that morning, only this time there was the unmistakable thump following the report of the rifle. I saw the stag jump and take a few rapid steps in a circle then collapse into the long grass out of sight.

"After crouching down, we carefully looked this stag over and the reason something didn't look right was obvious: the stag was a rusa..."

I left Jess to spot for me and taking my rifle I walked down to where the deer was, finding that he had been hit perfectly and was stone dead. Jess drove my ute down to us so all I had to do was gut the deer and, with her help, load him whole into my vehicle for the trip back to the shed for processing. I wanted to cape him out so I could mount her first stag for her. It was during the gutting process that I found out just how perfectly she had hit him, as his heart was destroyed by the 150gn Barnes projectile.

That afternoon we went to the mountain side of the property and hunted the high country looking for a stag for me. Although we spent the entire time up high, we didn't see another deer until we were walking back out; I spotted a brown stag walking along the flat ground, but something wasn't right. After crouching down, we carefully looked this stag over and the reason something didn't look right was obvious: the stag was a rusa - not a red as was expected in this area. I didn't



Jess holding the heavy rusa head.

have permission to hunt a rusa, so I carefully took out my camera and took a photo of him, using the telephoto zoom, before heading back to the homestead to speak with the property owners. They were adamant that there were no rusa on the place and it wasn't until they saw the image on my camera that they believed me. They said I was welcome to hunt him if I could, so the next morning I was back in the area I had seen him to try to do just that.

Of course, it rained heavily while I was trying to find the stag but as this was an opportunity that was not likely to come again, I just kept hunting. I sent Jess back to the house in my car so she could dry off and when she was gone, I found my stag.

The stag was feeding quietly along in roughly the same area I had seen him the day before

and it wasn't really a difficult shot; except I was so excited that I had the shakes. After taking aim several times and finding that I was shaking too bad to take a reliable shot, I decided to just watch him for a while until I had calmed down. I had a good look at him through my binos and found that he wasn't just a normal rusa; he had extra points on both antlers as well as big heavy beams and almost bladed main points. His cape was ruined from fighting, so there were obviously some more rusa on the property near this area or he was fighting with the red stags, but I didn't think that was likely.

Eventually I had calmed down enough to hold my rifle steady, so I placed the crosshairs of my Leupold scope behind the shoulder of the stag when he turned almost broadside and gently pulled the trigger of my Ruger .243, sending



The 'blond' stag after the author completed the mount.

a Barnes 80gn projectile on its way. The stag took a few steps and collapsed. It was only when I went to take some photos of my prize that I discovered that my camera was as soaked as I was and was inoperable.

After gutting my stag, I went and got my ute and trusty offside to help get him back to the shed where we could process him into venison for the return trip north. After spending the next day cutting up and freezing the meat in my Engels freezers, we packed up and cleaned the house before saying thank you to our hosts and leaving for the drive home.

I finished up mounting Jess's first stag. And as the cape on my rusa was ruined from fighting, I could only make a euro mount out of him but maybe one day I'll manage to get another cape to be able to mount him as well.

It really was an unusual trip, and I would never in a million years have guessed that we would take a rusa and a red stag on the same trip in the same area. It really was an 'unexpected double'.

Be safe and happy hunting. 🎯



The rusa stag when first spotted.

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By Rod Hoare

Affordable performance for the modern outdoorsman

During the past decade, few knife brands have had as much impact on the budget-friendly knife market as CIVIVI. Launched in 2018 by Chinese cutlery giant WE Knife Co., CIVIVI was created to offer premium design, quality materials and modern manufacturing techniques at prices accessible to everyday users.

What quickly set CIVIVI apart was its ability to combine thoughtful designs from respected knife makers with excellent fit and finish. Rather than producing generic budget knives, CIVIVI focused on delivering practical working tools featuring quality blade steels, smooth bearing pivots, ergonomic handles and reliable locking systems. The result has been a range of knives that appeal equally to first-time buyers and seasoned collectors.

Today, CIVIVI's catalogue includes everything from compact everyday carry folders to fixed blades designed for camping, hunting and outdoor adventures. Two of the company's most interesting recent offerings are the Sendy folding knife and the Gander fixed blade. While very different in purpose, both showcase CIVIVI's philosophy of providing practical performance at a sensible price.

CIVIVI Sendy doing what it does best.



REVIEW

CIVIVI SENDY

Designed by Ben Petersen, the man behind the Knaf's Co knife brand, the Sendy is a refreshing take on the traditional everyday carry (EDC) knife. Combining modern flipper action with practical tools such as tweezers and a toothpick hidden within the handle scales, the Sendy bridges the gap between a modern folder and a classic Swiss Army style utility knife, this saw the Sendy win 'Best EDC Multitool' at SHOT Show in 2024.

At first glance, the Sendy appears understated. Its slim profile, light weight, compact dimensions and non-threatening appearance make it ideal for everyday carry, office environments and everyday tasks. Yet beneath its gentlemanly styling lies a capable cutting tool.

The Nitro-V blade steel is one of the highlights. Offering excellent corrosion resistance, good edge retention and impressive toughness, Nitro-V has become a favourite among knife enthusiasts. Combined with the Sendy's thin blade and high flat grind, the knife slices exceptionally well through cardboard, rope and general daily cutting chores.

The low-profile front flipper deployment operates on ceramic bearings and provides fast, smooth action. Once opened, the liner lock engages securely. The reversible deep carry pocket clip allows comfortable carry for both right- and left-handed users, while the textured green/red G10 scales give a nice grip and will take a beating.

What I believe makes the Sendy truly stand out, are the integrated tweezers and toothpick. While they may initially seem gimmicky, I found them genuinely useful while remaining securely retained within the handle scales during harder tasks. Outdoor users will find the tweezers valuable for removing splinters and other small tasks around camp, while the toothpick always comes in handy. The only negative is the tweezers could have a slightly larger point to remove them from the knife scales; it's a bit finicky without a fingernail, but still removable.

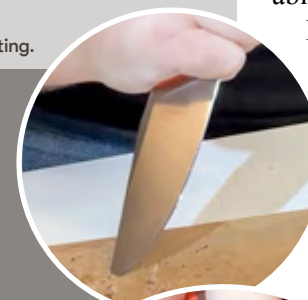
Testing verdict

The Sendy, for me, is one of the most practical everyday carry folders currently available in its price range. Lightweight, discreet, razor sharp and surprisingly versatile, it is equally at home opening boxes, preparing lunch or pulling a splinter from a finger around the campfire. The Sendy would also be an ideal first folding knife for your teenagers to carry on a family outdoors or hunting trip, getting them used to a folding knife.

Sendy specifications

- Winner of 'Best EDC Multitool' at SHOT Show 2024 (USA)
- Designer: Ben Petersen
- Knife type: Folding liner lock
- Overall length: 165.5mm
- Closed length: 93.5mm
- Blade length: 72mm
- Blade thickness: 2.3mm
- Weight: 74.1g
- Blade steel: Nitro-V
- Blade hardness: 59–61 HRC
- Blade style: Spey
- Blade grind: Flat
- Opening method: Front flipper
- Pivot: Ceramic ball bearings
- Lock type: Liner lock
- Pocket clip: Reversible deep carry
- Additional tools: Stainless steel tweezers and toothpick
- Handle materials: Various options available G10 (test knife), Micarta and wood

CIVIVI Gander tip testing.



CIVIVI Gander cutting 8mm sisal rope during testing.



CIVIVI Gander is large enough for a full four-finger grip.



REVIEW

CIVIVI GANDER

Where the Sendy is refined and compact, the Gander is unapologetically outdoors focused and makes the perfect partner to the Sendy. Designed by Matt Gentry, the full tang Gander is a compact fixed blade intended for hunting, bushcraft, camping and general field use.

The first thing that stands out is the blade shape. The clip-point profile offers excellent versatility, providing a fine tip for detailed work, while retaining enough belly for skinning and food preparation. The flat ground Sandvik 14C28N stainless steel blade delivers great toughness and corrosion resistance, while still being able to be field sharpened.

In hand, the Gander feels secure and comfortable, with the hunter orange G10 scales offering a textured and positive grip, even in wet conditions. The ergonomic handle shape provides confidence during prolonged use without creating any 'hot' spots.

The surprisingly well made Kydex sheath retains the knife perfectly and includes a Bob Terzuola designed T-Clip mounting system, allowing multiple carry positions, as well as being changeable for right- and left-handed draw. For this size knife, I preferred the scout carry (horizontal belt), but the ultra-secure clip makes the knife equally suitable for vertical belt carry or pack carry through easy MOLLE attachment.

With a cutting edge of nearly 100mm, the Gander is large enough for most hunting and camping tasks yet light and compact enough to remain highly portable. It's great at food preparation, feather stick making, camp chores and processing small to medium game.

Testing verdict

The Gander is a practical outdoor fixed blade that offers far more capability than its size suggests. The combination of quality steel, great feel and versatile blade shape makes it an ideal companion for hunting, camping, fishing and general bush use.

Gander specifications

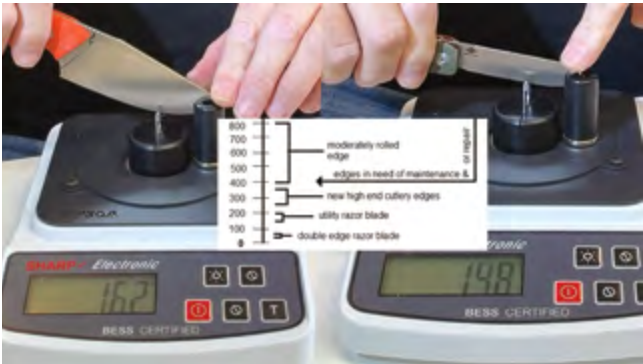
- Designer: Matt Gentry
- Knife type: Fixed blade
- Overall length: 199.3mm
- Blade length: 92.1mm
- Cutting edge: 99.8mm
- Handle length: 107.2mm
- Blade thickness: 3mm
- Weight: 122.6g
- Blade steel: 14C28N stainless steel
- Hardness: 58–60 HRC
- Blade style: Clip point
- Grind: Flat grind
- Blade finish: Satin
- Handle materials: Orange G10 (test knife), black Micarta, or Guibourtia Wood
- Sheath: Kydex
- Carry system: Bob Terzuola T-Clip
- Lanyard: Included paracord lanyard

Our standard tests and results:

BESS (Brubacher Edge Sharpness Scale) tests are performed on an Edge On Up Pro BESS certified professional machine, to use a standard test and ease of comparison for edge retention.

Each knife performed 40 cuts of thick cardboard, 10 cuts of 8mm sisal rope onto timber board, hardwood timber shaving, 10 nylon rope cuts onto timber board, tip strength into hardwood, 10 foam piece cut. Both knives passed with no damage.

Sharpness from factory was very impressive on both knives.



Conclusion

The Senty and Gander demonstrate CIVIVI’s ability to design knives for very different uses while maintaining the brand’s focus on value and functionality.

The Senty is a fantastic everyday carry knife that blends modern convenience with old-school cool. The Gander, meanwhile, is a capable field knife that would not look out of place on the belt of any hunter, camper or bush crafter.

For outdoorsmen looking to add *affordable yet dependable* cutting tools to their kit, both models deserve serious consideration. CIVIVI has proven that quality with performance can be achieved with a great price tag.



The CIVIVI range is available through Adventure Carry in Australia, adventurecarry.com.au or 0406 502 640.

Senty \$118 + shipping
Gander \$135 + shipping

Readers can get a 10% discount by using SENDY10 & GANDER10 promo codes.

Sharpness out of the box:
Senty - BESS 148g
Gander - BESS 162g
Tested sharpness after performing the aforementioned tests (edge retention):
Senty - BESS 253g
Gander - BESS 287g
Sharpness with stropping only after testing (ease of sharpening):
Senty - BESS 205g
Gander - BESS 166g

So, the Senty’s Nitro-V steel’s edge retention is a fractionally better, but the Gander’s 14c28N steel is easier to strop back to sharp in the field. My personal thoughts after testing: both are fantastic pieces at this price point and would complement each other perfectly in your kit.

See more of the testing of these knives and more on YouTube @Aussie Knife Gear Reviews. 🇦🇺

QUEENSLAND COUNCILS TRY TO CLAW BACK CONTROL

By Ted Springs

Several outback Queensland councils have introduced feral cat bounties as booming pest numbers continue to threaten native wildlife.

According to a recent ABC report, councils including Richmond, Cloncurry, Etheridge, Mount Isa and Boulia have rolled out schemes paying between \$10 and \$25 a tail in a bid to reduce feral cat populations. Richmond Shire alone reportedly saw 6,000 cats shot in four months after launching its program last August.

SSAA Queensland President Jeff Ross said pest control had long played a role in regional Australia, with bounty systems far more common in decades past. He said responsible shooting and trapping remained practical tools for reducing feral numbers, while also encouraging people to spend time outdoors and contribute to protecting local wildlife.

“Managing species is a tricky endeavour,” Jeff said. “But practical control measures can make a difference.”

SSAA Queensland Vice President – Northern



Region Development Mick Norris said the issue also highlighted the responsibility of domestic cat ownership. “As an owner of cats growing up and through most of my adult life, I understand there is a responsibility on owners not to add to the cat problem this country has,” he said.

Mick said his own cats were kept contained in an enclosure, allowing them access to fresh air without impacting surrounding wildlife. He said feral cats were among the most damaging introduced predators in Australia, particularly for smaller native mammals, reptiles and birds.

“Any measures taken, including bounties, that help native species are worth supporting for that reason,” he said. Mick added that bounty programs could also help offset the rising costs faced by pest controllers and recreational shooters, including fuel and ammunition, making more control efforts financially viable.

He pointed to coordinated feral cat management groups already achieving strong results in some areas, including reductions in cat numbers and the return of native species such as quolls.

While some ecologists have questioned the long-term effectiveness of bounty systems on total pest populations, many others acknowledge and thank the hands-on response from shooters in areas facing immediate feral cat pressure. 🇦🇺

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STOP GUESSING, START 'SCOPING'

Why every shooter should invest in a borescope

By Isaac Williams

For most of my shooting life, cleaning a rifle meant doing what everyone else does - the way your old man showed you...and the way his old man showed him. No one really knows why, but that's just how it's done. Drag a bore snake through it or give it a quick brush, run a few patches, and when the patches look 'clean enough', you call it good. We judge the cleanliness of the barrel by the cleanliness of the patches. Job finished. Or so I thought.

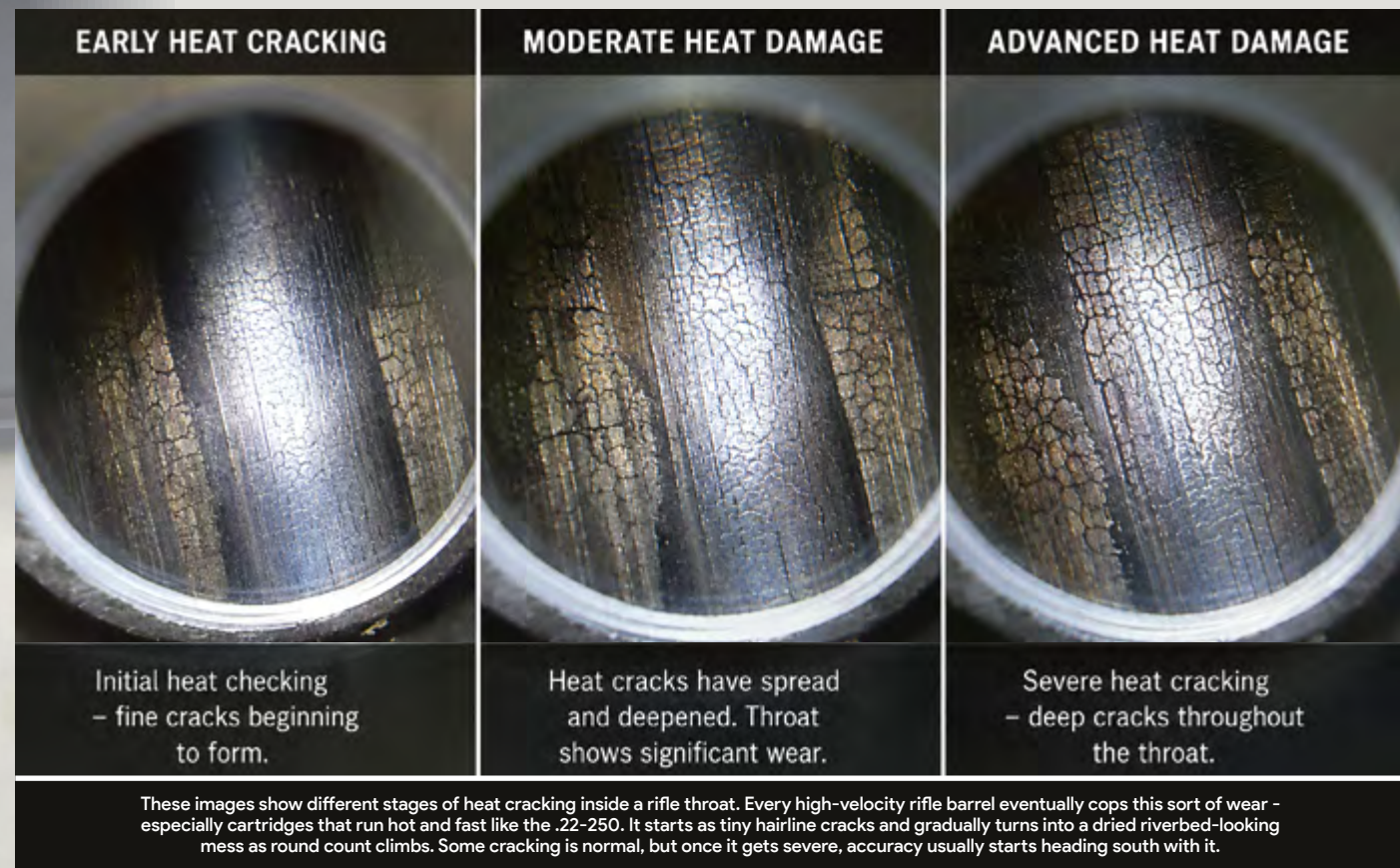
The reality is, most of us have no idea what's actually going on inside our barrels. We're guessing.

A borescope takes that guesswork and throws it straight in the bin.



This was the set up used throughout the testing and inspections. The borescope feeds straight into the laptop screen, which makes spotting carbon buildup, copper fouling, throat wear and heat cracking a whole lot easier than trying to squint down a barrel. Once you start seeing what's actually going on inside your rifles, you quickly realise some 'clean' barrels aren't clean at all.

The small mirror attachment fitted to the end of the borescope allows the camera to look sideways at the rifling and barrel surface rather than just straight ahead. Without it, you miss most of the important detail. It's a simple bit of gear, but it completely changes what you're able to see inside a barrel.



EARLY HEAT CRACKING

Initial heat checking – fine cracks beginning to form.

MODERATE HEAT DAMAGE

Heat cracks have spread and deepened. Throat shows significant wear.

ADVANCED HEAT DAMAGE

Severe heat cracking – deep cracks throughout the throat.

These images show different stages of heat cracking inside a rifle throat. Every high-velocity rifle barrel eventually cops this sort of wear - especially cartridges that run hot and fast like the .22-250. It starts as tiny hairline cracks and gradually turns into a dried riverbed-looking mess as round count climbs. Some cracking is normal, but once it gets severe, accuracy usually starts heading south with it.

“With a borescope, there’s no guessing.”

The first time you use one, it's a bit of a wake-up call. You take a rifle you're convinced is clean, feed the scope down the bore, and suddenly you're staring at copper streaks, carbon build-up and all sorts of things that were completely invisible five minutes earlier.

It's one of those moments when you realise you've been flying blind for years.

A borescope is nothing more than a small camera designed to look inside the barrel, but what it shows you changes the way you think about maintenance completely. Instead of assuming everything is fine, you're working with actual information. You can see the condition of the steel, the fouling left behind after shooting and the areas where wear

is starting to show. That alone makes it worth the money.

One of the biggest eyeopeners for most shooters is copper fouling. You can run patch after patch through a barrel and think you've done a great job, only to look through a borescope and find the bore still streaked with copper.

It hangs on far more than people realise, and it has a direct impact on how a rifle performs. Accuracy drops off, consistency suffers, and you're left chasing problems without understanding the cause.

With a borescope, there's no guessing. You either removed it or you didn't. It also stops you going the other way - over-cleaning. Plenty of rifles get more attention than they need simply because the owner doesn't know when to stop.



This image was taken after a solvent-soaked patch had already been pushed through the barrel. Even after one cleaning pass there's still fouling, solvent residue and patch fibres visible under magnification. It's a good reminder that one wet patch and a quick scrub usually isn't doing nearly as much as people think it is.

1. This image shows what would be considered pretty normal fouling buildup inside a regularly used rifle barrel. You can see a combination of carbon residue, light copper fouling and general combustion deposits starting to coat the bore surface. Most rifles will look something like this after a reasonable amount of shooting, even if they still appear 'clean' from the outside. One of the biggest eye-openers with a borescope is realising just how filthy a barrel can get long before accuracy problems start showing up on paper.



2. This image shows heavy carbon fouling building up in the throat area directly in front of the chamber. It's one of the dirtiest parts of the barrel and also one of the easiest areas to miss during normal cleaning. A lot of rifles that shooters think are 'spotless' still have layers of hard carbon hiding in this section.



3. This bore showed strong rifling definition with crisp edges and relatively even surfaces throughout the barrel. Under magnification you can clearly see the lands and grooves still holding good shape, which is generally what you want to see in a healthy barrel. A good borescope makes it pretty obvious when a barrel is still in decent condition - and when one is completely cooked.



Chemicals, brushes, endless patches...all of it adds wear over time. When you can actually see the bore, you clean to a result instead of cleaning out of habit. That's a big shift.

Another area where a borescope proves its value is in picking up early signs of wear. The throat of the barrel, just ahead of the chamber, cops the most punishment. Heat, pressure, and friction all come together in that one spot, and it doesn't take long before you start to see fire cracking and erosion. Without a borescope, you won't notice it until accuracy starts to fall away. By then, the damage is already done.

With a scope, you can monitor it over time. You start to understand how your barrel is wearing, how quickly it's happening and what kind of life you're realistically going to get out of it.

It's the same story with carbon rings. They build up quietly and can cause all sorts of headaches - pressure issues, inconsistent velocities and general poor performance. Again, you won't see them with the naked eye, but they stand out clearly under a borescope.

What surprised me - and I'll be honest, it caught me off guard - was just how many of my own rifles had a decent carbon ring sitting there. I was convinced I was on top of it. Bronze brush, a few patches each clean, job done. That's what I'd always done. Turns out, I wasn't even close. Those rings were still there, building up over time, and I had no idea. Once you've seen that for yourself, you don't ignore it again.

Where a borescope really earns its keep, though, is in the before-

and-after comparison. This is where things get interesting. You inspect the barrel before cleaning, take note of what's there, go through your normal process, and then check it again. Straight away you can see what worked and what didn't.

You might find your usual routine isn't touching certain areas. You might discover that a solvent needs more time to do its job. Or you might realise that what you thought was a 'quick clean' isn't even scratching the surface. That feedback loop is what improves your process.

Using a borescope itself is simple enough, but it does take a bit of patience. You can't just shove it down the barrel and expect to understand what you're looking at.

Slow, steady movement gives you a clear picture, and after a few uses you start to recognise the

"A borescope is nothing more than a small camera designed to look inside the barrel, but what it shows you changes the way you think about maintenance completely."

differences between copper, carbon, and normal wear. What looks confusing at first, quickly becomes familiar. And once it does, you start to trust what you're seeing.

What surprised me the most wasn't just how much fouling was left behind, but how differently each rifle behaves. Some barrels foul quickly, others hardly at all. Some clean up easily, others take real effort. Without a borescope, you treat them all the same. With one, you start tailoring your approach to each rifle. That's where the real value is.

At the end of the day, a borescope isn't about making cleaning more complicated. It's about making it more accurate.

You spend less time guessing, less time wasting effort and more time actually achieving the result you're after.

It's one of those tools that, once you've used it properly, you won't want to be without. Not because it's fancy, but because it shows you the truth. And the truth is, most of us weren't cleaning our barrels anywhere near as well as we thought we were. 🎯



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NITECORE® ON THE MOVE

**Power, light & reliability
for modern adventurers**

Review by Rob Mori (@hunt. aus)

There's a quiet revolution happening in the world of portable gear. As travel becomes more flexible, camping more refined and everyday carry more intentional, the demand for compact, high-performance tools has never been greater. Few brands understand this shift better than Nitecore. Known for engineering precision and a relentless focus on efficiency, the company has built a range that blurs the line between professional equipment and everyday essentials.

This is not just a collection of flashlights, headlamps and power banks. It's an ecosystem designed for people who live dynamically - commuting, travelling, working outdoors or disappearing into the bush for days at a time. I spent time across several key Nitecore products to see how they perform when taken seriously in real-world conditions.

LIGHTING THE WAY: THE NEW ERA OF EDC TORCHES

NITECORE EDC29

– *When 'overkill' becomes the standard*

At first glance, the Nitecore EDC29 feels almost absurd. A slim, pocketable everyday carry torch capable of blasting out up to 6,500 lumens sounds like something designed for industrial use, not something you casually drop in your jeans pocket. But that's exactly where it shines.

In practice, the EDC29 behaves like a precision-built lighting instrument rather than a simple torch. The beam reaches out to roughly 400 metres yet can instantly shift into a wide flood that turns night into daylight. The dual tail-switch system gives immediate access to power modes and strobe functions, while the dedicated 'Lumin Shield' mode feels almost tactical in its responsiveness.

Where it really separates itself is in usability. The flat, compact body disappears in the pocket, making it genuinely suitable for everyday carry despite its performance. The OLED display is a small but transformative feature showing brightness level, battery status, and remaining runtime in real time. It's the kind of detail you don't think you need until you've used it.

With USB-C charging and up to 61 hours on lower modes, it's also far more practical than its specs suggest. The EDC29 isn't just bright, it's intelligently bright. It feels like a tool built for people who expect their gear to keep up with unpredictable environments.

RRP: \$199.95

NITECORE EDC17

– *The torch that thinks it's a toolkit*

If the EDC29 is about raw power, the EDC17 is about versatility.

This compact device integrates three lighting systems: a 1,500-lumen white beam, UV light, and a green laser. On paper, that sounds specialised. In practice, it turns the EDC17 into a multi-role tool that goes far beyond illumination.

Need to light a path? Done. Inspect materials under UV? Covered. Signal or point something out at distance? The laser handles it. It's this adaptability that makes it particularly appealing for trades, travel or anyone who likes carrying fewer tools.

The slim body and slider interface make it extremely intuitive. There's no learning curve, just swipe, press and go. USB-C charging keeps it modern, and the rugged, water-resistant build means it can handle outdoor conditions without hesitation.

The only real compromise is the built-in battery, which limits flexibility compared to replaceable cell systems. But in return, you get simplicity and sometimes that matters more. The EDC17 is less about replacing a torch and more about replacing several small tools at once.

RRP: \$129.95



EDC17 makes it easy to spot a fake in a flash.

HEADLAMPS:

**HANDS-FREE
PERFORMANCE THAT
ACTUALLY DELIVERS**

NITECORE HC70 UHE

– *Built for serious use*

Headlamps often fall into two categories, which are classified as either too weak or too bulky. The HC70 UHE manages to avoid both.

With up to 1,600 lumens and a wide, even beam pattern, it's designed for people who rely on head-mounted lighting like hunters, campers, field workers, night hikers and anyone operating in low light environments for extended periods.

What stands out immediately is beam quality. Instead of a harsh central hotspot, the multi-LED setup creates a balanced spread that feels natural and reduces eye strain. The inclusion of both white and red-light modes adds real-world practicality, particularly when preserving night vision or working in groups.

Battery performance is another strong point. The included 6,000mAh battery delivers exceptional runtime of up to 220 hours on low settings and USB-C charging ensures it integrates easily with modern setups.

The HC70 UHE feels less like a gadget and more like dependable field equipment. It's robust, IP68-rated and clearly built with harsh conditions in mind.

RRP: \$139



Choose your weapon:
brute power vs gram counter.

NITECORE NU25

– *Ultralight, and almost invisible*

At the other end of the spectrum sits the NU25... a headlamp designed for those who count every gram.

Weighing just around 50 grams, it's the kind of product you forget you're wearing until you need it. Despite its tiny footprint, it delivers up to 400 lumens, which is more than enough for hiking trails, campsite tasks or emergency use.

Its strength lies in flexibility. Multiple colour temperatures (warm, neutral, and cool) make a noticeable difference depending on conditions, while the red-light mode is invaluable for preserving night vision. It's a small detail that dramatically improves usability in real environments.

Battery life is respectable at up to 45 hours on lower modes, and USB-C charging keeps things simple. The NU25 doesn't try to compete with high-output headlamps; it instead perfects portability and comfort. For runners, hikers and minimalists, it's difficult to beat.

RRP: \$79.95



POWER ON THE GO: THE NITECORE BATTERY ECOSYSTEM

NB10000 GEN 4

– *The benchmark ultralight
power bank*

The NB10000 has become something of a reference point in ultralight portable power and the Gen 4 refinement only strengthens that reputation.

At around 143 grams for 10,000mAh capacity, it delivers exactly what lightweight travellers want: enough power for multiple phone charges without unnecessary bulk. It slips into a pocket or pack effortlessly yet still feels solid and well-engineered.

Dual USB-C ports with 22.5W fast charging make it fully modern, while pass through charging adds flexibility when power access is limited. Small usability touches like the 'knock to wake' function and discreet RGB indicators make it easier to use in low-light conditions.

Add IPX7 water resistance, and it becomes clear this isn't just a city accessory, as it's equally at home on hiking trails, long travel days or in emergency kits.

RRP: \$99.95



NITECORE ON THE MOVE

NITECORE NB AIR

– *Minimalism perfected*

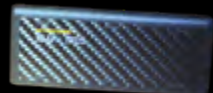
If the NB10000 is about balance, the NB Air is about absolute minimalism.

At less than 90 grams, it's one of the lightest serious power banks available. The 5,000mAh capacity won't replace a full backup system, but that's not the point. It's designed for quick top ups, emergency charging and ultralight travel setups.

A single USB-C port with 18W fast charging keeps things simple, while the carbon fibre shell adds durability without weight. IPX7 waterproofing ensures it can also survive outdoor use without concern for the user.

The NB Air is not trying to be everything; it's deliberately focused. It is ideal for day hikes, travel or minimalist kits and is almost invisible until needed.

RRP: \$64.95



“Taken together, the Nitecore range tells a clear story... specialised tools designed for modern mobility.”



The perfect range for those who never want to be left in the dark.

MULTI-FUNCTION LIGHTING:

THE CAMP COMPANION

NITECORE LR70

– *Lantern, torch and power bank in one*

The LR70 is perhaps the most ‘all-in-one’ device in the lineup.

Combining a 3,000-lumen flashlight, a 400-lumen lantern and a 10,000mAh power bank, it's designed for people who want fewer devices and more versatility.

In lantern mode, it creates soft 360-degree illumination ideal for tents, campsites or work areas. Switch to flashlight mode and it becomes a capable longer range light source. When you add in the red light and SOS modes, it also covers emergency scenarios.



Lantern, flashlight or power bank mode. Meet your new camp essential.

The built-in battery is large enough to last multiple nights and still provide backup phone charging. It's most definitely not the smallest option in the range, but its multi-function nature makes it incredibly efficient and useful for camping or extended trips.

RRP: \$159.95

FINAL THOUGHT:

ONE ECOSYSTEM, MANY LIFESTYLES

Taken together, the Nitecore range tells a clear story...specialised tools designed for modern mobility.

The EDC29 and EDC17 redefine what pocket torches can do, blending extreme performance with real-world usability. The HC70 UHE and NU25 show that headlamps can be either rugged workhorses or featherweight essentials. The NB10000 and NB Air demonstrate two ends of the

portable power spectrum, one being balanced and durable, the other ultra minimalist. The LR70 ties it all together as a true multi-role campsite companion.

What makes Nitecore stand out isn't just innovation, it's consistency. Across the entire lighting and power ecosystem, the focus remains the same which is to reduce weight, increase efficiency, and maximise usability in real world conditions.

For anyone building a kit for travel, camping, emergency or everyday carry, the Nitecore range offers something different, which is gear that doesn't just perform on paper but disappears into your daily or planned routine until the exact moment you need it most. ☺

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THE WEBLEY SERVICE REVOLVER

"The revolver allowed, just as earlier horse-pistols had, the cavalry trooper to ride up, deliver a shot or two, and ride away without dismounting."

By Tom Lewis

The role of the handgun in combat goes back many centuries. As more effective metalwork allowed smaller and more finely machined weapons, smaller guns came into being to complement the long arm. Although it's outside the Australia forces theme of this series, it's worth noting that one-shot pistols were in use by cavalry on European battlefields in the 1600s. Muzzle-loading and slow-to-reload, two 'horse pistols' were often carried in addition to a sword.

The revolver was a major step forward for handguns, in that it allowed multiple shots without reloading. Samuel Colt's Paterson five-shot in .28 calibre led the way in 1836. It must have been a fairly annoying firearm, for it needed partial disassembly to reload. A .36 calibre weapon followed almost immediately, but it wasn't until three years had passed for a new model with a reloading lever to make life easier. Colt models

arrived then thick and fast, and ammunition improved too in concert, with smokeless powder being developed in the 1880s. By the late 1800s, a six-shot model revolver with double-action (where the weapon fired on a single trigger pull rather than via a hammer pullback being necessary), was developed. It became the classic design.

In armed forces, reliability was first and foremost, and so the Australian forces, raised from the colony states and deployed to the Boer War, took with them the capable British Empire's Webley, but occasionally revolvers by Adams and other manufacturers. The Webley was a sturdy top-break weapon, originally entering service in 1887 in .442 calibre. By the time the second Boer War broke out in July 1899, it had become .455 calibre, in which version it saw lengthy service through the Great War and beyond.

Who carried revolvers?

Most soldiers involved in frontline fighting did not use a revolver. They were infantry, and their primary weapon was the rifle, backed up with a bayonet. However, horse soldiers who fought from a mounted position found a long-arm very cumbersome to use, although the carbine – generally referring to the same weapon with a cut down barrel – was in service. The revolver allowed, just as earlier horse-pistols had, the cavalry trooper to ride up, deliver a shot or two, and ride away without dismounting.

Then again, using handguns in such situations did not produce many results. As target shooters know, they are difficult weapons to use with accuracy, their short barrel and the limitations of a human arm and hand altogether producing poor results. Firing from the back of a horse, in a chaotic, difficult situation would make matters worse.

A telling WWI story by Robert Graves on the Western Front illustrates what terrible shots most people were with revolvers. A group of experienced infantry officers, billeted in an abandoned French house, decided to do some target practice.

We officers spend a lot of time revolver-shooting. Jenkins brought out a beautiful target from the only undestroyed living-room in our billet-area: a glass case full of artificial fruit and flowers. We put it up on a post at fifty yards' range. He said: "I've always wanted to smash one of these damn objects. My aunt has one. It's the sort of thing that would survive an intense bombardment." I smothered a tender impulse to rescue it. So, we had five shots each, in turn. Everyone missed. Then we went up to within twenty yards and fired a volley. Someone hit the post and knocked the case off into the grass. Jenkins said: "Damn the thing, it must be bewitched. Let's take it back." The glass was unbroken, but some of the fruit had come loose. Walker said: "No, it's in pain. We must put it out of its suffering." He gave it the coup de grâce from close quarters.

This is a telling example – these officers had seen much practice and combat itself, yet they were still appalling shots.

Somewhat shockingly to modern generations, officers carried handguns as a discipline measure. Military history is full of stories where they had to be used. On the Front, Siegfried Sassoon once came across one of his own battalion's officers making his way to the rear with what seemed a feeble excuse. Sassoon drew his revolver and threatened to shoot him if he didn't turn around. Some Australians broke and ran from their positions in action in 1917 in Europe; they

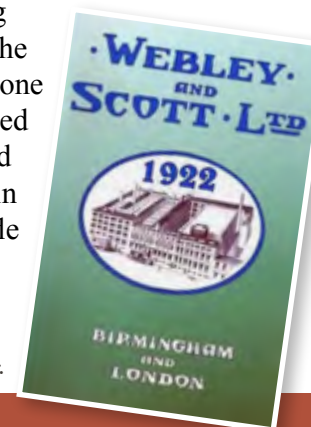
were remonstrated with and one soldier said: "I saw Lieut. Bruton in the end with his revolver drawn and preventing the men from going further back..."

It wasn't a measure confined to the Allies. Sergeant John Halpin was captured by Turkish troops in 1918 and saw the officer leading the men order them forward to stop a counterattack. Some of the men were driven forward with kicks, and one who would not move was then shot by the officer with his revolver.

This was not confined to the Great War. An Australian military handbook, published in 1941, urges its readers – if they are an officer – to use lethal force in this situation, if necessary, in no uncertain terms: "If any one of any rank makes a move to surrender, shoot him and carry on. If a bunch of men have surrendered, open fire on their guards and give them a chance to get away. If their guards are mixed up with them, open fire just the same." In advice to all ranks given earlier, it urges that if panic is "being communicated to others, then it is your obvious duty to shoot to kill." The historian Robert Sterling Rush notes in the 1965 edition of the US Army manual *Military Leadership* that reference is made to shooting your own men as a means of control: "If all else fails, shoot at those that are fleeing."

In close-quarter battle, such as trench situations, the revolver was most useful, being easy and quick to aim. One of the foremost Australian soldiers in one engagement, Albert Jacka, earned a Military Cross (he already had the VC), taking seven wounds in a savage fight with revolver, rifle and bayonet and killing at least five Germans.

Webley and Scott's 1922 catalogue front cover.



On the Western Front in 1917, British artillery soldiers are transported on a Mark IV female tank. The Australian War Memorial owns a Mk IV.

CURIOUS FACT

The first tanks had male and female genders. The male had heavy guns; the females multiple machineguns. The Australian War Memorial has a female Mark IV British tank in its collection.

As the tank began to come to the fore from late 1916, its crews found revolvers were the only feasible personal protection weapon to be carried; the rifle having no place inside the machine's confined spaces.

The pilots and observer/gunners of the early military aircraft usually carried a revolver each; both for personal defence if they crashed in enemy territory and unfortunately as a suicide weapon, especially if the machine caught fire.



Weird variation – the Webley-Fosberry Automatic Revolver

Handgun shooters versus automatic pistol shooters have argued it for more than 100 years: some said the revolver is intrinsically inaccurate due to its design. Put it in a fixed rest, and the revolver works well. But put it in a human hand, and practical accuracy makes it less accurate. A heavy trigger pull – necessary to turn the cylinder – means the firearm tries to rotate as it is fired. Then again, as many have argued, the revolver can be extremely accurate given good barrel length – and of course, the design means a round is always coming up, and in armed service use that is of primary importance. Range is not so vital when your adversary is mere metres away.

The Webley military revolver – Variants

Mark	Date of Introduction	Notes
	1867	• Webley’s first revolver • Quickly became known as the RIC revolver, as it was immediately adopted by the Royal Irish Constabulary, the force of all Ireland when it was part of Britain • .442 centrefire cartridge
Mk I	8 November 1887	• .442 calibre • 4-inch (100 mm) barrel • ‘Bird’s beak’ style grips • Mk I* – factory upgrade of Mk I revolvers to match Mk II
Mk II	21 May 1895	• Modifications to the hammer and grip shape • Hardened steel for the blast-shield
Mk III	5 October 1897	• Modifications to cylinder cam and related parts • Very limited run; most went to Royal Navy
Mk IV	21 July 1899	• Often known as the ‘Boer War’ model • .455 calibre • 4-inch / 100mm barrel • Higher quality steel • Cylinder axis fixed to barrel • Redesigned blast shield
Mk V	9 December 1913	• Wider cylinders - 0.12-inch (3.0 mm) - for nitrocellulose propellant-based cartridges • Some models had 5-inch (130 mm) and 6-inch (150 mm) barrels
Mk VI	24 May 1915	• Squared-off ‘target’ style grip • 6-inch (150 mm) barrel • Also manufactured by RSAF Enfield under designation Pistol, Revolver, Webley, No. 1 Mk VI 1921–1926 • Could be fitted with a stock to make a carbine • Speedloader available

Around the time the Webley Company was coming into its own as revolver makers of distinction, it experimented with a design put forward by Colonel George Fosberry VC, a soldier of distinction who had won the highest honour while serving in India. Years later, he designed a six-shot .455 calibre and an eight-shot .38 calibre working design with Webley, calling it ‘the Automatic Revolver’.

The trigger mechanism did not rotate the cylinder; one target shooter was able to put six shots into a two-inch (5.1 cm) bullseye at 12 paces in seven seconds. Designed primarily for cavalry, the revolver was not a success. It was slightly heavier than the normal Webleys and the same length. Only 5,000 were made, and Webley sold them for years after WWI to run the design out.



An officer (left) and two sergeants of the 1st Life Guards, with their holstered Webley revolvers, preparing to embark for France in the first days of the war, August 1914 (British Army).



Various other revolvers were used in the Empire forces. Here, a Canadian soldier reloads what looks to be a .38 Smith and Wesson.

What’s in a name? Is it Webley or Webley and Scott?

Late 18th century	• Company founded by William Davies, producing bullet moulds
1845	• Taken over by son-in-law, Philip Webley and his brother James, producing percussion sporting guns • Company used name of P. Webley & Son
1853	• Began producing revolvers • First percussion revolver – Webley Longspur
1867	• First double action revolver
1869	• Pair of RIC revolvers presented to Brevet Major General George Custer – used in his final battle at Little Big Horn
1878	• British Bulldog revolver produced in .442 and .450 calibres
1887	• Webley revolvers become the official sidearm of British forces
1897	• Amalgamated with W & C Scott and Sons to become The Webley & Scott Revolver and Arms Company Ltd of Birmingham
1924	• First air pistol produced
1926	• First air rifle produced – much used in initial military training
2019	• Webley and Scott India formed



General Custer with his Indian scouts in 1876. His favourite, Bloody Knife, is kneeling at left. Note the weapons posed for the photograph and the prized revolvers. The famous US Civil War general carried two RIC Webleys in his final battle against overwhelming Indian forces at Little Big Horn.

The ‘classic’ Webley may well be the Mark IV, introduced in July 1899, and therefore often known as the ‘Boer War’ model. In .455 calibre, its heavy bullet propelled at about 600fps was often enough to knock a man over at 20 paces. The four-inch barrel was not too long to preclude a fast withdrawal from the leather holsters initially issued, but these were often replaced by webbing holsters in which the gun was placed backwards. Plenty of Mark IVs kept going well into WWI and beyond, for with no fundamental inherent design problem, why not?

Post-WWI, the revolver continued in Australian service, although thought was being given to the extra capacity offered by some automatic pistols. Webleys were in plentiful supply. Alwyn Shilton, known as ‘Bluey’, carried a revolver in WWII. He had served since 1935 as an infantry signaller in the 5th Battalion of the Victorian Scottish Regiment and was then selected as an officer. He carried a Webley and Scott 0.45, and he thought it “absolutely useless. Unless you get right up close.”

When WWII ended, revolvers were easy to conceal in luggage going home, and so they occasionally appear in deceased estates. The author had a reasonably alarming experience while director of the Darwin Military Museum. Down south, WWII gunner Jack Mulholland had died. A good friend of the Museum, he had been on the 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns

when the Japanese Navy came calling on February 19, 1942. Four aircraft carriers launched 188 aircraft to bomb and strafe the port, killing 236 people, sinking 11 ships and destroying 30 aircraft.

Jack wrote *Darwin Bombed* about his experiences – it’s well worth a read if you can find one in a library or on a second-hand site. By 2011, he was in poor health. When a family member phoned one quiet Saturday, we had already heard he had died that week, but this was an unexpected call from his family. “Dad must have brought home a revolver – we found it in his wardrobe. What do we do?”

Of course, giving advice from thousands of kilometres away makes it even more difficult, especially if you haven’t met the person presumably now holding the revolver in one hand and the phone in the other. Basically, the advice – in order – was:

- Don’t point it at anyone.
- It may be loaded – don’t pull the trigger.
- Do you have anyone around who knows firearms who might be able to check?
- Don’t take it down the road to the police – phone them first and get their advice.

The cylinder on a Webley Mk VI service revolver (Image: Webley and Scott).



In conclusion...

The Webley revolver had done sterling service for Australian forces through four major engagements. It was taken to the Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950. RAN ships were first into action, with *HMAS Bataan* and *HMAS Shoalhaven* on July 1. The following day, No. 77 Squadron with their Mustang fighters were into the fight. On September 28, a battalion of 3RAR arrived in the Pusan area, and the war by then was becoming a desperate attempt to hold back the communist forces flooding south. Webleys were doubtless to the fore!

For those interested, the very well-written book *The Service Revolver and How to Use It* by Captain Charles Tracy in WWI is available online. Use the QR code. ☺



THAT’S NOT AN AUSTRALIAN KNIFE

By Ted Springs

THIS IS!

Australian knifemaker Halfbreed Blades may have only recently launched, but it’s been in the knife-game for much longer through sister company Hardcore Hardware Australia. But even though it’s still early days, the company is exporting products to more than 40 countries, showing Australian design can compete on the world stage.

Instead of gimmicks, Halfbreed Blades treat each new design with a simple question: What is this knife designed to do? That philosophy has shaped a growing range of fixed blades, folders, bushcraft and outdoor knives intended for hunters, campers, first responders and everyday users. It’s also good advice for thinking about any part of your kit before heading out.

Halfbreed Blades designs and develops its knives at the company’s South Melbourne headquarters. Founder and Creative Director Jonathan Loftes and his team select different steels depending on the intended use of each knife, and take great care in creating sheaths, which can be an underappreciated part of a knife.

For hunters, a knife can be one of the most-used pieces

Designed in Australia, the MIK-03P Gen-2 Medium Infantry Knife is intended as a versatile field knife.

HALFBREED BLADES

of equipment after their firearm. Whether field dressing game, preparing camp or tackling everyday jobs around the property, reliability and edge retention are important factors to consider when choosing a knife.

Among the company’s current outdoor offerings, the MCK-02, LBK-01 Gen-2, MIK-03 Gen-2 and MIK-08 Tracker have all proven popular with hunters and bushcraft enthusiasts, while the folding knife range continues to expand. Looking ahead, Halfbreed Blades says it has several new fixed blades, specialist rescue tools and premium steel variants in development.

Earlier this year, the company’s Australian designed knives also received international recognition, earning second place in the Everyday Carry Fixed Blade category at the 2026 IWA Knife Awards in Germany. It’s another reminder that Australian-designed equipment continues to earn respect well beyond our shores. ☺

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STATION STAYS

Fairview & Koolburra Stations

Cape York's Wide-Open Frontier

By Peter Jackson

FAIRVIEW STATION Space to Breathe

Fairview delivers exactly what many Cape travellers are chasing: space, simplicity and authenticity. The country rolls away in open timbered flats and wide grazing paddocks, framed by classic Far North Queensland bush. At first light, a cool breeze moves across the grass and the only sound is the distant call of birds waking up. By late afternoon, the sun drops in a blaze of orange that turns the landscape gold.

Accommodation and camping options are practical and comfortable without being overdone. This is not luxury tourism — and that's its strength. It suits travellers who are self-sufficient and appreciate a good camp set-up, a tidy base and room to spread out. There's plenty of space for caravans and off-road rigs, and it makes an ideal stopover for those heading further north or returning south after a Cape adventure.

For SSAA readers, Fairview's appeal lies in its environment. The surrounding country offers the kind of quiet that many of us seek — a break from phones, traffic and daily noise. Evenings are made for campfires (when permitted), a simple meal and long conversations under a sky so clear it feels almost exaggerated. You don't realise how much light pollution you live with until you stand under Cape York stars.

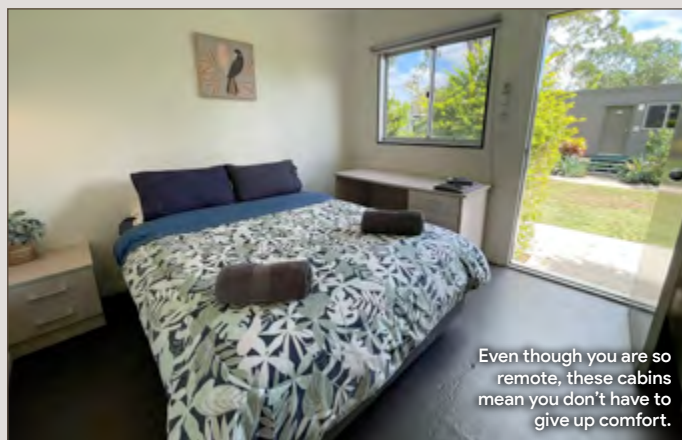
The hosts are approachable and down-to-earth, happy to share insights on road conditions, weather patterns and station life. That local knowledge is invaluable in the Cape, where conditions can shift quickly and preparation matters. Visit their website: fairviewcapeyork.com.au/ or email bookings@ryanglobal.com.au



You'll know you've arrived at Fairview Station when you see this beast of a bus.

Cape York doesn't do anything by halves. The distances are bigger, the skies broader, the dirt redder and the sense of remoteness more honest than just about anywhere else in Australia. Tucked into this vast northern landscape are two properties that offer SSAA members a genuine taste of life on the land — Fairview Station and neighbouring Koolburra Station.

Both are working cattle stations first and foremost. That's important. When you pull through the gate, you're stepping into a functioning pastoral operation, not a themed outback attraction. There's a rhythm here dictated by seasons, stock work and weather — and as a visitor, you're a guest in that world.



Even though you are so remote, these cabins mean you don't have to give up comfort.

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Koolburra Station offers a variety of camping sites and accommodation.

KOOLBURRA STATION

Expansive and Evolving

Next door, Koolburra Station broadens the experience. Larger in scale and rich in Cape character, Koolburra offers travellers an even deeper immersion into remote northern Australia. The landscape feels expansive — sweeping flats, pockets of thicker scrub and long stretches of country that remind you just how small you are in the scheme of things.

Koolburra has increasingly become known as part of the region's growing interest in structured outdoor and hunting experiences, but at its core it remains a working station with a strong sense of community and purpose. Visitors can expect the same straightforward hospitality that defines life on the land — practical facilities, open space and a genuine welcome.

What stands out at Koolburra is the sense of frontier. There's a rawness here that many travellers crave but rarely find. Dust hangs in the air behind passing vehicles, cattle move across distant paddocks and the scale of the property gives you perspective. It's the kind of place that encourages early mornings and unhurried afternoons. You can find them on Facebook or email: Koolburra@ryanglobal.com.au

Why They Work for SSAA Members

Station stays resonate strongly with SSAA members because they align with our values: respect for land, appreciation of rural Australia and an understanding of what it takes to operate in remote country. Both Fairview and Koolburra provide an opportunity to reconnect with that ethos.

They're also excellent bases for broader Cape exploration. Whether you're touring with a 4WD, towing a camper or travelling in convoy with mates, these stations offer safe, welcoming staging points where you can regroup, service gear and plan the next leg north or south.

Practical Considerations

Cape travel is never casual. Road conditions vary dramatically between dry and wet seasons. Always check access prior to arrival, carry sufficient fuel and water, and ensure your vehicle and recovery gear are up to the task. Booking ahead is wise, particularly during peak touring months.



The Verdict

Fairview and Koolburra Stations aren't about polished brochures or resort-style indulgence. They're about authenticity — red dirt under your boots, cattle country stretching to the horizon and a reminder that Australia is still vast and largely untouched.

For those looking to experience Cape York beyond the bitumen, these two stations deliver something increasingly rare: genuine space, real quiet and the kind of perspective only big country can provide. 📍



Hunt NQ runs hunting tours out of Koolburra Station and will soon be including 'Heli-Hunting' from its new helicopter.



A Hunt NQ guide offers advice to hunter.

Image by Kertu



UPDATE

H5N1 AVIAN INFLUENZA REACHES MAINLAND AUSTRALIA

By Joanne Heathcote

At the time *Avian Influenza: A Threat on the Wing* by Joanne Heathcote was written and published in the July edition of *The Report*, highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza had not been detected on mainland Australia. However, that changed on 20 June 2026, when authorities confirmed Australia's first mainland detection following the discovery of the virus in migratory birds in Western Australia and not long after in various other states (at the time of writing).

Joanne's article explained what H5N1 is, why wildlife scientists have been preparing for its arrival, and how hunters, recreational shooters, birdwatchers, landholders and others who spend time in the field can play an important role in

protecting Australia's wildlife.

While there is currently no evidence of widespread impacts on mainland Australian wildlife or poultry, the detection highlights why early reporting is so important.

This strain of H5N1 is unprecedented in its global spread, persistence, host range and ability to kill wildlife. It infects far more than birds and has been detected in more than 100 mammal species worldwide, including seals, sea lions, dairy cattle, cats and mink.

The outbreak on Heard Island, where an estimated 13,000 southern elephant seal pups died, demonstrates the devastating impact the virus can have on even the world's most remote and pristine ecosystems.

Once H5N1 becomes established in wild bird populations, it is

essentially impossible to eradicate.

Recreational shooters, hunters, birdwatchers, landholders and others who spend time in the field are often among the first to notice unusual wildlife mortality.

Your observations can make an important contribution to Australia's wildlife disease surveillance. If you observe multiple sick or dead birds or other wildlife showing signs of disease:

- Do not handle the animals.
- Record the location (GPS if possible) and take photographs if it is safe to do so.
- Report your observations to the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Working together, we can help detect outbreaks early and support efforts to protect Australia's unique wildlife. 📍

BEE123 HITS 10,000 HIVE HEALTH CHECKS

From the Queensland Government's Department of Primary Industries

Queensland beekeepers have achieved a major milestone, completing more than 10,000 hive health checks through Bee123 since the varroa mite reporting tool and surveillance map launched in 2024. These checks have generated surveillance data from 65,000 individually tested hives across apiaries containing more than 265,000 hives. This milestone highlights the critical

role beekeepers play in monitoring hive health and tracking the spread and impacts of varroa mite across Queensland. Bee123 reports provide essential data to identify issues, guide biosecurity decisions, and give beekeepers a clearer understanding of hive health locally and statewide. Report any treatment failures or unusual mite activity immediately using the Bee123 form or call 13 25 23. ☎



SCAN THE
QR CODE
TO FILL OUT
THE BEE123
FORM



Image by MiSchu

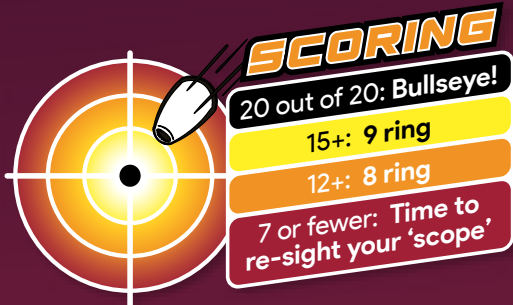
SHOOT OFF! Quiz

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.

QUESTIONS:

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 1 | Does going above sea level increase or decrease the boiling temperature of water? | 12 | Which is older: flintlock or percussion cap? |
| 2 | Which military rifle was the first to be widely issued with smokeless powder ammunition? | 13 | Which two states share most of the Simpson Desert? |
| 3 | Which country developed the Schmidt-Rubin rifle? | 14 | In Australia, which has more species: snakes or crocodiles? |
| 4 | Which famous revolver was introduced in 1873? | 15 | Which has more calories per gram: fat or protein? |
| 5 | Which Australian state/territory has the highest number of crocodiles? | 16 | Starting with the letter M, which Australian tree is most commonly tapped for tea tree oil? |
| 6 | Which country hosts the annual Bianchi Cup Action Pistol Championship? | 17 | Which is further north: Cairns or Darwin? |
| 7 | Which continent has no native deer species? | 18 | Which Australian desert is the largest? |
| 8 | Which came first: .30-30 Winchester or .30-06 Springfield? | 19 | Which Australian mammal has the strongest bite force relative to body size? |
| 9 | Which is older: Lee-Enfield or Mauser 98? | 20 | Which deer is typically heavier: red deer or sambar deer? |
| 10 | Which country produced the first smokeless-powder military rifle? | | |
| 11 | Which came first: revolver or semi-automatic pistol? | | |



Plus, if you want more quizzing fun, there's a second half to the Shoot Off! A full extra 20 questions on our website - ssaaqld.org.au Good luck!

Send feedback and your question ideas to news@ssaaqld.org.au.



Eat WILD:

Wild venison backstrap

with chips and red wine jus

Prep: 30 mins

Cooking time: 30 mins

Serves: 2

Recipe from Australian Meats

What you'll need

Venison:

- 500g wild venison backstrap
- 50g butter
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 sprigs thyme
- Olive oil, for cooking
- Chives, finely chopped (to garnish)

Red Wine Jus:

- 1 onion, diced
- 10 garlic cloves
- 1 bottle red wine
- 1L beef stock
- 1 tbsp cornflour, mixed with cold water (slurry)
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 50g butter
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Chips:

- 600g large potatoes (whole, skin on)
- 50g animal fat (beef dripping) or olive oil
- Sea salt flakes

How to cook it

Prepare the chips

- Preheat oven to 200°C.
- Boil whole potatoes in salted water for 20 minutes, then drain and allow to cool.
- Cut into chunky chips.
- Place animal fat or oil in a baking dish and heat in the oven for 5 minutes.
- Add the potatoes, toss well, and roast for 20–25 minutes, turning once, until golden and crispy.
- Season with sea salt flakes.

Make the red wine jus while the potatoes cool and cook

- Heat a drizzle of olive oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat.
- Add onion and garlic, cooking for 5 minutes until softened.
- Add red wine and herbs, then cook on high heat for 15 minutes until reduced by more than half.
- Add beef stock and boil for another 15 minutes.
- Stir in cornflour slurry and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring often, until slightly thickened.
- Remove from heat, whisk in butter, and season with salt and pepper.

Cook the venison backstrap

- Pat venison dry and season generously with salt. Drizzle with olive oil.
- Heat a heavy pan on high heat, add olive oil, and sear the backstrap for 4 minutes on each side.
- Add butter, rosemary, and thyme, then baste the meat with the melted butter for extra flavour.
- Transfer pan to the oven and cook for 2–4 minutes or until internal temperature reaches around 45°C for rare.
- Remove from the oven and rest for 5 minutes before slicing.

Serve

- Place chips on the plate, add sliced venison, and spoon over the red wine jus.
- Garnish with finely chopped chives, cracked black pepper, and extra salt if desired.



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SHOOT OFF! Quiz

ANSWERS

1. Decrease	12. Flintlock
2. Lebel	13. South Australia and Queensland
3. Switzerland	14. Snakes
4. Peacemaker	15. Fat
5. Northern Territory	16. Melaleuca
6. USA	17. Darwin
7. Antarctica	18. Great Victoria Desert
8. .30-30 Winchester	19. Tasmanian Devil
9. Lee-Enfield	20. Sambar
10. France	
11. Revolver	

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