



## Newsletter, May 22nd, 2017

See below for details of  
our end of year comp!

### Presidents Report

To our members,

As usual, too much water has passed under the bridge between newsletters and so again, our apology to members. The RIDGE executive has not been sitting on their hands, with the past months being extremely busy for all. Here is a brief rundown on what has been happening.

### Wake up Australia.

In our last newsletter, I wrote these words.... *“For many years now I have been harping on about the threats to our deer, our hunting heritage and the lifestyle we hold dearly”*. I then went on to detail the situation in the chital deer country of North Queensland where aerial and ground shoots have decimated some of the best known chital deer strongholds. We will attach the December 2016 RIDGE newsletter again so that those that didn't read it last time, or who may like a quick refresher read of it, can do so.

### Aerial culling.

One of the most *“effective”* methods of feral animal control is what is commonly known as “chopper shooting” or aerial culling. Done correctly, it is humane, quick and cost effective. Unfortunately, these “shoot and let lie” operations, from the point of view of recreational hunters who believe in sustainable management, are extremely wasteful and destructive. In many areas, where hunters and landholders are working towards long-term sustainable management of wild deer as an asset and resource for future generations, this type of control operation on a neighbouring property can instantly destroy decades of hard work.

We have it on very good authority that a number of aerial culling operations are now planned for the immediate future on areas of Government land, including State Forests, National Parks and dam catchment areas in the Brisbane and Mary Valley areas of Queensland on wild deer, wild pigs and wild dogs. Recent traffic accidents involving recently liberated deer have been suggested as one of the contributing factors to this decision but just how wide reaching these operation will be, is unknown. Consider the fate of your own favourite hunting property if the older age-groups of red deer stags simply are not alive to return next year from their annual velvet growing migration into forestry areas. RIDGE radio collaring research showed some older stags travelled in “bachelor” groups, up to 20 km from their rutting areas each year while in soft velvet. With the stags gone, some programs will fail, so landholders may lose the incentive to maintain the herds.

RIDGE has tried for many years to warn hunters of the gravity of the situation we now face but unfortunately, it has largely fallen on “deaf ears”. I still believe the RIDGE stance on deer management is the most balanced, fair and sustainable one presented by any organisation so far. Where deer numbers are now seen as too high by landholders or Government departments, they must be kept in check. Landholders must be respected if they are experiencing high enough impacts from wild deer to cause them to look at serious control options. **It is up to “us” to offer sensible alternatives.**



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### The RIDGE Stance

We see wild deer as an asset and a resource with huge economic, social, historical, educational, nutritional and spiritual values that should be managed on a sustainable basis.

### How then, can this stance be achieved??

As I wrote in our last newsletter, *“It is time for the hunters of this country, the people who say they love their hunting heritage and the deer (and other game animals) so much, to realise that it is “us”, the hunter and the landholders who want deer on their land, who have not stepped up to the plate and put forward a viable, sensible and sustainable solution”*.

In this newsletter, we hope to detail a strategy which we believe can work.

### Sustainable Use of Wildlife Conference.

After a very testing review process of our Sustainable Use paper (detailed in the December newsletter) which appeared to be bogging down, I enlisted the services of Brian Murphy from the Quality Deer Management Association of America (QDMA) as an independent reviewer. With Brian’s help, we finalised the paper and presented it within the time allowed. We have just been advised that the paper **has been accepted** for publication. It will give a peer-reviewed example of RIDGE management policy in action.

Ours is a *“hard-nosed, practical, user-pays, self-funding, self-regulating, voluntary, incentive-driven, holistic, grass-roots, farmer-led, farmer-cluster system for management of native and existing introduced species on private freehold and leasehold land in Old”!!!!!!*

If you would like to order a copy of the SU Conference book, please contact:

Brodi-Rose Newsome  
Event Assistant

### **Iceberg Events**

**T** 07 3876 4988 | **M** 0473 577 745 | **F** 07 3367 0032

**E** [brodi@icebergevents.com.au](mailto:brodi@icebergevents.com.au) [www.icebergevents.com.au](http://www.icebergevents.com.au)

### Property Based Management Plans.

Way back in 1992, Brian Murphy introduced us to the concept of Property Based Management Plans (PBMP) as a vital part of any QDM system. To say that he and Joe Hamilton and the rest of the QDM team were “ahead of their time” is an understatement. After many years of research and testing, our paper on Sustainable Use was a very brief outline of just one of the methods under which wild deer can be managed as an asset and resource. Once published, this paper will be expanded on the RIDGE website to give a far broader information base to members and other interested parties.

RIDGE has further developed the PBMP concept to the stage where we have a very credible policy and administration framework which can work for all hunting within this State and possibly even across the country but it cannot have any hope of success without your help.



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**HuntEasy**

The RIDGE policy for wild deer management has been developed to be not only comprehensive but also mindful of the interests of all associated parties. It has been quite apparent that neither of the major political parties was in favour of any funding being directed towards the management of wild deer for recreational hunting or even for any possible farming alternatives. This meant that our system would need to be self-funding and self-regulatory to have any chance of success. For these reasons, the system known as HuntEasy has been developed using the best advice and experience at our disposal.

**The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party – Queensland**

To be effective, any policy brought forward by industry must be accepted by Government. Unfortunately, after many years of trying by different hunting groups and organisations including RIDGE, there has been no progress towards the acceptance of sustainable use principles for wild deer management by the major political parties.

The only party which has openly and enthusiastically supported hunters, shooters and landholders as a cooperating group, is the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. Recent discussions with members of the Queensland branch of this party has shown that they are willing to support sustainable management of wild deer as an asset for future generations of Australians to enjoy and utilise as we have done.

I believe this is a great step forward but the party desperately needs your support immediately. Please take the time to go online to their website and consider spending the few dollars required to become a supporting member.

[www.shootersfishersandfarmers.org.au](http://www.shootersfishersandfarmers.org.au)

**Feedback please!!**

RIDGE would like to hear from you as one of our valued members. Please take the time to visit our website and send a message to the secretary with any helpful suggestion or offer of support you can. This group is only as strong as its members. [www.theridgegroup.net](http://www.theridgegroup.net)

**Photo of the Year Competition.**

Our treasurer, Mick Liehr, has been assisting RIDGE members with the purchase of top quality hunting equipment from the US, including knives, trail cameras, binoculars and much more.

Mick has kindly offered a prize for the Best Hunting photo taken by a member for the 2017 season. The photo can be of a deer, a native animal, hunting scene or anything else associated with RIDGE activities for the year. The competition will get underway later in the year so get your cameras rolling!!





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**The 2017 AWCA/RIDGE ballot**

Wasn't this an interesting red deer rut?!!!

In some areas, the stags roared like trains for 6 weeks and in others, an intense roar for just under two weeks then ..... nothing.

Full honours must go to our hunters who took the good with the bad and hunted hard to secure what was still a very formidable result for the 2017 season. Lady luck played a hand in things as well as a spot or two of "buck fever" as we saw 6 top class trophy heads shot at and missed. That is why what we do is called hunting and not shooting, it is not a numbers game during the ballot, it is a time to enjoy the deer, the bush and times spent with family and friends. A top trophy is simply the "icing on the cake".

The best trophy in my view was a massive big 6x7 taken by Greg, Stuart and Travis Robben after Greg's many years of hard hunting. Graham Bristow was one of my first ever guided hunters way back in the early 80's and he came back to hunt with me again this year and brought his best mate Jason. Together we took an old and unusual 5x5 with heaps of extra snags down low. Adam Moore and I took a 10 year old beautiful 5x5 and the Harrison team produced a number of stags for their week, one being a lovely 6x5. Well done men, you hunted hard.

Young Riley Twyford managed to drag his Dad Blair out of bed every morning and walked every hill on his block, passing up some lovely 6x5 and 5x5 stags. Awesome work mate. To all the 70+ ballot hunters who participated this year, we thank you for your dedication to safety, ethics and sensible behaviour, the ingredients which make this all possible.

**Housekeeping!!**

Much as the season was again a huge success for the sustainable use philosophy promoted by RIDGE members, there were a few issues. The person/s who dumped their Solo cans and green "popper" packets in the large rock pile in the middle of Calabash need to rethink their attitude. Those that took a "she'll be right" attitude towards shutting gates need to understand the reason why "near enough is not good enough". The few that hung their stag jawbones on a low branch so the goannas could carry them away need to think about how important gathering even this basic data is to the group..... enough said.

Next season we will have to be a bit tougher on everyone and I apologise for this in advance. Tags will be issued for all jawbones during the inductions and a requirement for a blaze orange minimum standard will be included with next year's ballot entry forms. Much effort is required to keep this ballot functioning and the damage that can be done to its overall reputation and acceptance by landholders is an issue, so please help us to improve.

**Get well soon Bree!!**

One of our most enthusiastic and dedicated juniors was not able to be with us this year. Brianna Anderson, sister to Marlin and daughter of Mick and Mary, unfortunately had to go into the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital in Brisbane in November for cancer treatment



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which is pretty darn rough when you are just eight years old!! Like the true battler she is, Bree has kept smiling throughout the extensive treatments she has had to endure and her attitude must stand as an inspiration to us all. On behalf of the whole gang at RIDGE, we send all our love and look forward to when you can come chase a roaring stag again.

### **Venison Hunting opportunities for members**

The opportunity for RIDGE members to hunt venison deer with their families is one of the core principles on which the group was founded and for many this has been fulfilled through membership to the Glenfiddich Hunting Lodge project. For others who may only wish to hunt a few weekends of the year for venison deer, there will be a number of hunting weekends organised before the end of the year. Please register your interest using the RIDGE email [ridgegroupemail@gmail.com](mailto:ridgegroupemail@gmail.com) and we will get back to you with dates, costs and other details. Suggested first weekend – 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> June or the 30<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

### **Hunter Education Weekends**

There has been quite a bit of interest in another Hunter Education weekend so we are going to offer a few dates that may suit. These events are a lot of fun for everyone as ideas are swapped and information shared on many issues facing deer hunters. It is a chance to explain the reason behind the close alliance between AWCA and RIDGE, the research that has been conducted and why, the strategies we are trying to get accepted to help provide a future for our young hunters and many hands-on skinning, venison boning, caping and hunting techniques. The suggested dates are: July 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> or November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Please contact us on [ridgegroupemail@gmail.com](mailto:ridgegroupemail@gmail.com) to register your interest for one or more of these dates and we will notify you of confirmation ASAP.

### **The next RIDGE Executive and General meeting**

The next RIDGE Executive and General meeting will be held on the 9<sup>th</sup> July at 1 pm with the executive meeting starting at noon.

#### Topics for discussion.

- RIDGE policy direction and application
- Increased hunting opportunities for members
- Promotion of RIDGE activities

That's enough from me at present, please email me with any short stories or photos from the 2017 ballot, any issues you need addressed regarding the group or if you are a new hunter wishing to join the group. RIDGE has a lot to offer hunters if they are prepared to put a little in towards its success. Hoping to see you at our next meeting.

All the best and good hunting,  
Clark



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Please ensure your membership is current prior to entering ballot.

**Membership Application / Renewal 2017**

(If unsure of your membership status, please check with the treasurer)

I /we wish to apply for / renew my/our, membership to RIDGE and share in the challenge of deer management, conservation, research and hunting.

**Please complete this form and enclose with your payment by Credit card, Cheque or Money Order to:**



The RIDGE Treasurer  
PO Box 364, Coorparoo, QLD, 4151 or  
[ridgegroupemail@gmail.com](mailto:ridgegroupemail@gmail.com)

Direct Deposit available: **The RIDGE Group, BSB: 014-585, Account: 259077189**

Please include your name when depositing directly into the account and inform the treasurer via the email address above.

Name .....  
Address .....P/C .....  
Phone (Home) .....(Mobile).....  
Email (For Newsletter).....  
Signature .....Date.....

**Please Note:** Membership is for 1 voting member, their spouse and children under the age of 17 years. Children will be listed as Juniors on membership lists.

- Landholder (no voting or ballot rights) - Free
- New Member - \$75.00
- Membership Renewal (1 year) - \$75.00
- 5 year payment option (1 year free) - \$300.00
- Donation - -----

**Total \$.....**

Credit Card: M/C Visa Expiry:

Number:

Signature:.....Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2017

**Please advise us of your email address if possible for newsletters and all other correspondence.**