



The Hon Jaala Pulford MP

Minister for Agriculture  
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Mr Brian Hine  
Chairperson  
Game Management Authority  
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Dear Mr Hine

*Brian*

### STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GAME MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

I am pleased to provide you with this Statement of Expectations (SOE) for the Game Management Authority (GMA). This SOE applies for two years from the date of this letter, or until otherwise amended.

#### **Improving the administration and enforcement of game hunting regulation in Victoria**

This SOE is important to the discharge of my ministerial portfolio responsibilities and statutory powers. It sets out my expectations of the GMA as they relate to the regulation and licensing of game hunting in Victoria.

As Minister for Agriculture, I have portfolio responsibility for the key legislation that enables the administration and regulation of game hunting in Victoria. This includes the:

- *Game Management Authority Act 2014*
- *Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012*
- *Wildlife Act 1975* (as it relates to game hunting).

The SOE should be read within the context of the objectives, functions and powers outlined in this legislation and associated regulations.

Game hunting presents significant economic opportunities for Victoria, through local and tourist driven participation. To enable these opportunities, game hunting businesses and the Victorian community must be confident that responsible game hunting is effectively regulated, sustainable and encourages the observance of appropriate standards of responsible and ethical behaviour by hunters. To earn that confidence, it is essential that the GMA delivers clear, consistent, contemporary regulation and administration of game hunting that is respected and valued by the Victorian community.

#### **Reform, improvements and targets**

The GMA recently commissioned and received the recommendations of an independent review (the review) regarding the effectiveness of the GMA's compliance and enforcement regime, the appropriateness of its operating model and its capacity and capability to deliver its compliance and enforcement obligations.

The review indicates that the GMA has faced challenges in effectively fulfilling its compliance and enforcement responsibilities. These challenges include the complex and fragmented regulatory and institutional framework for game management in Victoria, and the GMA's resourcing constraints.

The review points to several areas of reform and improvement. In a briefing, you advised me that the GMA Board has accepted all but one of the review's recommendations. I expect the GMA to implement the accepted recommendations and for it to develop a comprehensive plan for implementing the recommendations, noting that some require the support from Ministers, Departments and partner agencies.

In accepting this, I have asked the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) to lead the development of an accountability framework between the GMA and relevant partner agencies involved in game management, including hunting. The proposed accountability framework will help clarify roles, responsibilities and governance and ensure delivery is coordinated and priorities are understood. I expect that DEDJTR will oversee establishment of a Working Group to progress the accountability framework. The Working Group will comprise of (but not be limited to) representatives from the GMA, Victoria Police, Parks Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Department of Land, Water and Planning and DEDJTR.

The review made findings and recommendations across four categories for improving the GMA's performance:

- Effectiveness
- Regulatory governance and approach to regulation
- Operating model
- Capacity and capability.

My expectations in relation to these are outlined below. Having regard to the review, I expect the GMA to identify and develop activities and processes that the GMA will undertake to improve performance in these areas. This should be carried out in consultation with government, businesses, hunters, hunting organisations and the broader Victorian community as appropriate when developing them.

To further address the resourcing constraints faced by the GMA, DEDJTR will provide the GMA with \$2 million additional funding to assist with implementing the necessary reforms.

As an immediate first step, I require the GMA to provide me with an action plan to implement the 26 supported recommendations. This must be provided for my consideration by 30 October 2018.

I understand that elements of the action plan will likely require partner agencies to cooperate and share resources with the GMA to achieve meaningful reform. As noted above, DEDJTR will work with the GMA to develop a clear accountability framework between the GMA and relevant partner agencies involved in the management of game hunting.

### *Effectiveness*

I expect the GMA to identify options to strengthen the current licensing regime, including any regulatory amendments that may be required, or efficiency improvements in licensing administration. As part of this, I expect the GMA to transition its application, renewal and change of detail processes for licences and permits to an online platform as identified in the Government's Sustainable Hunting Action Plan.

Service Victoria (SV) has been established to make online government transactions easier for the community via a central service point. DEDJTR will work with the GMA and Service Victoria to explore using the SV portal as an access point to the GMA's new Game Licensing System.

I expect the GMA to improve its stakeholder engagement strategies. This includes in relation to consultation, communication (in particular the ongoing use of social media), education, and complaints management. Guidance material must be easy to find, access, understand, relevant and comprehensive.

The GMA must also ensure that it engages with hunting organisations, organisations opposed to hunting and other relevant stakeholders to improve the behaviour of hunters and give confidence to the broader community that game hunting is conducted in a sustainable and responsible manner. In doing so, the GMA must be able to adapt and adjust its messaging in an agile way, including through a variety of social media platforms.

#### *Regulatory governance and approach to regulation*

I expect the GMA to identify what it will do to improve its regulatory governance and its approach to regulating game hunting in Victoria. This includes options to develop an informed, flexible and responsive risk-based regulatory approach that improves hunter behaviour and knowledge of their obligations.

The GMA must develop a more robust approach to compliance and enforcement. I expect this to be in the form of an annual, risk-based compliance plan which is informed by the GMA's three-year strategic plan and that targets its compliance and enforcement interventions effectively. The annual compliance plan should identify relevant specific goals and priorities with measurable performance targets applicable for the upcoming period.

#### *Operating model*

The GMA must identify and implement improvements to its operating model to enable it to better deliver on its statutory obligations. This should be done in conjunction with the development of the roles and responsibilities accountability framework that DEDJTR will deliver between the GMA and partner agencies.

#### *Capacity and capability*

I expect the GMA to implement processes to improve its capability to deliver its statutory obligations. This includes ensuring it has the appropriate resources to develop and implement effective communication and compliance strategies and to consider alternative regulatory tools to influence positive hunter behaviour.

The processes should also include ensuring staff are appropriately trained to the levels required to perform their functions effectively and efficiently.

The GMA should also identify what it will do to maximise the effective use of its resources. This includes continuing to work cooperatively with partner agencies, adopting a more risk-based approach to regulating game hunting, and exploring increased information and education as more cost-effective approaches to influencing behaviour.

## Planning and reporting

### *Annual Business Plan*

Considering the recent appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer, a relatively new Board, new funding and the Sustainable Hunting Action Plan, I expect the GMA to deliver its draft annual business plan covering 2018-19 to 2020-21, in a form consistent with the requirements of Section 21 of the *Game Management Authority Act 2104*, by 30 October 2018 and a final by 31 December 2018. For future years, I expect the GMA to provide me with its draft annual business plan by 31 May, and its final plan by 31 August, each year. This will align the GMA with best practice planning arrangements and other entities in my portfolio. The business plan should include objectives and priorities and performance targets that address the requirements of this SOE.

### *Responding and reporting against this SOE*

I expect the GMA to respond in writing within two months of receiving this SOE, outlining the specific activities the GMA will undertake to achieve the reforms, improvements and targets detailed above. In developing the activities, I expect the GMA to consult with DEDJTR, the Commissioner for Better Regulation, game hunting stakeholders and the broader community, as appropriate.

The GMA should report progress against these performance targets through its annual report to avoid dual reporting. As a part of annual reporting, regulators are expected to report on:

- current baseline levels for performance targets set in this SOE or by the GMA (where relevant); and
- activities to be undertaken to reach the performance targets and improvements set out in this SOE or by the GMA.

I also expect that this SOE and the GMA's response to it, be published on the GMA's website.

I look forward to seeing the GMA continue working towards best practice administration and enforcement of game hunting regulation in Victoria.

Yours sincerely



**Hon Jaala Pulford MP**  
Minister for Agriculture

Date: 19/10 /2018