

Media release

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Patrols keep hound hunters on the right track

Game Management Authority (GMA) officers are patrolling Victoria's state forests to educate hound hunters and ensure they comply with the laws.

GMA Chief Executive Officer Greg Hyams said GMA officers were working with Victoria Police and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to patrol popular hunting areas.

"Since the hound hunting season began on April 1, GMA officers have approached more than 1000 hunters, campers, four wheel drivers and other bush users while patrolling areas of state forest," Mr Hyams said.

"Officers have stopped about 130 vehicles and inspected numerous hounds in areas around Jamieson, Tolmie, Myrtleford, Licola, Dargo, Mount Beauty, Mount Disappointment and Eildon."

"Our patrols are focusing on public safety, compliance with the regulations and humane and ethical hunting practices that support responsible hound hunting.

"Although most hunters are doing the right thing, some infringement notices and official warnings have been issued for minor breaches of the *Wildlife Act*.

"Infringement notices and official warnings have also been issued for unregistered quad bikes, illegal campfires and minor firearm offences which were dealt with by GMA and Victoria Police.

"Hunters are generally a law-abiding group and hound hunting is a significant traditional pastime in Victoria. Unfortunately there are some who choose to do the wrong thing making patrols such as these necessary.

"Illegal hunting or careless behavior damages the reputation of all who participate in hunting and can also put people at risk.

"Hunters are reminded to respect non-hunters, thoughtfully transport harvested deer, only use correct hound breeds and hunt away from private property boundaries unless permission is granted.

"We will be working closely with hunting organisations and industry to maintain the highest standards of behavior in the field through the *Respect: Hunt Responsibly* program.

"The GMA will continue to patrol hunting areas to check that deer hunters using hounds are acting safely and legally during 2015.

"I strongly encourage hunters and the broader public to report those doing the wrong thing by calling 136 186 or contacting Victoria Police."

For more information on game hunting in Victoria, visit www.gma.vic.gov.au

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