

# **ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

## **Inquiry into the control of invasive animals on Crown land**

Bright — 19 October 2016

### Members

Ms Bronwyn Halfpenny — Chair

Mr Tim McCurdy — Deputy Chair

Mr Simon Ramsay

Mr Tim Richardson

Mr Bill Tilley

Ms Vicki Ward

Mr Daniel Young

### Staff

Executive officer: Dr Christopher Gribbin

### Witness

Mr Anthony Carroll.

**The CHAIR** — Welcome, Mr Anthony Carroll, and thanks for coming to this public hearing today. Just before we hand over to you, a couple of formalities: first of all, this hearing is being recorded, and you will be given copies of the transcript to have a look at and check for accuracy before they are made public. Also, anything that you say at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege; however, that does not always extend if you talk outside the public hearing. So just keep that in mind. The secretary would have spoken to you about this. If you want to provide a presentation, you have 5 to 10 minutes. That then gives us plenty of time to ask you questions. I will hand over to you. If you could perhaps maybe just give a bit of a background or an introduction to yourself, we will go from there. Thank you.

**Mr CARROLL** — Thank you. I have a fairly short introduction. I do have a number of pictures I can show you at the end.

**The CHAIR** — Sure. Yes.

**Mr CARROLL** — They are relative to things like habitat. I am mainly on about deer, and I presume this whole review started because of the deer population. Just briefly, deer were introduced roughly in 1860 to 1880. There were about 20 species and only 6 survived. About the same time they were taken to New Zealand, and the red deer basically came from a country — Scotland and these places — and it was very similar to where they were transported to. The sambar deer did not increase rapidly for a long time. By World War II they had basically made the Wonnangatta and Buffalo range. The 1939 fires pushed them over the Great Dividing Range. Along came the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983. They spread them further.

I have been hunting sambar for a long time, and up until about the late 1980s they were very hard to find. Most people did not even know they existed. If they saw them out in the paddock with a bunch of cows, and they are quite keen on them, they would not know the difference. There has been a steady increase, but it has basically taken about 100 years to get the deer established in a broad range — that is [inaudible] numbers. So we have to ask ourselves what happened thereafter. Why the big increase, especially starting, say, 10 years ago? What actually happened?

For people who have been watching them, and I think I said it in here, I have had these game cameras out, and 20 000 to 30 000 photos is not an exaggeration. The great alpine fires came along in 2003 and 2006–07, and then there was Black Saturday and other small burns. The regrowth after these fires produced absolutely perfect conditions for sambar deer. They thought it was great — not only sambar deer but all the other animals and plants and that type of thing. The fires wiped out big numbers of deer, but they also wiped out big numbers of native animals, birds and that type of thing. The impact was very, very severe. The massive regrowth, though — and it only took about three years to start getting up to a height — meant that the deer could not be hunted, basically. Where I could see 150 metres through the bush I could not see 10 metres through the bush. You cannot shoot them if you cannot see them. You can hear them, but that is as close as we could get to them, basically.

The numbers simply got too high. At the back of the farms there is an area of considerable concern. However, it is 10 years since we had these major fires in 2003 and 2006–07. The actual dieback in the bush is now most significant. What is happening is that there is a lot less fodder. A lot of the stuff they could have for these boom years is now sitting on the ground. It is producing wonderful fire material, by the way. In the area that I go into — and ideally I do not go into national parks or that sort of thing — I drive past them because I cannot hunt in them. I will come to that. I just go past them. Where I actually hunt there are groups of hunters coming up from Melbourne. I only live down in Oxley. One of the fortunate things is that they take a lot of meat animals. They turn up, and the first thing they will do if they have not got any is go and shoot a meat animal. The deer numbers are now in decline in the area that I hunt in. They are noticeably declining. It is not very difficult to see it.

But the other thing is that, as I understand it, around the Mount Buffalo National Park and other areas and up the top past Cheshunt the deer are coming out in large numbers on farms. That has not happened where I go in the Black Range. One of the reasons is that they have been able to get at them and hunt them fairly well. The farmers never allowed the numbers to build up anyway.

I just want to move on to the hunters. Have you looked at the fact that the hunters themselves, most of them, need better education to take more meat animals, especially to take more females? I put that in my submission here. If you want to get numbers down, you kill the females off and they simply do not breed. It is a simple equation. People go hunting large males with big heads. That is fine. Shooting one big male does nothing for getting the numbers down, really. It might stop them getting into Joe Brown's vineyard and ripping up 50 metres of his vineyard. That is fine. It might stop them fighting, but it does nothing for numbers, really.

I believe the Game Management Authority has a vital role to play in this respect, especially in starting to better educate the hunters — that would be via the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, field and game and ADA — to take more meat animals and get them out.

That raises another issue though. Hound hunting is restricted to a lot of areas. I can go hunting in some areas of national parks where hound hunters cannot go. I think it is time that changed, quite frankly. They should pick a certain area for the hounds, and again, under the guidance of GMA, not just willy-nilly, and say 'Okay, we've got these boundaries. We're going to go in there, especially if there is a high concentration of deer, and see if we can have an impact on them'. I know from hunting down deer below Lake Eildon that they can have a big impact on the deer. But if they walk across the road, they cannot take hounds in there. So what the deer do is walk straight across the road. It is pointless having areas cut off.

One of the tricky issues is what to do with the deer carcasses. I am not going to shoot a deer and leave it to rot on the ground. It is as simple as that. Most people that go hunting will not do it. It cannot be justified shooting a valuable resource and leaving it to rot and attract dogs. We need a real rethink on this and on how to actually go about it. We should have game butchers. We are about 100 years behind Europe, it just so happens. They have a very well-established system. They hunt in different conditions, true, but all game animals have to be utilised. It also applies in other places like Alaska. It is well organised. The game is considered highly valuable. You can go into delicatessens and buy venison off the hook. It is quite simple.

In other areas there is the pet food industry. The pet food industry does actually operate out of parts of the back of Wodonga, which is part of Bill's place. It has to be economic, and they need a certain number of deer. In areas where the deer are in high concentration — out the back of farms — I think that needs to be really expanded. There need to be sufficient deer. What we will also find if we go down that path is just how many deer are there and where the deer are coming from. If you start reducing the deer numbers back and it becomes economical, you will know you have probably got them to a point where the deer numbers are reducing.

Regarding hunting areas, I am going to just read this little bit: there are far too many safe havens and sanctuaries for deer and other invasive species. The sanctuaries, as I call them, are where you cannot go hunting at all. All they are doing is placing artificial controls on the management and the hunters, and they cannot do anything about it. The deer are free to breed and thrive, and they think it is wonderful, I have no doubt. The people who live around Buffalo and up the top of the King River will know what happens. It would be cost effective or more cost effective to open up more areas where people can hunt them. I particularly pick on places like the Mount Buffalo National Park or something like that and certainly up the top of the King River–Wabonga plateau. That is another classic area. You can drive up from Cheshunt over to here along the road out of Cheshunt. On the left-hand side you can hunt. You can take hounds in there. You cannot go on the right-hand side. It is closed off. It is almost farcical, in a way. The deer have a huge area. It is a massive area. You cannot shoot them off the road — that should never happen anyway — and they have just got free rein. Nothing is happening about it whatsoever.

Our partnerships are with Parks Victoria, SSAA, FGA and ADA, and I am part of the conservation program management. I have been on shoots with SSAA, mainly on goats. These programs can be successfully applied to basically any invasive species, including our native animals. The program that they have got going is highly successful. They have a very good safety record. They have an exceptional safety record. This is a matter that does concern the public, and it should. But the reality is that when we are on these programs, rarely do we ever see the rest of the public. The areas get closed off. I have been up to the Warby Ranges shooting goats up there on the CPM program. Interestingly, the parks people reduced their

numbers back, then the CPM program got into it. They ended up with six or seven goats they could not get, so they simply brought the helicopter in and shot them. That was a very expensive exercise, and on a large scale I am not sure how it would work.

Management: it is vital for a management plan that involves all stakeholders. The GMA — the Game Management Authority — and Parks Vic need to take a lead and a vital role in the management of all the invasive species, but we have to have a plan and there is frankly nothing at present. As we well know.

I just want to read the last paragraph of my submission, please:

The effectiveness of control programs needs a real change of mindset from culling/let's poison to proper management.

Deer and other invasive species are well-established and here to stay.

Let me tell you: we are not going to get rid of deer, so we may as well get over it now and come up with a plan to deal with it.

Make good use of a valuable resource and move away from the 'pest' mentality which is costly and on a broad scale fairly ineffective. And, remember humans are the most invasive species ever set foot on this planet.

And we caused this problem. Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you. That was a good presentation and thanks for providing your submission as well. Can I just ask — based on your submission, two things. One is that you are involved in the conservation pest management program, which is for goats. Is it goats and foxes?

**Mr CARROLL** — Foxes, yes.

**The CHAIR** — Can you just run us through: what did you have to do, how did you get involved in that, what are the criteria to be part of that program?

**Mr CARROLL** — I had to be in the SSAA. The one I am in is the SSAA one and the ADA have one. To get involved you have to be accredited. You have to have an accreditation to do it. That includes the shooting program. You have to be able to prove you can shoot straight. It is not an easy matter, I have to tell you. I see some smiles. One of the interesting things is, at a longer range the younger people did better, but as soon as we got the targets closer up — we were not allowed to support the rifle — they had to repeat a lot of the exercises. It is interesting.

Apart from that we then have a written type of examination. It is a two-day course that culminated in a 60, 70-question questionnaire, which you have to pass, and there are certain parts of the questionnaire that you have to get correct. That is what is required. You need to go and practise to be able to shoot straight for starters, but you then need to go — it takes about three days roughly, something like that, to do it.

**The CHAIR** — Where there many people? Was there a lot of interest? Was it a big group?

**Mr CARROLL** — Yes. They ran various courses. I did it about four years ago. Following that I was then put on a section 37 certificate so that I could actually shoot vermin in national parks. Just getting that ticket does not entitle you to go into a national park at any time. It has to be organised. It is organised through the CPM or Parks Vic.

I have been on culls with the SSAA. There were no Parks Vic people there and they do not have to be there, but you have to be legally under what is called a section 37 permit. I think I have got it right.

**The CHAIR** — Did everybody pass the accreditation that you are aware of?

**Mr CARROLL** — The shooting bit, no. They had to repeat it. There were two or three young people who simply had great difficulty getting past the freehand shooting. They did pass it eventually. They got there. It is actually quite difficult by the way, what they do.

**Mr McCURDY** — Thanks, Anthony. Two parts to my question. The first part is: I am concerned with the number of deer increasing and if we are going to make people more accountable for the carrying out of their meat, I just wonder whether we will actually reduce the number of hunters. People would say, ‘Well, it’s all too hard. I only want to go in and shoot and not have to carry the meat out’, and we could actually get a reduction in hunters.

But the main part of my question is: are there any incentives? Do you think incentives would work? We had the wild dog bounty, for example. When you talk about hinds versus stags, would you see any reason why an incentive would not work there? You know, if you were to shoot a hind, you would get a hundred bucks for it for example versus nothing for a stag. Would that work or not?

**Mr CARROLL** — I think it would provide some incentive. I am just contemplating how you are going to prove it was a hind versus a stag first up, because when you shoot a deer way out in the bush you cannot carry the whole thing back. You have to make maybe three or four efforts to get the whole deer back. What invariably happens is people take the main part of the deer. They do not bring the carcass back, and it is not necessary to bring the carcass back. You are not going to get the carcass back, because if a deer weighs 200 to 300 kilos, you just simply cannot carry it. You have to make a number of trips to get it out, so yes there could be an incentive there for people to take — a bit like the fox bounty — the ears along.

Just thinking a bit further, it does not really matter if it is male or female actually, because it is getting rid of one. It is preferable to do more females. I just cannot think of how you would get over the male/female — —

**Mr McCURDY** — The practical side of it.

**Mr CARROLL** — The practical side of it, yes. You could take a photo yes, but you can get a photo from anywhere really.

**Mr YOUNG** — Thanks, Anthony, for coming in. Reading through your submission, you talk about the rising number of deer, particularly since the fires.

**Mr CARROLL** — Yes.

**Mr YOUNG** — We have had a lot of people talk about the reasons why deer numbers are booming and that seems to be one that comes up quite a bit, but we have had also other people saying that deer numbers are not impacted by hunters and that because we have been hunting — and even though we are taking 60 000 deer out of the bush — hunters are not having an impact on the numbers of deer, so therefore hunting is not effective. Have you got any comments in relation to that and the fact that we cannot measure how many hunters are taking out accurately or how many it is impacting on and the reasons why there might be population increases?

**Mr CARROLL** — The first thing is, we have not got a clue how many deer there are — not a clue do we have. I have got cameras out, and I can work out in a relatively small area because I keep seeing the same deer. I can show you a few photos shortly. But there is an awful lot of bush out there. There is something like 4 million hectares of the high country where the deer inhabit, and that is just the main part of it. We do not know how many are there.

We are supposedly taking 60 000 animals out a year and the numbers are still increasing, but we do not know why that is happening in actual fact. We do not know if it is because the amount of food is going down. Deer love inhabiting areas behind farms. There is a good reason for it. It is like kangaroos: they simply hop the fences, have a feed and go back to the bush when they get pursued. What was the other part please, Daniel?

**Mr YOUNG** — Just about the fact that it has been said that hunters are not contributing to dropping those numbers.

**Mr CARROLL** — Where I hunt that simply is not correct. The numbers are dropping substantially. They have probably gone back to where they were pre the fires. You have got to remember before the fires I could see 150 metres through the bush. They could see me, but I could get a shot at them. It was easy. And the tracks were in much better condition.

I do not know how you work out whether it is working or not. As I mentioned earlier, if you started reducing the numbers and got to the point where it is not economical anymore, I think you would start to find, okay, the numbers are going down now and the hunters are having the impact. So all I can say is where I hunt the numbers have a very significant impact, but I have got to repeat: we can get at them. We have access to them. It is not very good at present because the track has not been maintained, I might add.

**Mr YOUNG** — Maintenance of tracks is something that has been brought up a bit. We have had it said that there are parts of the bush where you cannot get into, way into the dense stuff, that there is no point even doing deer controls down here because you cannot even get out there, so the populations just replenish themselves. Do you think it would be easier to do that if there was more maintenance on tracks and things to get into those areas? Would people go down there hunting?

**Mr CARROLL** — Maintenance on strategic tracks, yes. If you have not got a track to get in, we are not going to go in there. We do not want to drive through farms. You can go and ask the farmer, but the farmers obviously do not want you driving through their farms because you are just going to cut the place up. Especially now, after it has rained, it is a serious matter.

**Mr YOUNG** — In terms of what you were saying before about areas that you cannot hunt in, mainly national parks, why do you think there is a reason that we cannot hunt in those areas? Apart from the actual realities of legislation prohibiting us, why do you think we are prohibited from hunting in national parks?

**Mr CARROLL** — I have got no idea. I do not think there is any logic to it to be quite frank. In built-up areas, yes, we do not want people in built-up areas, although look at the Wilsons Promontory National Park where they have been shooting hog deer. There are a lot of people around the area. Yes, they do close it off while they are actually spotlighting the deer. That is fine. But I cannot find a real, logical reason not to allow hunting in the remainder of the national parks. I have got to repeat that. There is an awful lot of national park, there is a lot of state forest too, by the way, and basically I do not get past the state forest because why are we going to drive 300 kilometres one way when we can drive 90 kilometres there and back. I know we are reducing the deer from the back of the farms.

**Mr YOUNG** — We were talking before and it was mentioned that people sometimes do not like taking carcasses home because they live in suburbia or close to the city and it is a bit hard for them to cut it up in their garage and people see it and when you are hosing blood down the driveway. Do you think it would be easier if there was provision for people to butcher carcasses out here, say, at the exits to some of those areas if there were facilities for people to do a bit of that?

**Mr CARROLL** — I think there could be facilities where people could get the carcass out. If you shoot the carcass 2 kilometres into the bush, you still have got to cart out. There is the issue. So you basically have got to break the carcass down out in the bush. Nobody can cart a 200-kilogram animal out of the bush. It just does not happen. The beast is already broken down; some people do stick them on the back of the vehicle. I have been over to Gippsland where we shot a couple of animals on a farm, because the farmer wanted to get rid of them. The bloke did not believe they were there until they got into his vegie patch and then he got a bit uptight. We set up on the back of a trailer and took them back to Metung. But you have got to get it to the point where you can pick it up. Yes, you could. I do not have a real problem with that actually, because if you dress it out properly, there is very little blood, for starters. I have just bought a second-hand refrigerator so instead of hanging it up anywhere, I just break it down and put it in the refrigerator for about two weeks, then I can get the cuts I want and do what I want with it and then just freeze it.

**Mr YOUNG** — Yes. So some facilities like that you think would encourage people to take more meat animals?

**Mr CARROLL** — I am not sure, Daniel. I really do not know. Everyone I have seen has already been broken down to get them out of the bush, so you have got the two hindquarters, the backstraps and often the forequarters. You are not going to cart that 2 to 3 kilometres out of the bush, because a bullet has gone through it. Basically it is left there.

**Mr YOUNG** — In terms of what you were saying about encouraging people to take more hinds and to fix the ratio, taking a big stag does not really put a dent in the population. You mentioned that having the GMA involved in that would be a good place for them — in the education of hunters — and for them to do that. Some of the things that I have experienced with the GMA, and in part their own attitude to education and messaging and things like that, is that they are somewhat restricted by legislation that sets up the authority and that they see themselves as more of a regulator by virtue of the fact that that legislation is restricted. Do you think that that is a change that should happen to allow the GMA to be promoting these sorts of things and encouraging hunters to do that sort of stuff?

**Mr CARROLL** — Yes, just change it. Get rid of the old attitudes. Just simply take a fresh look at it and say, ‘If this is inhibiting us from doing it, yet there is no good reason, change it’.

**Mr YOUNG** — I suppose that is the attitude to take with public lands that are locked up to hunting. If there is no good reason for it — —

**Mr CARROLL** — That is absolutely correct.

**Mr RAMSAY** — Thank you, Mr Carroll. Are you still an active huntsman?

**Mr CARROLL** — Yes, I am.

**Mr RAMSAY** — Can I ask what gun you use, or guns?

**Mr CARROLL** — I have a couple actually, a few. I used to use, when I was younger and sillier, a 35. I now use a 308 because it is much lighter. I notice it gets some laughter going on. I use a 308, but I am very particular about the sort of ammunition I use quite frankly.

**Mr RAMSAY** — Do you hunt wild dogs and pigs and other invasive pests?

**Mr CARROLL** — I have been up in the Northern Territory hunting pigs. Yes, I have. I do not actually hunt dogs, because until relatively recently I have not been able to find the dogs. Before the fires, yes, we had dogs further out in the hills, and if we have time, I can show you some photographs of what they actually do and how all the animals come into these wallows that are meant to be destroying our bush, which is simply not true.

**Mr RAMSAY** — Have you used shotguns at all?

**Mr CARROLL** — No, I do not use shotguns. If I have to get that close, if I have to use a shotgun — I used to belong to Para Park, Sunday Island. I know in the early days down there with the hog deer they used shotguns. They used to ride around on horses and use shotguns, a bit like Cowboy Bill as far as I could see. But I do not find a shotgun — I just have not used one. They are incredibly effective at short range, though. I know that.

**Mr RAMSAY** — Would you ever foresee the need for recreational huntsmen to use an eight-shot Adler lever-action shotgun?

**Mr CARROLL** — For hunting sambar? No is the answer to that.

**Mr RAMSAY** — In relation to wild dog control interstate, do they use a suite of tools in relation to baiting?

**Mr CARROLL** — Say that again. I cannot hear you.

**Mr RAMSAY** — In relation to wild dog control and pig control, what other tools do land managers use for control, apart from shooting.

**Mr CARROLL** — I do not know if it still operates, but with pigs they used to round them up and sell them off to Europe. In fact they used to round them up, put them in a yard and then shoot them, because the Europeans wanted wild boar. The goats are another interesting thing. A couple of years ago I was up in New South Wales. We drove from Bourke right down the Darling River. We did not see a lot of cattle, we did not see a lot of sheep, we saw a lot of goats and the farmers were rounding them up for \$50 a head. The current price of a goat, as of Monday, is about \$70 a head, by the way. That is live weight. That came from Elders stock agents — \$70 a head. Goats can be relatively easily rounded up. What they do is they feed them to get them into the pen. It is quite effective in actual fact.

**Mr RAMSAY** — We had evidence about potentially using dogs to corral, not to attack but to get them out in the open and then corral them in larger groups. Do you see the mix of hunting and hounds?

**Mr CARROLL** — Are you talking about deer?

**Mr RAMSAY** — Yes, sorry. Back to deer, given the goat experience I guess.

**Mr CARROLL** — I would like to see it happen. I am being cynical by the way. They are extremely difficult to round up even when they have got hounds on them. I am not a hound hunter. I have been caught up in a hound hunt, which I found amusing I have to say. But they are extremely difficult to round up. They do not make good pets and they are just not easy to handle. They stress badly. Rounding them up I do not think is feasible actually.

**Mr TILLEY** — Good afternoon, Anthony. I just want to talk a little bit about carcass management. I am just a little bit challenged by some of the things you have said this afternoon, because, as you may appreciate, the state is responsible for the management of its ground reserve in the state as a whole. Here we are faced with an issue about controlling deer numbers, and you saying to us that recreational shooters are going out there and taking backstraps and legs and leaving the rest out there. What would we need to do to make sure that those that go into the bush, into those areas, take out what they shoot?

**Mr CARROLL** — If you go to Canada, just to add to that, and go moose hunting, they are a huge animal, you are required by law to carry the whole thing out. Am I right, Daniel?

**Mr YOUNG** — Yes.

**Mr CARROLL** — Thank you, the whole animal. They generally, though, have a guide who has an ATV. What they do is they pack it onto the ATV and carry the thing out. They frequently use things like packhorses. It makes it much easier. We do not have packhorses and we do not use ATVs. I do not care what we do, but carting a carcass 3 kilometres out of the bush — as you would appreciate, it does not go this way, it goes that way, up and down — is not that easy. I just do not think it is going to happen.

I go up to the north-east deerstalkers, and every couple of years — or the last three years — a group of them have gone out for a week's hunt. They have gone up to a place like Bennies and walked out into the bush for four or five days, and they have come back quite disappointed. They invariably say it is hardly worth going out there because most of the deer are sitting in close to the farms. That is where the numbers are. So going out into the bush, I am not sure what the value of it really is. If people want to go hunting big animals out there, they are not having any more success than the ones behind the farms. That is a simple fact.

**Mr TILLEY** — Yes, thank you. Just getting a better understanding, I suppose, of all this, bearing in mind once again the state is responsible for managing its estate and finding and establishing a willingness to pay for shooters. So if we are talking about infrastructure — you know, chiller rooms, refrigeration, dressing stations or whatever — would there be a level of willingness to pay by recreational shooters to support that infrastructure?

**Mr CARROLL** — Well, if they are getting paid, yes, they would. But if the deer is shot, I am not sure why you would want to bring much more than the hindquarters and the main part out. Bringing the forequarters out, it has often got a bullet hole through it, and it is very hard to do much with it. Yes, people do make it into dog food. A lot of people — hunters — use it for dog food, but it is not a great part of the animal. There is not a lot of meat on the forequarters for starters; that is the first thing. So I am not sure they are going to necessarily start carrying more out because they are getting paid more. I can see that the clever ones — —

**Mr TILLEY** — I am not talking about getting paid to do it. I am talking about: would there be a willingness to pay by recreational shooters to support investment in infrastructure? Would there be a level where shooters themselves would be willing to make a contribution towards that infrastructure, whether it be chiller rooms, dressing stations or those?

**Mr CARROLL** — I think, in certain places, things like coolrooms — yes, I would, for instance. But I have got to repeat again that the deer is already broken down. I am just going to take it home and put it in my refrigerator that I have got especially to do it. A lot of people, and I suspect in the city areas — and a lot of people out of the city go hunting — probably do not have that facility. There are mobile butchers around, yes, and they do put deer in them. They have a separate mobile part that they will put them in, and it is quite successful. So they are already paying for people to do that. It could be a bit more formalised. Especially the other part of it is game butchers. Now I am not sure why that should cost a lot of money actually to set that up in reality. But they have got to get the animal there, and they have got to be hygienic for starters.

**Mr TILLEY** — So there are business opportunities for the economy as well.

**Mr CARROLL** — There are certainly business opportunities for small business. I want to add there, though: setting up a small business and something like that, I am not sure that red tape will not kill it off before it starts, with all due respect.

**Mr TILLEY** — Yes, we are aware of some of that. On a closing note, you made mention there of better access to Crown land and safety specifically for other park users. Can you expand on all that a little bit?

**Mr CARROLL** — Well, when I go hunting where I am — you are talking about park use — I do not discriminate between parks and state forests, quite frankly. Parks are nothing more than a name for me. It does not achieve anything, quite frankly. Rarely do you ever see people out bushwalking or anybody else but hunters out there — or people prospecting out in the bush; there is a fair bit of that that goes on when it dries out a bit.

I have never seen a problem. I understand — and I have to say it is hearsay — that some of the dog teams are a little bit aggressive. In fact they are a pain in the neck. They do cause problems and they tend to think that they own a certain part of the bush; they do not in actual fact. That needs to be fixed up. It is probably well-known who they are.

**Mr TILLEY** — All right. Putting that aside, can you identify for the committee what areas or what parts of Victoria you may do these activities, or in what parts of Victoria would you expand some of these activities?

**Mr CARROLL** — I would certainly start with the Wabonga Plateau. You go up to King dam; the Wabonga Plateau is all on one side. You go up King River; the left side you cannot hunt, and the right side you can hunt. It is almost farcical that you cannot hunt on one side of the river. When you come back towards Cheshunt, there is a big lump of land in there, all across what they call the Stony Creek country, right back over to the King River, below the dam wall. You cannot go in there, and I absolutely start on one area like that. The Mount Buffalo National Park is another one, just the bits that I know of.

**Mr TILLEY** — I suppose that is local knowledge and what you experience.

**Mr CARROLL** — I would certainly push the Wabonga Plateau. I am not totally familiar with the Mount Buffalo National Park, I have to say, but I could imagine if you had a farm or property backing onto the Mount Buffalo National Park, it would become quite annoying the number of deer that come out. You hear a lot of stories, by the way. I have never seen it, I have to say, because where I go they have not been allowed to build up in number.

**Mr TILLEY** — It is been mentioned that principally a lot of your work has been goats and foxes. Do you come from Oxley?

**Mr CARROLL** — With the CPM, yes.

**Mr TILLEY** — Have you got many dogs around your place?

**Mr CARROLL** — No, you do not get many dogs around our place.

**Mr TILLEY** — You have not come across many wild dogs?

**Mr CARROLL** — Out in the bush, yes. I have photos of them though. They disappeared for quite a while after the fires. When the fires were on, the fires wiped out a lot of animals and birds. Interestingly, wallabies fared very well in the fires, probably because they tend to sit on the flats. But six months later a lot of the wallabies were killed by dogs, because the dogs wanted something to eat and they picked on the wallabies. They also picked on the young deer, the ones that survived.

**The CHAIR** — Are there some photos that you would like to show us? We still have a few minutes left if you want to go onto that.

**Mr CARROLL** — I will just show you a few.

**The CHAIR** — Just while we are working it out, the RACV figures in your submission, are they in their annual report or something?

**Mr CARROLL** — No. The RACV put out an e-newsletter about a month ago. It was about how to avoid collisions with animals. That is what it was about, and stuck down the bottom was this table.

**The CHAIR** — Just for our purposes, the source would have been the RACV's last newsletter, last month?

**Mr CARROLL** — Just say one of them, about a month ago. I think there has been one since; I am not quite sure. But the date that I printed this off, Chair, was 29 September, and it was pretty close to that date.

**The CHAIR** — So you got it off their website?

**Mr CARROLL** — Yes, it is on the RACV website. Just on that, I showed this to a neighbour yesterday and he said, 'Well, you have got no. 4, there are 76 deer hitting'. This is RACV insurance claims data, for those who have not seen it. He said, 'All right, there are 76 deer and only 70 cattle. There are millions of cattle, so how can that be?'. Well, if you do not know, the short answer is a deer can jump a standard stock fence standing next to it, but the fence keeps the cattle in. There are some amusing ones there.

### **Visual presentation.**

**Mr CARROLL** — If I go through this quite quickly, this is in fact a deer wallow. The thing down the left-hand corner, it is a total puzzlement as to what it is. It looks like a dog with a coat or something on it. I do not know what it is. It does not matter. We are talking about invasive animals. Now, where this wallow is, up to the left is a big game trail. I will show you what that is if you have not seen one, and up to the right it goes. This is the wallow. Just behind it is the wombat. Where the wombats dig a burrow in the yellow earth, as soon as it gets moist, the deer make a wallow in it. The deer do not make the wallow; they do not dig the hole.

**The CHAIR** — Where was this taken?

**Mr CARROLL** — It is in the Black Range, out the back of Whitfield. Right at the finish I will have to show you a huge burrow and what actually happens and what it attracts. The wombats are very friendly, I can tell you.

That is a black cat that turned up. You can see the date down there, 23 August 2012. There was a lot of activity in this area in 2012–13, and it started to decline. Deer numbers started to go down after that.

**Mr TILLEY** — So you shot that cat with a gun as well, not just a camera?

**Mr CARROLL** — A camera — these cameras are fixed on the tree. I can tell you if I saw it, I would shoot it. If the cat was there and the deer was there, I would shoot the cat, let me tell you.

**Mr TILLEY** — Good to hear.

**Mr CARROLL** — There is a rabbit in there, a very silly rabbit. We are talking about invasive species; a lot of foxes visit these areas. They have a real attraction to them all the time.

**Mr TILLEY** — Did you shoot that bastard too?

**Mr CARROLL** — Well, he has been in the wallow. This is fruits on the trees, another fox, a hind and a calf; there is a cat in there — a black cat. These are not very good. There is another fox. It just gives you an idea. These wallabies on the right-hand side live there all the time. They are happy.

Now, the animals appear to all get along well together. You do not see them chasing one another, fighting. You will see the wallabies there. That is a hind. There is a deer over there near the wallow. The deer — it is a female — goes up to the tree, smells the tree and decides if the male that has left his scent is suitable for breeding with. It is a very simple thing. That is a kangaroo. Now here is a stag that has decided he is going to have a bath in the wallow. The wombat is in his hole over there. Here is this bloke back again. This is a fair-sized stag. You see the fox in the middle there? For some reason or other most of the animals go up to that point and smell it. Even the rabbits go there — even rabbits. Here is stickybeak coming back again. There are two rabbits in there. They are very brave or very stupid. Now here is a wild dog. Do you see him? Just there — it does not matter. There is another wild dog there smelling. Here is a stag. Now, do you see the dog? You can see the face, with the eye elongated in the camera. There is another different dog, at the same time, just going back; they have gone up and decided to go back. Here is a young stag. He has had a bad night out, this bloke. He looks like he has been beaten up. He is quite knocked around actually. He is standing there. They do look a bit humped like that.

This is roughly a year later. There is a young stag eyeing off the wombat. Here is about a four-month-old sambar calf doing exactly what the parents do — lying in the wallow. Here is his lordship having a bath, which they think is great. Now you cannot see this bloke's face. I actually had quite a number of hunters on these things and I have to tell you I have had two cameras stolen — removed off the tree, and I did not give them permission. This bloke did not do it. But the hunters are amazing. Here is another bloke. He has turned up. He is doing what a lot of the animals do. First he got his GPS out, then he got his camera out, then he spent 5 minutes looking around at every tree in the place looking for the camera.

**Mr YOUNG** — Did he have a sniff of that same spot?

**Mr CARROLL** — I actually suspect he did. Well, he took enough photographs. But it is amazing how many photos there are — there are about 20 photos of him. He is looking around and actually looking for the camera. Once he looked straight at it. It is hard to see; it is very difficult to see this one. He just did not cotton onto it. But they look fair dinkum. Now there is a hunting hound. Can you see him over to the right?

**The CHAIR** — I see, yes.

**Mr CARROLL** — It is the only one I have ever seen out in the bush, in this part, and it is open. There is a difficult matter with the hounds; the area is close to the farmland, and the farmers do not like dogs on

their farm. About 12 years ago they had a lot of troubles with the hound crews just going through. We are back to our wallaby. Now this bloke is standing there, he is bipedalling and he is barking his scent on the tree. There are only a few photos left actually.

**The CHAIR** — I think we have probably only got a minute or so left, so the last couple.

**Mr CARROLL** — That wallow we just looked at, about 12 months after that, the wombats deserted and the deer had gone away, and you cannot see any part where the deer had been wallowing at all; it is all grown over. They simply go away. However, shortly after that the wombats have opened up. In front of that middle kangaroo, they opened up this massive hole. The kangaroos love it. There is a young deer. To the back of the deer you can see there is a great hole — the hole is about this big; you could crawl into it in a fire — and they will stay there until they get booted out. Just quickly on the other one — —

**The CHAIR** — This will have to be the last one.

**Mr CARROLL** — Yes, this is the last one. This is actually a game trail. You can see the two trails going down there. You can see the kangaroos there; there is a whole mob of kangaroos. There are thousands of these, but they are the same 20 kangaroos. You can see a kangaroo there; you can see a deer up the top. This bloke just walked right up to the camera. There is another mob of roos. That is a red dog. He has actually gone up and licked the camera, this bloke. That is a hunter going past the camera, and a deer. Do you see those two eyes in the middle there? That is a fox with what looks like a bird in its mouth. That is the only one. There are very few birds ever on the photographs. Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you very much for your presentation. It was really worthwhile.

**Witness withdrew.**