

The Commissioner of Police Tasmania Police

Dear Commissioner,

## **KINGSTON BEACH GOLF COURSE WILDLIFE CULL**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this letter is to seek from you an exemption from s.113(2) of the *Firearms Act 1996* ("the Act") to enable me to undertake a cull of wood duck, native hen, sulphur crested cockatoo, and brush possum on the Kingston Beach Golf Course ("the course") in accordance with permits that have already been issued to me by the Dept. of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment ("DPIWE") at the instigation of the Kingston Beach Golf Inc ("the club"). I attach a copy of each of the four permits.

The course is private property owned by the club. There is no general public access. I have been a full playing member for more than 25 years. The wildlife is now in plague proportions never before seen.

The exemption is sought under s.155(4)(b) of the Act.

### **The need for the Exemption**

The exemption is sought for three reasons, namely:

1. If the exemption is not granted the cull:

(a) will only be effective, if at all, to a very limited extent which will make it barely worthwhile to undertake the task and will not alleviate the problem; and  
(b) will be very difficult to execute in practice, because it is impossible in the present circumstances to determine with precision the exact boundary of the 250m exclusion zone prescribed under s.113(2).

2. There is a very high level pressing need for the undertaking of the cull in a thoroughgoing and efficient manner, in order to reduce:

(a) the significant risk to human health that is presently posed by the quantity of excrement placed on the course by the wildlife to be culled, and by the wood duck and native hen in particular; and

(b) the direct interference with play now occurring due to the presently very high numbers of wood duck and native hen; and

(c) the substantial damage to the fairways and greens being caused by the sulphur crested cockatoos (some greens are becoming unplayable); and

(d) the substantial damage being caused to the trees by brush possum.

3. It is impossible in practical terms to procure the consent of every person who occupies a residence within 250m of the course from which the wildlife must be culled.

Access to the whole course is necessary or the cull will be ineffective. As you may be aware, domestic residences abut the course on the southern boundary of Browns River and the Western boundary of the Channel highway. These residences are within 250m of the two major dams from which the wood duck must be culled.

I add that, whilst the permits for wood duck, native hen and sulphur crested cockatoos suggest that shooting should be undertaken first to scare, the numbers of these species on the course are so great as to require that there be an immediate significant reduction. The result of the making of that significant reduction, by the careful

use of firearms, should scare off at least the remaining majority of the wood duck. My experience with native hen is that they are not easily scared off. Most of them will need to be shot.

I attach a map of the course which includes a scale measure of 250m, taken from Google maps. The difficulties in undertaking the cull without the exemption now sought are readily apparent from the map; dam 1 and dam 2, marked by hand highlight, are the areas of the course where the wood duck congregate, and it will be necessary to shoot in those areas for the cull to be effective.

### **The Purpose of the 250m Prohibition**

I submit that the purpose of the prohibition, clearly enough, is to protect public safety. That concern can be met in the present circumstances if care is taken in and in relation to the undertaking of the cull, in essence by:

ensuring that the permit conditions are complied with; and  
ensuring that all shooting is undertaken directly away from any occupied residence(s); and  
utilising rimfire rifles for the undertaking of the cull of native hen, brush possum and cockatoo, of calibre no greater than .22.

I intend to cull the native hen, cockatoo, and possum with .22 calibre RWS subsonic ammunition, which I know to be accurate and effective in my bolt action Anschutz rifle. It is very short range and silent. The rifle has an illuminated Schmidt and Bender scope.

Further, all shotguns with small game shot such as no.6s also have a short range. My own personal preference would have been to utilise a 410 or 28 gauge shotgun to undertake the cull of the wood duck, but DPIWE has required that 12 gauge be used. That is in my view unfortunate because the noise may attract concern; on the other hand, the noise is likely to drive the remaining duck from the course, which is the main point of the exercise. And the kill rate will be higher.

I submit in summary that, in relation to the two dams, and elsewhere, the cull can be undertaken in perfect safety simply by utilising appropriate firearms, taking care and shooting away from the houses which border the course, towards the empty heart of the course.

### **Methodology**

I propose to enlist the assistance of another club member, or one of my shooting friends who is a retired sergeant of police, to assist me with the undertaking of the cull. We will drive the course in my 4WD Porsche Cayenne. From it I will undertake most of the shooting. The remainder, on the dam ducks, will be done on foot. It will occur in the late afternoon/evening early during the week when no one is on the course.

### **Personal Details**

I always take care when shooting and I will be especially vigilant on this occasion. My curriculum vitae, in relation to hunting, commences when I was 8 years old, when I shot my first rabbit under the direction of my uncle. I am now 54 years of age and from that it follows that I have had well over 40 years experience as a hunter, almost all of it in Tasmania.

My professional CV would not seem to be overmuch relevant but I note that on 12 April this year Crawford CJ appointed me Senior Counsel for the State of Tasmania. My professional expertise is in taxation and commercial law. I am very keen to comply strictly with the law as it presently applies and, I add, generally.

I am properly licensed, in possession of all necessary firearms and other equipment to undertake the cull, including a roof top spotlight with an orange filter which is perfect for such of the present task, mainly on the possum, as needs to be undertaken at night. Your officers have recently inspected and passed my home storage facilities. As is evident from the permits, I have the confidence of the club to undertake the cull.

I am a member of the Police Pistol Club and the SSAA.

I propose to undertake the cull at the earliest convenient time, after the course has dried out from the recent

deluge of rain.

I would be pleased to confer with you in relation to any aspect of the matter.

Yours faithfully,

A.J. ABBOTT