



Compliance (Education and Enforcement) Plan 2023 – 2024

Our purpose

Through engagement with stakeholders and targeted research, the GMA understands the potential harms associated with game hunting. We regulate through education and enforcement to reduce the incidence and impacts of high-risk harms and provide authoritative evidence-based advice on game hunting.

Our role


The GMA is a statutory authority established to promote sustainability and responsibility in game hunting in Victoria, in accordance with the *Game Management Act 2014* (the Act). The GMA also performs the regulation, investigation and disciplinary functions conferred by or under the Act, the *Wildlife Act 1975*, the *Conservation Forests and Lands Act 1987* and relevant law.


This plan sets out the short-term compliance priorities of the GMA. The plan is developed in accordance with our *Compliance Strategy 2020 – 2025* and *Education Strategy 2020 – 2025* and provides transparency on where we will focus our efforts to protect the community, ensure sustainable game harvesting, improve animal welfare outcomes and protect non-game wildlife.


Priorities in this plan are informed by a range of information and data, including community reports of illegal hunting, information reports (internal and external) and outcomes from the GMA's *Strategic Education and Enforcement Panel*. This plan ensures we are focussing on high-risk harms while also delivering regulatory outcomes on other matters, in line with our *Compliance and Enforcement Policy*.


Our approach

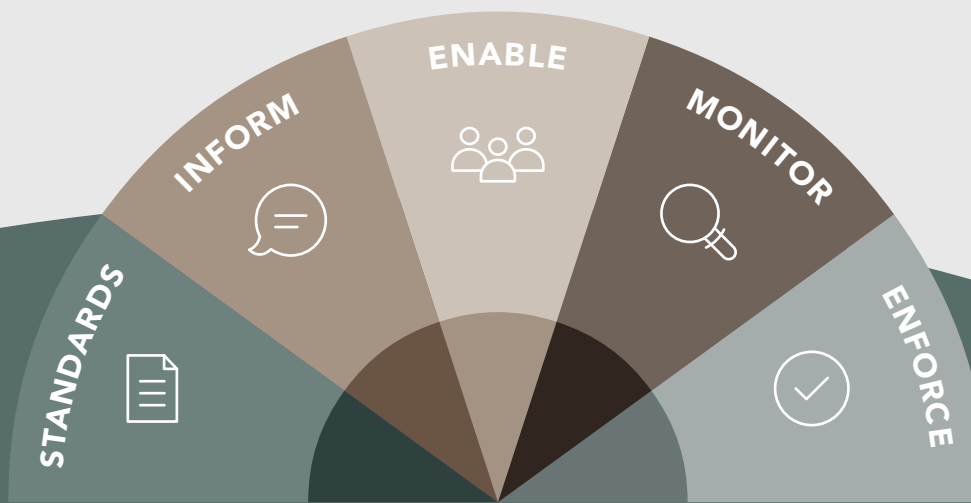
 **Standards:** We operate within our legislative framework and authorising environment. We clearly communicate to stakeholders their legal and social obligations. We continuously review our policies and procedures and undertake research to understand stakeholder knowledge and community sentiment towards us.

 **Inform:** We actively engage with stakeholders and the broader community to educate them on legal game hunting and provide them with resources that encourage responsible and sustainable hunting practices.

 **Enable:** We engage with industry and community to provide the necessary education and reporting tools.

 **Monitor:** We assess themes of non-compliance and maintain intelligence holdings that inform operational activities.

 **Enforce:** We influence behavioural change by addressing non-compliance through the consistent application of regulatory tools.



We will:

Standards 

- Apply a consistent approach to assessing illegal hunting complaints ensuring complainants are updated of assessments in a timely manner
- Track our compliance and prosecutorial performance to improve systems, processes and tools, ensuring consistency and transparency in decision making and improving regulatory outcomes

Inform 

- Meet with communities impacted by game hunting to understand their concerns and provide authoritative advice on game hunting
- Providing information to stakeholders and the broader community on what to expect when engaging with an Authorised Officer
- Use communication channels to disseminate compliance outcomes and promote education in formats accessible by the target audience

Enable 

- Continue to partner with industry to deliver education products and sessions for new hunters
- Continue to build partnerships with peak organisations to assist them to educate their members on relevant laws and how to comply
- Implement advertising campaigns to encourage communities to report illegal hunting

Monitoring 

- Report on numbers, trends and themes from illegal hunting complaints
- Work with other agencies to understand trends or emerging issues relating to illegal hunting
- Undertake regular audits of commercial licence holders and registered entities to ensure regulatory standards and licence conditions are being applied

Enforce 

- Carry-out operations targeting high-risk harms and apply appropriate regulatory sanctions to offenders through investigations, seizure of equipment, prosecutions and fines to deter dangerous and illegal behaviour
- Undertake proactive patrols to deliver both education and enforcement outcomes supported by our intelligence holdings to address community concerns

Our focus

Seasonal poaching	Communities that spotlight	Incorrect hounds	Animal welfare	Overbagging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target individuals that continue to hunt game species outside of the season and hunt in prohibited areas. Where activities cross tenures, support will be sought from other enforcement agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Non English Speaking Background communities that have an interest in game hunting to ensure that hunting laws and practices are well understood • Conduct targeted enforcement patrols in areas where communities are being impacted by illegal spotlighting • Continue to deliver our advertising campaign on illegal spotlighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with hunting organisations to educate hunters on correct breed standards and will use appropriate regulatory tools where wrong breeds are being used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce education material for hunters on humane treatment of animals involved in hunting • Minimise animal welfare concerns between wildlife and dogs, by targeting the use of non-approved dog breeds • Actively prosecute anyone undertaking activities that cause undue suffering to animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a zero tolerance for anyone caught deliberately overbagging, implementing our regulatory tools to prevent or deter such activity