

Forestry Corporation of NSW  
(FCNSW)

Hunting Risk Assessment

June 2023



## Distribution

Party	Title
Danielle Molquentin	Audit and Risk Manager

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## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Background

Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) appointed BDO Services Pty Ltd (BDO) to facilitate a Hunting Risk Workshop and to develop a risk and control matrix for hunting risks in State forests. This report includes the risk and control matrix that was developed as an outcome of the workshop.

### 1.2 Objective

The objective of the engagement was for BDO to facilitate the annual Hunting Risk Assessment Workshop and to develop a risk and control matrix based on the outcomes of the workshop.

### 1.3 Scope

The scope of the risk workshop was limited to the overarching risk of “hunting activities occurring in NSW State forests” The permissible types of hunting in NSW State forests are:

- Hunting with firearms (including blackpowder);
- Hunting with a bow; and
- Hunting with hunting dogs.

Therefore, the overarching risks considered in scope for the workshop were:

- A person is struck by a projectile (either from a gun or bow);
- A person is injured by a hunting dog; and
- The psychological impact of hunting activities on FCNSW staff who are in contact with Hunters.

Any other risk factors pertaining to hunting were excluded from the scope of the workshop.

### 1.4 Risk Mapping

The following table outlines how these overarching risks have been split into sub-categories in the risk and control matrix:

Risk category	How the risk is linked to overarching risk
Competency of Hunters	If Hunters are not fit and proper, there is an increased risk of people being struck by a projectile or attacked by a hunting dog.
Hunters encountering other Hunters or members of the public	The greater the level of interaction between Hunters and other people, the greater the inherent risk of a person being struck by a projectile or attacked by a hunting dog.
Accidental discharge of firearms and Bows	Accidental or inappropriate discharge or a bow or firearm increases the risk of a person being struck by a projectile.
Injuries sustained from hunting dogs	A lack of control over hunting dogs would increase the inherent risk of a person being attacked by a hunting dog.
Hunting in adverse conditions	Hunting in adverse conditions increases the risk profile of the activity and as a result, increases the inherent risk of a person being struck by a projectile.
Psychological impact of hunting on FCNSW staff	FCNSW staff may have psychological impact from encounters with Hunters in State Forests.

### 1.5 Report Clearance

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Workshop Participants for their contribution and collaboration.

Yours sincerely,



**Matt Williams,**  
Partner, Risk Advisory

## 2. Risk and Control Matrix

### 2.1 Competency of Hunters

Sub-risk	Control Description	Control Detail
A person who is not deemed fit and proper to hunt is permitted to hunt in a State forest.	Licensed Hunters must gain permission to hunt in State forests.	<p>The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests state that in order to lawfully hunt in public land in NSW, a Hunter must first:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Obtain an R-License;</li> <li>2. Watch the public land hunting video tutorial;</li> <li>3. Apply for written permission to hunt ;</li> <li>4. Download the current hunting maps showing hunting zones and exclusion zones to your GPS-enabled device (or use the Hunt NSW app, which automatically updates the maps attached to a written permission);</li> <li>5. Carry either a physical or digital written permission with you while hunting; and</li> <li>6. Read, understand and comply with all the conditions that apply to hunting in NSW.</li> </ol> <p>As part of the process for gaining written permission to hunt, the license status of each applicant will be checked in order to ensure they are permitted to hunt.</p>
	Applicants are assessed in order to ensure only fit and proper applicants are awarded an R-License.	<p>In order to be eligible for an R-License, the individual must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be over 12 years (parent or guardian approval required if over the age of 12 and under 18 years)</li> <li>• be a member of an Approved Hunting Organisation</li> <li>• become accredited for one or more of the R-licence categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Firearms</li> <li>○ Bows</li> <li>○ Dogs</li> <li>○ Blackpowder firearms</li> </ul> </li> <li>• pay the licence fee.</li> </ul>

		<p>Applicants who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• been found guilty of any firearms offence in the past 10 years;</li> <li>• been found guilty of an offence in the past 10 years involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ cruelty or harm to animals</li> <li>○ personal violence</li> <li>○ damage to property or unlawful entry into land;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• been found guilty of an offence for releasing game animals for the purpose of hunting;</li> <li>• been deemed not a fit and proper person to hold the licence; or</li> <li>• been found guilty of an offence prescribed by the Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2022 in the past 10 years,</li> </ul> <p>are deemed ineligible to hold an R-Licence.</p>
Permitted Hunters are not aware of the rules for hunting in a State forest	The Written Permission form provides a link to the Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forest webpage that sets out the rules for Hunters.	<p>The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forest set out the rules associated with hunting in state forests, the rules cover topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mandatory use of GPS devices;</li> <li>• The need to wear an item of blaze orange clothing;</li> <li>• The use of vehicles; and</li> <li>• hunting exclusion areas.</li> </ul>
A person hunts under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol	Hunting under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol is prohibited	<p>The NSW Game Hunting Guide states that:</p> <p><i>“You must not use a firearm to hunt in NSW if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.”</i></p>
Unlicensed persons unlawfully hunt in a State forest	Forest users are made aware of their ability to report suspected unlicensed Hunters.	The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) website has a platform for reporting any suspected illegal hunting activity in state forests. The website also provides some signs that may be indicative of illegal hunting activity. Claims of illegal hunting are investigated by DPI.
Unlicensed persons unlawfully hunt in a State forest	DPI conducts surveillance activity in State forests.	DPI staff patrol State forests to ensure that Hunters have all obtained written permission to hunt at that location and time. The patrols are risk based and can target forest areas where illegal hunting is deemed a higher risk of occurring.

## 2.2 Hunters encountering other Hunters or members of the public

Sub-risk	Control Description	Control Detail
Hunters encounter other people in a State forest	Hunters are required to wear "Blaze Orange"	The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests require all Hunters to wear an article of blaze orange clothing on their upper body so they can be easily identifiable other Hunters or members of the public.
Hunters encounter other people in a State forest	Limit on Hunter numbers	The hunting booking system will not permit a hunting trip to be booked if it would result in more than 1 Hunter to every 400 hectares of land in the State Forest, restricting the number of Hunters in any given location.
Hunters encounter other people in a State forest	The use of GPS devices	The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests require all Hunters to carry a GPS device with up to date hunting maps at all times. The maps show any hunting exclusion zones currently in place.  Hunters are also required to show their current position on the map at all times.
Hunters encounter other people in a State forest	Hunting exclusion zones	Hunting exclusion zones are in place in populated areas of State forests.  Temporary hunting exclusion zones are identified by signs erected by FCNSW. Hunters must observe all temporary exclusion zone signs and must not hunt in that zone.  Hunting is not permitted within 100 metres of any occupied residence, dwelling, fire tower or building located in the State forest or located on land neighbouring the State forest.
Hunters encounter other people in a State forest	Hunting booking notices	FCNSW staff are able to apply to have access to the DPI booking system and see the number of Hunters booked into each State forest area.
Hunters encounter other people in a State forest	Hunting zones are made known to the public	The areas in State forests that are open for hunting are marked with signage. Hunting Zones can also be viewed by the public on the DPI website.

## 2.3 Accidental discharge of firearms and Bows

Sub-risk	Control Description	Control Detail
A firearm is accidentally discharged	Permission Conditions restrict how firearms are treated whilst not actively hunting	<p>The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests state that:</p> <p><i>“When not actively hunting and not in your immediate possession all firearms must be stored in accordance with the following provisions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Firearms must be locked away (either in a locked vehicle or other locked storage device) and not readily accessible.</i></li> <li><i>All reasonable precautions must be taken to ensure that firearms are stored in such a way so that they cannot be lost or stolen.</i></li> <li><i>Firearms must not be accessible to any person who does not have written permission to hunt using firearms in the State forest.</i></li> <li><i>Firearms must not be accessible to any person who does not have a firearms licence or permit authorising them to be in possession of a firearm.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>When transporting or conveying a firearm in a motor vehicle (including a motorbike):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Firearms must not be loaded with any ammunition (this includes any magazine that is fitted to the firearm).</i></li> <li><i>Firearms must not be visible from outside the vehicle.</i></li> <li><i>All ammunition (including any detachable magazine loaded with ammunition) must be stored in a locked receptacle, separate to the firearm.”</i></li> </ul>
A firearm is discharged whilst travelling in a vehicle		
A person gains unlawful access to a Hunter’s firearm		
Bows are fired by an unlawful person	Permission Conditions restrict how bows are treated whilst not actively hunting	<p>The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests state that:</p> <p><i>“When not actively hunting and not in your immediate possession all bows and hunting equipment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Must be locked away (either in a locked vehicle or other locked storage device) and not readily accessible.</i></li> <li><i>Must not be accessible to any person who does not have written permission to hunt using that equipment in the State forest.”</i></li> </ul>



## 2.4 Injuries sustained from hunting dogs

Sub-risk	Control Description	Control Detail
Hunters lose control of hunting dogs whilst hunting	GPS collars	GPS collars are required for hunting dogs to ensure that dogs are not lost during hunting activities.
Injury is sustained from hunting dogs whilst dogs are not used for hunting.	Dogs are required to be controlled in accordance with the Companion Animals Act	Whilst not engaged in hunting activities, dogs are required to be controlled in accordance with the Companion Animals Act , the same conditions apply to all companion animals in State forests.

## 2.5 Hunting in Adverse conditions

Sub-risk	Control Description	Control Detail
Firearms are discharged in poor light conditions	There are restrictions on when hunting activities are permissible	The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests state that: <i>"You may only hunt using a firearm or bow during day-time, being from 30 minutes before sunrise through to 30 minutes after sunset."</i>
Firearms are discharged in poor light conditions	In order to discharge a firearm, Hunters must be able to clearly identify the target	The NSW Game Hunting Guide states that: <i>"You must not fire at a game or pest animal unless it can be clearly seen and identified. The shot taken must not pose any discernible risk of injury to any person or damage to any property."</i>
Firearms are discharged in poor conditions such as haze, smoke or fog	It is not permissible to hunt game animals fleeing from fire or smoke	The NSW Game Hunting Guide states that: <i>"You must not hunt game animals that are fleeing from fire or smoke. You must not light a fire for the purpose of hunting or flushing out a game animal fleeing from fire or smoke, except if you are a professional Hunter."</i>
	The use of tree stands is not permitted	The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests state that: <i>"You must not use a tree stand for hunting in a State forest."</i>
Firearms are discharged from unstable ground	Hunting from a vehicle is not permitted	The Permission Conditions: Hunting in NSW State Forests state that firearms must be locked and unloaded whilst inside a vehicle. As such, hunting from a vehicle is not permitted.

## 2.6 Psychological Impact of FCNSW staff Encountering Hunters

**Note:** the majority of the controls pertaining to the risk of FCNSW staff experiencing psychological impact from interactions with Hunters are preventative. Most of these preventative controls have been detailed **sections 2.1- - 2.5** of this report. The controls that prevent an adverse impact include:

- **2.1:** the controls ensuring the competency of Hunters reduce the risk of psychological harm to FCNSW employees as it reduces the risk of a firearm being discharged in close proximity to FCNSW staff.
- **2.2:** the controls around Hunters encountering other people in the forest reduce the risk of psychological harm to FCNSW staff. Hunters are required to wear blaze orange and the GPS zones clearly identify what areas are open for hunting and where hunting is prohibited.
- **2.3:** while firearms are not in use, they are required to be stored in a safe and secure manner to reduce the risk of accidental discharge.
- **2.4:** GPS collars are required for hunting dogs so they are not lost. Hunting dogs must be managed in accordance with standard rules for dogs whilst they are not hunting.
- **2.5:** The rules controlling hunting activities in adverse conditions mitigate the risk of psychological harm to FCNSW staff in such conditions.

In addition to the considerations above, the following controls have been designed to prevent and manage the psychological impact that encountering Hunters may have on FCNSW staff.

Sub-risk	Control Description	Control Detail
Psychological impact of FCNSW staff encountering Hunters.	Zoning of State forests	State forests are zoned appropriately so that any harvesting or commercial activities are undertaken in different sections of the forests to hunting activities. The zoning minimises the frequency of interactions between Hunters and FCNSW staff in State forests.
Psychological impact of FCNSW staff encountering Hunters.	FCNSW staff have access to zoning data via GPS.	FCNSW staff have access to up to date forest maps that detail the current hunting zones in the forest. Staff who are not required to interact with Hunters can ensure they avoid hunting zones.
Psychological impact of FCNSW staff encountering Hunters.	Psychological support	FCNSW staff undertake training in managing “aggressive stakeholders”. The training is run every few years and is offered to staff who are required to interact with members of the public as part of their job.

## Appendix A - List of Workshop Attendees

No.	Workshop Attendee	Organisation
1	Danielle Molkentin	Forestry Corporation of NSW
2	Carly Clifford	Forestry Corporation of NSW
3	Tijmen Klootwijk	Forestry Corporation of NSW
4	Andrew McCurdy	Forestry Corporation of NSW
5	Kathy Lyons	Forestry Corporation of NSW
6	Richard Varvel	DPI Hunting
7	Alan Genders	DPI Hunting
8	Judith McArthur	DPI Hunting
9	Patrick O'Brien	DPI Hunting
10	David Smith	DPI Hunting
11	Joe Hutchings	Australian Workers Union
12	Lisa Nelson	NSW Public Service Association
13	Matt Williams	BDO
14	Ruben Burke	BDO
15	Morgan Quan	BDO