



Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (Qld) Inc.
Conservation and Wildlife Management Division
"Preserving Australia's Heritage"



SSAA (Qld) Inc. Conservation and Wildlife Management Division

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CONSERVATION & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

March 2017 Newsletter

Message from the CWM President

PHOTOS submitted for publication in this newsletter or for use on our CWM website remain your property and you give permission for SSAA to use them in any CWM publications.

SHOT EXPO 2017 is on the 27- 28th August this year. Tim Shalders has been doing a fantastic job of coordinating CWM members involvement in this and other events over the last few years. Please look out for emails from Tim and put your hand up if you would like to volunteer to spend some time speaking to expo visitors about CWM.

MOONIE Project is only four hours west of Brisbane. This is especially convenient for those that live in the south east. All CWM projects are open to members throughout the state and we have seen some far north Qld members make the long drive down to assist in controlling feral pigs, cats, goats, foxes, hares and wild dogs on 4 private properties that border a government owned property. There is accomodation

available in either shearers quarters or a shearing shed on 2 of these properties to house the teams that over the years have assisted in removing thousands of pest animals. Here's the link for more details - [Moonie project link](#)

Registering your expression of interest in a project. One of the main reasons our landholder partners like to work with us is that all project visits are planned to work in with and compliment their other pest animal control work ie trapping, baiting and aerial shooting. We coordinate putting the teams together for each trip and report back the results at the end. Our partners particularly like that any members attending have gone through various vetting processes such as our accreditation requirements. Another part of this vetting process includes trip leaders understanding your skills, experiences, specialties and preferences in hunting/shooting and how best to include you as part of the team for any particular project. In some cases you may not be suitable for a

project for a whole host of reasons, including not having specialised kit or a desire to walk rough hilly terrain most of the day. Please don't take this as an insult and understand where your strengths are and nominate for those projects where you will be most valuable.

One of our committee members, **Roland Pitcher** in conjunction with other members across the state are developing better methods of registering your expressions of interest in trips. As you would understand there's a fair deal of time involved in putting teams together for our various projects. Most of this time is spent collating emails from all members interested in attending. Last year we trialled a doodle polling system but found it not suitable to our requirements. Over the last month we've been trialling 'Google Forms' and are happy with the results so far.

Here is an example of our **expression of interest form** for the Moonie project – [Moonie form](#)

Damien Ferguson

State Committee Biennial Conference

The conference was held at the Brisbane International Conference Centre Boondall on the 11th February. The first meeting was an all-day discussion by the State Committee. This meeting was followed that evening with a general meeting of members, committee members and guest speakers.

The State Committee meeting was attended by seventeen members, made up of 11 members from the Southeast area and 6 from central and north Queensland. Unfortunately not all Queensland committee members were able to attend. The first meeting was chaired by Peter Ferguson who welcomed members and outlined some administrative details.

The committee meeting commenced with the president's overview. Damien emphasized the necessity of maintaining good relationships with our landholder partners and protecting our brand. CWM Qld is in a good position for the future as landowners were approaching us. Our membership had risen to over 700 with a target of 1000 members in order to enable CWM to service existing and upcoming new projects. There is a need for southern members to help out with some very exciting new far north Qld projects. CWM currently is a sub-committee under SSAA Qld but may

eventually become semi-autonomous under SSAA Qld. To enable that process there will have to be some restructuring of the current management committee.

Significant discussions regarding the future structure of the CWM committee and



ideas for our future progress were then made.

Mark Woods brought forward the discussion of standardising training across the state. The training of team leaders has been centralised to maintain uniformity. General training is done at 'Skills Development' weekends.

There followed much discussion about administration (Ken Payne), the importance of post-project reporting (Randle Irvin) and policy development, recording and distribution (Mike Farrell). Central to these discussions was the role and structure of the centralised 'database' and how important it was and how it may evolve as CWM continues to grow.

For an organisation to maintain uniformity and continuity it is essential that there are members who can carry on the various roles of running the organisation in the sudden absence of its leaders. The topic of succession planning was

introduced by Peter Ferguson. What was required was a pool of suitable deputies from which to select suitable candidates. These people could help current administrative people to carry out their roles thus starting the succession process. It was agreed that Team Leaders in the field would nominate a 2IC for each group where possible.

Ben (Harvey-Walker) introduced the topic of mentoring new members. There was much discussion about the benefits but too many views on what level was appropriate or could be provided. A key gap identified for new members was between accreditation and getting onto a project. The 'Skills Development'



weekends are the next step for new members to learn about how CWM operates and to meet project leaders or coordinators. It was suggested that after the accreditation process new members be given an information sheet outlining the next steps to take to get onto projects. This sheet is yet to be developed.

The evening session began with conference organiser Dr Bob Michael (retired) outlining some formalities in his welcome statements. David Auger, from Queensland Gun Exchange, was introduced who presented on display a \$68,000 Rigby rifle. While it was inappropriate to handle the gun, a large proportion of the audience took advantage of getting up close and inspecting this unique piece of engineering and shooting royalty.

The next presentation of the evening was by Damien Ferguson speaking about the results of the earlier committee meeting. He also sought to clarify some of the issues surrounding CWM's

reluctance to overtly publicise our projects, mainly due to 'non publication' clauses in our contracts. Of critical importance also is that only accredited CWM members are allowed to attend our projects. Publication of our projects' exact locations can result in non-accredited people 'turning up' unannounced. He spoke of CWM now operating on over 70 properties throughout QLD and the high regard with which CWM is held by our project partners.

At the completion of his talk, Damien showed a short video of a property assessment of a possible project of 168,000 acres in the Cooktown area. This video was very professionally produced by two of our FNQ members and in particular showed the benefit of using vision obtained by drone (UAV) to cover assessment of some very rugged and picturesque country.

Next we were very fortunate to have Bob Green, our current SSAA QLD president, speak to us. Bob, a former SSAA National President, has

been a SSAA member for more than 40 years. He has served in various other administrative and representative roles for Australia over this time.

Bob's enthusiastic presentation covered a wide range of topics including licensing, the politics of the gun debates and threats to our organisations long term existence. His major emphasis was on the SSAA and CWM brand. Bob stated that these organisations are held in high regard due to consistent hard work by a great many members. He urged us all to be cognisant of our present status and to continue with our whole hearted support for both organisations.

The final presenter was Neal Finch. Neal is a professional biologist with more than 20 years' experience in practical wildlife research. Neal has demonstrated an ability to combine this with his academic interests. Many of our members have been impressed by Neal's enthusiasm with the Red Deer research project in the Lake Cressbrook area. His lively presentation spoke to the topic of "social licence" or the growing trend for society to somehow grant (permission) for organisations (or groups) to continue to operate despite some oppositions. "Social licence" has become a phenomenon generated by people's "perceptions of a need to control" what they see as something adverse in society, despite obvious overall benefits. He cited the examples of forestry, mining

and agriculture.

The panel of speakers then accepted questions from the audience.

In all, the more than 60 general members who attended were well satisfied with the evening presentation.

South East Report

Stewartdale Skills Development Weekend – A new Shooter’s Perspective

I’ve been attending the Stewartdale Skills Development weekends since meeting the group at the Brisbane Shot Expo in August 2015. The weekends are held at the SSAA 1200 hectare Stewartdale property which is 40 minute south west of Brisbane.

After the sign-on and “meet and greet” it’s time for a safety brief and an overview of the day’s activities. At the last development weekend sign-on was followed by very informative talk about internal parasites carried by wild dogs that we could be exposed to and other human health risks. There was a lot of interest shown and many questions were answered at the end of the presentation.

The first shooting activity for the weekend was the rim-fire shoot. Participants load up as though they are going for a day’s hunt in the bush. Packs with essential gear and rim-fire rifles are carried, on foot, through gates and passed over fences to the bush surrounded rim-fire range –



not a bench, chair or pole in sight. Everyone works together to set up the steel reactive targets at various distances on the range. The targets vary in size, shape and functionality. The group is divided into details depending on numbers of participants. Details (a mix of experienced and novices) line up side by side and try to complete the various exercises within the time required. The exercises vary in distance and shooting position. Delightfully I have not once heard “load and fire single rounds only” at a CWM skills development weekend.

The variety of rifles is usually extensive and there is always a willingness from the more experienced to help the newer shooters in the group. Many are always willing to lend their rifles to those who don’t have one.

The shoot usually ends when everyone has used all their ammo and quenched their rim-fire thirst. This is followed by the return walk back to camp for a sit down and a feed. The CWM members

running the day share their knowledge and explain the relevance and importance of the morning’s activities to CWM projects and to the code of conduct.

Next it was shotgun time of the day. Well, don’t they come in all shapes and sizes! Anyone contemplating a new purchase (possibly a lever action or triple barrel in short or long) would benefit from attending one of the weekends. Everyone is happy to share their experience and usually their shotgun.

The exercises always involve a seemingly endless supply of clay pigeons and/or clay rabbits. Participants may be split into two details and sent in different directions, again depending on numbers participating. Each detail makes an evenly spaced line and attempts to shoot thrown clays as the group walks through the bush. This exercise simulates quick offhand reactive shooting and reinforces the necessity of visual contact with team members, at all times. Again,

there is usually enough time and clays for all to use as many shells as their shoulders will allow. Then back to camp for refreshments and a chat.

The last organised shoot for the day is around the farm tracks to the SSAA Ripley Range. Everyone jumps in their cars and heads over to the range for a late afternoon and evening centrefire shoot. Rifles are racked and everyone sets up the paper targets at the nominated distances. As with the rim-fire shoot, different scenarios are simulated. Without fail some of the resident roos will casually bounce onto the range causing a mid-shoot ceasefire. Shooting continues as the daylight fades. At this time of the day info on the importance of quality optics is often discussed. Any available torches and night vision gear is brought out after sunset. After a pack-up in the dark any campers head back to the Fig Tree Hill campsite to eat, relax and chat. There is usually a spotlighting option for those with the energy and drive to find someone to guide them. Everyone knows how comfy a camp chair is after a full day in the sun and walking through the bush. Then it's off to bed for an early rise for those wanting a hunt on foot somewhere on the property. For the others it's a getup whenever you feel like it.

It is evident that the development team work hard to make each development weekend enjoyable, informative and safe. The day's exercises always vary

and there is always something different to fill in downtime between shooting. There is often a guest industry representative or a presentation by a knowledgeable team member to fill the weekend. The weekends are always enjoyable as we are surrounded by like-minded people in a scenic location. For me, and surely a lot of others, the weekend is an opportunity to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills the long-term shooters and hunters already have. For others, it is an opportunity to polish their skills and help others. I believe the experienced are happy to pass on their knowledge to other responsible shooters. It's also a great time to gain confidence in your hunting and equipment before attending one of the pest management projects.

Mick

Moonie December 2016 – a daily account

Saturday: Weather - hot and dry.

I drove to Moonie town where I met up with other team members at the Moonie Crossroads roadhouse. We then continued to the property, introduced ourselves to the owners and set up accommodation in the big old timber shearer's quarters. This large old building, made predominantly from cypress pine, has been brought back into usable condition over the last couple of years. Visitors have done a lot of work to improve the facilities including some

plumbing and electrical work carried out by qualified tradesmen from the considerable numbers of CWM members and other visitors. A very satisfactory bathroom with flush toilet and shower has been set up, and the kitchen, although lacking a cooking stove (other than a wood-fired one in poor condition) has a good working refrigerator, a sink and adequate bench space. There are four usable bedrooms, and another two rooms, currently used for storage, that can be fixed up for sleeping in the future. The bedrooms have beds and mattresses, and there are more mattresses in the large main room in the centre of the building in case larger numbers of people need to be accommodated.

During the late afternoon we walked and drove in the SW part of the property in search of target pest species. We sat at a dam until dark in case pigs came to drink, but a few kangaroos were the only animals that emerged from the scrub. We spotlighted from the vehicle on way back to camp but without success.

Sunday: Weather - hot and dry. We drove to the river floodplain in the NW corner of the property and walked through river floodplain, channels and billabongs. Less than half an hour into our walk a mob of about 20 pigs were flushed from cover and Ken shot a good sized young boar. The mob took off at high speed towards the north and most likely crossed the river. An hour or so later more pigs bolted out ahead of



perimeter of a large crop paddock (in stubble) as sun was setting, but saw no animals. Ken, Warren and Brad went out spotlighting after 9 PM and despatched one pig, a fox and two hares.

Monday: Weather hot. During the morning, we walked for about 5km in a loop in the eastern end of the adjacent property. Some fresh signs were evident near the dam, but no pigs or goats were seen. We

us and another was shot (Ken and Warren fired simultaneously and both scored hits on the animal). We walked back to the vehicle, about 5km in total.

returned to camp for lunch and had a good discussion with some visiting CWM members from a nearby property. The afternoon-evening walk was

pigs were seen with the thermal imager. One boar of good size, one small pig and a hare were shot.

Tuesday: Weather hot. The morning walk was carried out in the SW part of the property. No animals were seen. After a break in the middle of the day we went out to walk a line of vegetation between paddocks. A shower of rain had fallen earlier, and another brief shower fell while we were walking. We saw no animals but there were some very encouraging fresh signs. No spotlighting that night due to the soft ground after the rain.

Wednesday: Weather very hot with thundery showers late in the day. Ken packed up and departed during the morning. The remainder of the team proceeded to the NW corner of the property, walking through the same area that had been productive for us on Sunday. No animals were seen other than kangaroos and several swamp wallabies. The swampies held their front legs stiffly outward and downward as they ambled off. Shane and Rob arrived in the early afternoon to join the team. After setting up their camping arrangements they headed out for a hunt, bagging one three-legged pig. About 9:30 PM the five of us headed out as a single team with spotlights and thermal imaging gear. A couple of small groups of pigs in stubble paddocks were detected with the thermal and seven were despatched.



After a lunch break at camp we walked for several kilometres in the NE part of the property, amongst channels, billabongs and floodplains. No pigs were seen. We drove around the

to the north amongst river channels and billabongs, but no animals were seen.

After dinner in camp, Warren and Brad drove out to do some spotlighting. Several

Thursday: Weather hot.



The team slept until 7:30 AM or thereabouts after having returned to camp from spotlighting in the wee small hours. Shane and Rob headed out for a mid-morning hunt. I had to finish up due to a commitment at home so I packed my camp, thanked the owners for their hospitality and drove out at 11:30 AM. The remaining team members had some success during the next few days. Warren kept the total count for the trip: 33 pigs, 8 foxes, 7 hares and a cat on that particular property. That property is 1 of 4 on the Moonie project.

Norm Bain

Rockhampton Report

The Bridled Nail-tail wallaby and CWM

The Bridled Nail-tail Wallaby, (*Onychogalea fraenata*), commonly known as a Flashjack or BNT is a vulnerable small macropod that was once common along the east coast of Australia.

The once prevalent BNT was believed to have become extinct with no sightings of the animal between 1937 and 1973. A possible sighting in 1973 by a fencing contractor prompted wildlife personnel to investigate the area near Bluff in Central Queensland. A few Years later, the area around the sightings was purchased by the QLD government and remains a key habitat for the BNT's recovery. Since 1973, a further two populations have been re-started as well as the development of several captive populations.

Now occupying less than 5% of the area they once covered, it is estimated that only 500 of the BNT's remain in natural populations. Shooting, land clearing and predation greatly reduced their numbers through the early 1900's contributing to their rapid decline. The BNT's were regularly shot as pests, their habitat was cleared for farming as well as predation from wild dogs, cats and foxes previously introduced into the Australian bush.

Research has shown that a large number of BNT's fail to reach breeding age with the main cause being predation. The BNT is a relatively small macropod with a fully grown male weighing 4-8kg and only 1mt in length. The females are generally smaller and the joey's size makes them extremely vulnerable for at least 6 months after birth. As well as their small size, the BNT does not have any effective defence strategies to avoid predators, especially wild dogs, cats and foxes. One key to the BNT's continued survival is their prolific rate of breeding as well as rigorous pest control operations in their core habitats expanding to the surrounding areas.

Several studies have shown that predation by cats may be as high as 3 young BNT's per week. On one reserve, research has also shown there may be as many as 30 cats present at any time.

Any increase of predation on these populations would surely outweigh the BNT's breeding and may cause the numbers to decline with devastating results.

"How can I help?" CWM has been assisting the BNT recovery for many years through pest control projects on 2 of the key BNT reserves. Both the Bluff and Avocet projects are easily located and both have a great range of facility's making for a comfortable experience.

Bluff project is located east of Bluff in Central Qld. The area is accessible by 2wd but a



4wd is recommended on the property. The facilities boast a kitchen, toilets, hot showers, 240v, and large undercover areas with a/c rooms when available. Traversing around the property is relatively easy with well-marked tracks and maintained tracks. The facilities also make Bluff project suitable for new members with limited camping equipment as well as the more equipped.

Avocet is located north of Springsure in Central Qld. The camping area nicknamed the Ritz is accessible by high clearance 2wd but 4wd is recommended for accessing the rest of the property. The camping area has a drop toilet, 12v shower, 240v and a small kitchenette. However, drinking water will need to be carried as the tanks are infrequently treated. There are plenty of areas for a tent or swag and a small undercover area if the weather closes in. A little more equipment is required for the Avocet project, however it would also be suitable for new as well as more experienced members.

For further information on these projects or other CWM projects in the Central QLD area, please contact Andrew McMaster at CWMRockhampton@gmail.com.

Andrew

Townsville Report

Hi to all members in Queensland and beyond.

North Queensland is kicking the year off with several new projects - check out Cairns on our calendar for further details on their new listings.

We have a special running on the "Burdekin River Wetlands 2017". "Free entry".

There is extended availability on some projects but some costs may apply. If you are flying in to attend some of these projects, there are a few seats available for anyone travelling out to projects from airports. The projects will be advertised via email but your best option is

to let us know what project and dates you are thinking of attending so that we can match you to a project.

Randle Irvin

General articles, stories, tips

A special note to all members with regard to 4wd's.

Two issues continually affect travel to, on and from Remote Projects, namely **tyres** and **batteries**.

Tyres: Consideration needs to be given for taking extra tyres and repair options when travelling long distances to remote areas. The current crop of 4wd's are running road tyres that have a speed rating that demand thinner side walls and a design that creates a vulnerable sidewall. There isn't much you can do about it so prepare for it. There are tyres available that offer more durability with regards off-road driving but they trade one feature for another.

Battery's: A lot of vehicles have a second battery installed to help with power usage.

When you are in remote areas the special requirement is on reserve starting power more than extended supply. No point having a cool drink if you are not able to start your vehicle. Check that you have a protected engine start reserve. Howe's Law applies in this situation. Howe's Law states; "Murphy was an optimist."

Many times we have had a dual battery system drained. It is not always easy getting things going again from a dead flat battery. Test your system for a worst case scenario and find your weak spot at home and not when you are 6hrs from the nearest village. Tip of the day: Just because you paid a lot for your second battery doesn't guarantee that it was set up correctly for remote locations. Most aren't.

Randle

Hydration

On a recent CWM trip to Moonie we encountered temps of 40 degrees during the day which highlighted the

importance of fluid intake. Between the morning and afternoon hunt in camp we stocked up on a variety of fluids including electrolytes which was essential to keep hydrated.

While hunting we were taking the full 3 litres of water in a hydration bladder which had the advantage of continual sips of water being taken from the tube over your shoulder. Most times we came back with the bag almost empty. The disadvantage of a bottle in your backpack (sometimes only a litre or less) is you only stop every so often and have to take the back pack off for a drink and can be dehydrated by the time you do this. Sometimes it leaves you

feeling sick with no energy. Remember if you are not passing water it generally means you are not taking in enough. By checking the colour of your urine <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat/Pages/urine-colour-chart.aspx> it can also tell you what level of hydration you are at.

Ken

Ken Payne story

Promoting Hunting in our community.

I have noted that some people don't mention that they go hunting in case they are criticised. It is by actively promoting the positives and mentioning that it is not the killing of things but the things we save by doing the culls that I usually end up with a positive conversation about hunting.

Information such as Environment Minister Greg Hunt saying that up to 20 million feral cats are each killing four native Australian animals a night can also be useful in a discussion about hunting.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-13/greg-hunt-feral-cat-native-animals-fact-check/5858282> .

I read a lot of articles about the native animals that are saved by keeping populations of cat/ pig/ dog/ fox low so that I am knowledgeable enough when I discuss the finer points of hunting with someone.

Anecdotal data obtained from farmers indicated that the



value of a cow bitten as a calf by wild dogs and, as result has scar tissue on its rump, may be downgraded by up to 50% when it goes to the abattoir. The whole beast – not just the kilo or more of meat is affected.

A lot of negativity about guns is from people who have never seen a gun, except in the movies. I like to invite them to a gun range and about half take up the offer. It is amazing how many begin to realize that guns are not as scary as they thought. I am not backward about pushing the safety rules and point them at the SSAA website which has videos of family's enjoying the sport <https://ssaa.org.au/ssaa-tv> .

Another thing is not to over gun them. The worst thing is to let them use a large calibre first up and laugh when it hurts. I suggest they use a .22 and practice their stance and grip and you then can see their enjoyment when they get a consistent 10 score. If they want to try something bigger, I try to step them up gradually from a .223 up to .308.

I have a workmate who had not had anything to do with guns. I introduced Chris and his 3 children to shooting as each one turned 11. The older two, Alex and Luke, compete in the .22 metal silhouettes and love it. Over the Christmas break his daughter Kate fired a rifle for the first time and was all big smiles. All four have recently done their safety course and are applying for their licences. They in turn will be talking positively to their friends of



the great time they are having with guns.

Ken

On a personal note my oldest son Nathan has qualified with CWM and came out to Moonie, his first trip, taking out 6 feral pigs. Nathan grew up with hunting and has been on our personal trips from the age of 4 with his 2 grandfathers, his uncle and myself, shooting rabbits. However, once cars and work etc came along life got in the way. At the age of 29 he has recently got his shooters licence and has taken up hunting again. I enjoyed this

personal one on one time in the bush like so many other fathers in our group.
Ken

Item for sale

Vortex Razor 8x42 Binoculars

Very Good Condition.
Located in Augustine Heights QLD (about 20 minutes from Ripley Range).
Approximately \$1800 New
Selling for \$950
Call Dan for details
[0417446393](tel:0417446393)



Upcoming Activity Dates

Our calendar of activity dates is now published on our web site. Please go to:
<http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/calendar/2017-calendar>

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