

Victorian Game Management Authority

Game licence holder communications preferences research

FINAL

July 2025

Quality and Compliance Statement

This project was conducted in accordance with the international quality standard ISO 20252, the international information security standard ISO 27001, as well as the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). ORIMA Research also adheres to the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021 administered by the Australian Data and Insights Association (ADIA).

Acknowledgments

ORIMA pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples past and present, their cultures and traditions and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank all the participants who were involved in our research for their valuable contribution. This project was funded by the Victorian Game Management Authority.

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Executive summary

Background

As Victoria's game hunting regulator, the Victorian Game Management Authority (the GMA) is required to deliver important communications about game hunting regulations, research and education programs, compliance and enforcement activities, and licensing requirements.

The GMA uses a range of channels to communicate with game licence holders, including online (e.g. via its website, social media, email), face-to-face (e.g. education sessions, events, compliance patrols), print and broadcast media (e.g. promotional material, regional and metropolitan media) and other direct communication channels (e.g. customer contact centre/ game licensing).

The overall objective of this research was to understand game licence holders' awareness and perceptions of communications and their communications preferences. The findings from this research will be used to inform planning, investment and refinements to the GMA's communications and engagement with game licence holders, specifically to ensure communications are:

- **Clear**, concise and easy to understand;
- **Targeted** i.e., reaching the intended target audiences; and
- **Effective** i.e., informative, engaging, relevant and influential.

Methodology

The research comprised two components:

- An online survey with Victorian game licence holders with an email address registered with the GMA; and
- Follow up online focus groups with game licence holders to obtain more detailed feedback about the GMA's communications, including specific materials.

A total of n=4,987 responses were received to the online survey from the n=42,671 game licence holders contacted (response rate of 12%). To improve the representativeness of the survey results, the online survey data was weighted to align the response sample distributions in terms of game licence type with those of the overall population profile.

The follow up qualitative research comprised three online focus groups with deer, duck and stubble quail game licence holders (n=20 participants total).

Key findings

General information about game hunting

The GMA was a key source of information for game licence holders, particularly for information related to hunting rules and regulations (such as season dates, bag limits, permitted hunting areas, legal hunting methods and licensing requirements).

Overall, game licence holders' most common sources of information about game hunting in Victoria were:

- The GMA website (56%);

- Friends, family and colleagues (50%);
- Online search (41%);
- Communications (e.g. email newsletter) from hunting associations / clubs (33%);
- Facebook (31%); and
- Hunting association / club websites (30%).

Nearly all (94%) game licence holders had *actively looked for* information about game hunting in the last year. The main types of information game licence holders actively looked for were related to rules and regulations, including:

- Where to hunt / permitted areas (75%);
- Hunting season dates / times (67%); and
- Changes to hunting rules and regulations (58%).

Overall, around half (50%) of game licence holders felt it was 'easy' to find information about game hunting and just over half (56%) were satisfied with the current information available about game hunting.

GMA channels of information

Most game licence holders (79%) had seen or heard information from the GMA in the last 12 months.

The main channels game licence holders had seen or heard information issued from the GMA **in the last 12 months** were:

- The GMA website (45%);
- Email newsletter (26%);
- GMA Facebook page (24%);
- GMA MyGL website (24%); and
- Through hunting association / club websites or social media (20%).

Overall, the majority (67%) of those who had seen or heard information from the GMA were satisfied with the information.

The GMA and GMA MyGL websites were the main channels of information game licence holders had used. Those who had visited the website(s) were most commonly looking for information about game hunting laws and regulations (75%) and licensing requirements and renewals (57%). In contrast, game licence holders were less likely to have looked for the educational resources (7-31% across the different resources), how to report illegal hunting (6%) and information related to enforcement (7%).

Those who had visited the website(s) had generally positive perceptions of the information provided. Suggestions to improve the website mainly related to improving:

- Navigation / ease of finding information / user friendliness (21%);
- Information about where you can legally hunt (11%); and
- Notification of changes / rules and regulations (10%).

Information preferences

The main type of information game licence holders wanted to see more of from the GMA in the next 12 months was game hunting laws and regulations (52%).


The preferred channels of information for hunting seasons, changes to hunting laws and regulations, and education resources were the same. The GMA website was the most preferred channel of information, followed by email, Facebook and SMS update. These results suggest that game licence holders have a strong preference for direct communications (particularly email) but also value having a go-to source of information like the GMA website.


While the above were the preferred channels for all age groups, younger game licence holders aged 16-34 were more likely to prefer getting information from:


- Social media channels including Facebook (35-36%, compared to 17-18% of those aged 55+), Instagram (9-10%, compared to 1-2% of those aged 55+) and YouTube (6-14%, compared to 4-6% of those aged 55+); and
- Hunting / firearms retail stores (13-19%, compared to 9-10% of those aged 55+).


Older respondents aged 55+ were more likely to want information from their hunting association / club website (24-26%, compared to 7-8% of those aged 16-34), reflecting that greater proportions of this cohort were members of a hunting association or club.


Conclusions and recommendations

- 

Continue to focus on providing information to game licence holders about **licensing, laws and regulations** and consider how this information could be improved, particularly information about **where to hunt**.
- 

Continue to ensure the **GMA website** is **up-to-date** and consider how the **website navigation could be improved** so that information is easier to find.
- 

Increase **direct communication** to game licence holders via **email**, particularly to disseminate information about rules and regulations (e.g. season dates and bag limits), including changes to rules and regulations.
- 

Maintain the **GMA Facebook** as its **primary social media channel** (particularly for younger game licence holders aged 16-34) but consider how posts could be more engaging.
- 

Game licence holders are **less likely to use or seek educational resources** (e.g. how to hunt, firearms safety) from the GMA and hence these resources should not be relied upon in isolation to convey important educational messages to game licence holders.

More detailed findings supporting each conclusion and recommendation are provided in Chapter VII (Conclusions and recommendations).

I. Background and methodology

Background

As Victoria's game hunting regulator, the Victorian Game Management Authority (the GMA) is required to deliver important communications about game hunting regulations, research and education programs, compliance and enforcement activities, and licensing requirements.

The GMA uses a range of channels to communicate with game licence holders, including online (e.g. via its website, social media, email), face-to-face (e.g. education sessions, events, compliance patrols), print and broadcast media (e.g. promotional material, regional and metropolitan media) and other direct communication channels (e.g. customer contact centre/ game licensing).

The overall objective of this research was to understand game licence holders' awareness and perceptions of communications and their communications preferences. The findings from this research will be used to inform planning, investment and refinements to the GMA's communications and engagement with game licence holders, specifically to ensure communications are:

- **Clear**, concise and easy to understand;
- **Targeted** i.e., reaching the intended target audiences; and
- **Effective** i.e., informative, engaging, relevant and influential.

Research objectives

The objectives of this research were to:



Understand **current awareness** of the GMA's communication channels



Understand game licence holders' current **usage and satisfaction** with current communication channels



Understand **perceptions** of the GMA's communications, including quality, clarity and relevance



Identify **areas for improvement and expansion** of the GMA's communication and engagement



Understand whether **communications preferences differ by demographic groups** (e.g. by type of hunter, location, age, experience level)

Methodology

The research comprised two components:

- An online survey with game licence holders with an email address registered with the GMA; and
- Follow up online focus groups with game licence holders.

Online survey

Survey sample and response rates

The sampling frame for the survey was all game licence holders who held a Victorian game licence at the time of the survey for whom email contact details were available and valid (n=42,671). Email addresses were provided by the GMA. A total of n=4,987 responses were received from the n=42,671 people contacted (response rate of 12%). A summary of the number of respondents by game licence type is provided in Table 1 below. Note the sum of each licence type is higher than the total as respondents could hold more than one licence type.

Table 1: Summary of the number of survey responses by type of game endorsed for

Type of game endorsed for	n=	%
Deer stalking	4,310	86%
Deer with hounds	537	11%
Duck	1,758	35%
Stubble Quail	1,216	24%
Introduced gamebirds	571	11%
Total	4,987	

Table 2 below compares the population and survey response sample of game licence holders by type of game endorsed for, which shows that the fallout of licence type was broadly similar between the population and survey sample. To maximise the representativeness of the survey results, the data was weighted to align the response sample distributions in terms of game licence type with those of the overall population profile (including game licence holders that did not have an email address registered with the GMA and hence were not invited to complete the survey).

Table 2: Survey responses by type of game endorsed for compared to population profile

Type of game endorsed for	Population		Survey	
	N=	%	n=	%
Deer (Stalking and hounds)	2,550	5%	232	5%
Deer (Stalking and hounds), both quail and duck, duck only	1,979	4%	287	6%
Deer (Stalking and hounds), quail only	132	<1%	18	<1%
Deer (Stalking)	27,444	51%	2,826	57%
Deer (Stalking), both quail and duck, duck only	8,770	16%	896	18%
Deer (Stalking), quail only	2,566	5%	127	3%
Both quail and duck, duck only	9,173	17%	575	12%
Stubble Quail only	797	1%	26	1%
Total	53,411		4,987	

Statistical precision

As this survey was an attempted census of all game licence holders with an email address registered with the GMA, the results are not subject to sampling error. They are, however, subject to non-sampling measurement error.

Unlike sampling error, non-sampling error is generally not mathematically measurable. The main non-sampling error risk with this survey is the potential for non-response bias to affect results. Non-response bias arises if the people who respond to the survey differ systematically to non-respondents in terms of characteristics relevant to the survey.

Fieldwork

The draft questionnaire for the survey was developed and refined in consultation with the GMA project team. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

The online survey was conducted from 16 April to 4 May 2025.

All stakeholders received a primary approach email from the GMA, advising them of the survey and encouraging them to participate. This was followed by an invitation email from ORIMA, containing a unique link to access the survey. Reminder emails were sent during the fieldwork period to maximise response rates to the survey. Responses were anonymous and could not be linked back to an individual licence holder.

The GMA also added a page to its website confirming ORIMA's involvement in the survey and encouraged participation in the survey via its Facebook page.

Follow-up qualitative research

After the conclusion of the survey, follow-up qualitative research was conducted. The qualitative research consisted of three online focus groups conducted with n=20 game licence holders between 26-27 May 2025. Online focus groups were conducted with different types (i.e. deer, duck and Stubble Quail) of game licence holders, as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Qualitative research design

	Total
<i>Online focus group (OFG)</i>	
Deer hunting licence-holders	1 x OFG n=6
Duck hunting licence-holders	1 x OFG n=6
Stubble Quail hunting licence-holders	1 x OFG n=8
TOTAL	3 x OFG n=20 participants

Focus group participants were recruited from respondents to the quantitative survey who opted in to participate in further qualitative research. ORIMA Research consultants then reached out to invite members of the target audience to be part of the research and arrange for their participation. As per standard market research protocols and to encourage participation in focus groups, focus group participants were given a reimbursement payment of \$110 to recognise their involvement in the research.

Presentation of results

Understanding the quantitative research findings

Reported percentages are based on the total number of valid responses made to the particular question being reported on. This occasionally differs from the total number of completed survey questionnaires because of omissions in the completed questionnaires. The results reflect the responses of people who had a view and for whom the questions were applicable. 'Don't know/unsure' responses have only been presented where this aids in the interpretation of the results, such as for awareness questions.

For ease of reading, the five-point scales have been condensed and are reported in the form of three-point scales—recording positive, neutral and negative responses. For example, the proportion of respondents who answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to a particular question are reported as the proportion who responded as 'agree,' while those who answered 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' are reported as the proportion who responded as 'disagree.' In some cases, the sum of individual percentages may differ from the aggregate percentage due to rounding. Percentage results in stacked bar charts throughout the report also may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Understanding the qualitative research findings

Qualitative research findings have been used to provide depth of understanding on particular issues.

The following terms used in the report provide a qualitative indication of the number of qualitative research participants who held particular views:

- Most – refers to findings that relate to more than three quarters of the research participants;
- Many – refers to findings that relate to more than half of the research participants;
- Some – refers to findings that relate to around a third of the research participants; and
- A few – refers to findings that relate to less than a quarter of research participants.



The speech bubble icon indicates findings from the qualitative research.

II. General information about game hunting

Sources of information

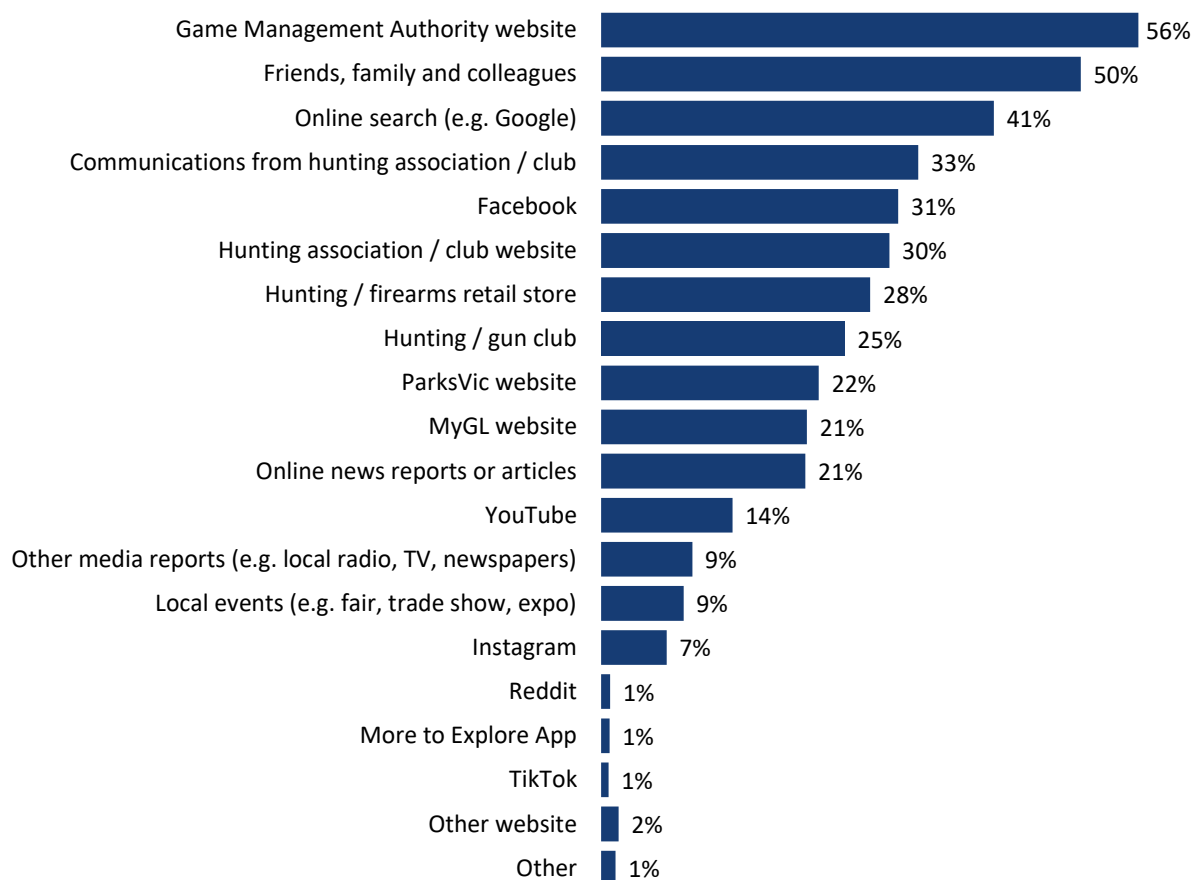
The most common sources of information about game hunting in Victoria were:

- The GMA website (56%);
- Friends, family and colleagues (50%);
- Online search (41%);
- Communications from hunting associations / clubs (33%);
- Facebook (31%); and
- Hunting association / club websites (30%).

The GMA website was the main source of information for all types of game licence holders. Those endorsed to hunt both deer and gamebirds (i.e., duck and Stubble Quail) reported higher usage of most channels compared to those endorsed to hunt deer only. However, those endorsed to hunt deer only reported higher usage of the Parks Victoria website (27%, compared to 21% endorsed to hunt both) and YouTube (17%, compared to 12%).

Sources of information about game hunting

Base: All respondents (n=4,984)



The GMA website was a main source of information for both **younger game licence holders aged 16-34** (49%) and those aged 55+ (57%). However, those aged 16-34 were more likely than older age groups to get information about game hunting from:

- Friends, family and colleagues (54%, compared to 50% of those aged 55+);
- Online channels including online search (48%, compared to 33%), Facebook (42%, compared to 23%), YouTube (22%, compared to 9%) and Instagram (14%, compared to 2%); and
- Hunting / firearms retail stores (39%, compared to 24%).

Reflecting that a greater proportion of older respondents aged 55+ were members of a hunting association or club (67%, compared to 45% of those aged 16-34), **older respondents aged 55+** were more likely than younger age groups to get information from:

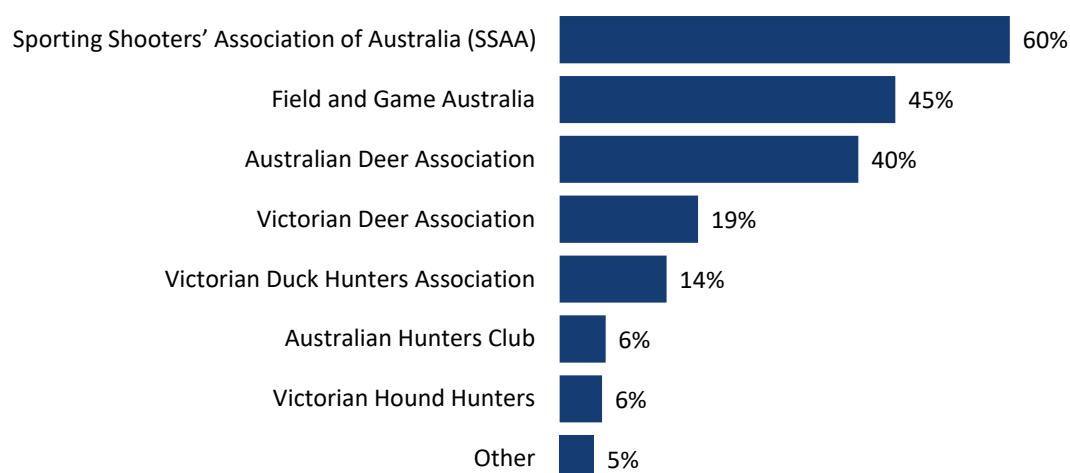
- Hunting association / club communications (39%, compared to 25% of those aged 16-34);
- Hunting association / club websites (36%, compared to 22%); and
- A hunting / gun club (31%, compared to 21% of those aged 16-34).

Among game licence holders that got information from hunting associations or clubs, the main ones they got information from were:

- Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (60%);
 - Higher among those endorsed to hunt deer only (66%) or deer and gamebirds (63%), compared to those endorsed to hunt gamebirds only (44%);
- Field and Game Australia (45%); and
 - Higher among those endorsed to hunt gamebirds only (81%) or deer and gamebirds (57%), compared to those endorsed to hunt deer only (20%);
- Australian Deer Association (40%).
 - Higher among those endorsed to hunt deer only (55%) or deer and gamebirds (44%), compared to those endorsed to hunt gamebirds only (2%).

Hunting associations or clubs get information from

Base: Respondents who got information from hunting associations or clubs (n=2,204)



Around one quarter (24%) of game licence holders followed hunting influencers or pages (such as websites or social media) for information. Those aged 16-34 (39%) and 35-54 (29%) were more likely to be following hunting influencers or pages, compared to those aged 55+ (13%).

The most commonly mentioned hunting influencers / pages (apart from hunting association / club pages) included:

- Aussie Bush Harvest;
- Bolt Action Productions;
- Edge of the Outback;
- Meat Eater;
- Paul Boag;
- Sambar Stalkers;
- The Huntsman;
- Tony Gillahan; and
- Zebras Hunting.



In line with the quantitative findings, the qualitative research found that **the GMA website was a key source of information about game hunting** for most participants. The GMA was also the **preferred source for information relating to hunting rules and regulations** (such as season dates, bag limits, permitted hunting areas, legal hunting methods and licencing requirements) for most participants, as they expected that information from the GMA (as the regulatory body) would be **accurate and trustworthy**.

As such, the GMA was considered the “first point of call” / “**go-to**” **source for information about hunting rules and regulations** – however most participants reported also accessing information from a range of other sources to supplement the information provided by the GMA. Participants reported that they looked for information from other sources when they needed:

- **Timely information** (e.g. about changes in hunting rules) – participants reported that this type of information was often communicated in a more timely manner by hunting clubs / associations compared with the GMA. Participants also reported that hunting clubs / associations were more likely to proactively communicate information about changes to rules and regulations via ‘push’ channels (e.g. email), which meant that participants felt more confident they had the information they needed;
- **Specific information about permitted hunting areas** – participants reported that the information provided by the GMA about permitted hunting areas did not always provide the required level of detail / clarity they needed. As such, participants reported looking for further information to confirm/ clarify permitted areas from other sources such as the More to Explore app (although it is noted that the GMA uses More to Explore to provide this advice), the Avenza Maps app, Parks Victoria or the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA); or

- **Information about hunting proficiency** (e.g. hunting and shooting skills) – which participants reported they preferred to source from fellow hunters, either through hunting clubs / associations or other hunters they knew personally (i.e. family or friends).

"I use [the GMA website] as my reference. If it's on the GMA website, it's real"–Quail hunter participant

"I use the maps [on the GMA website] to look up where to go, and then cross check to make sure everything's right on More to Explore"–Quail hunter participant

Information seeking

Nearly all (94%) game licence holders had *actively looked for* information about game hunting in the last year. Younger respondents aged 16-34 looked for information more frequently (29% at least once a week, compared to 19% of those aged 55+).

How often *actively* looked for information about game hunting

Base: All respondents (n=4,853)



■ Every day

■ A few times a week

■ Once a week

■ Once a month

■ A few times

■ Once

■ Never or not in the last year



In terms of the type of information sought throughout the year, most participants reported that they generally looked for **different types of information at different times in the year**. Specifically, participants reported looking for information:

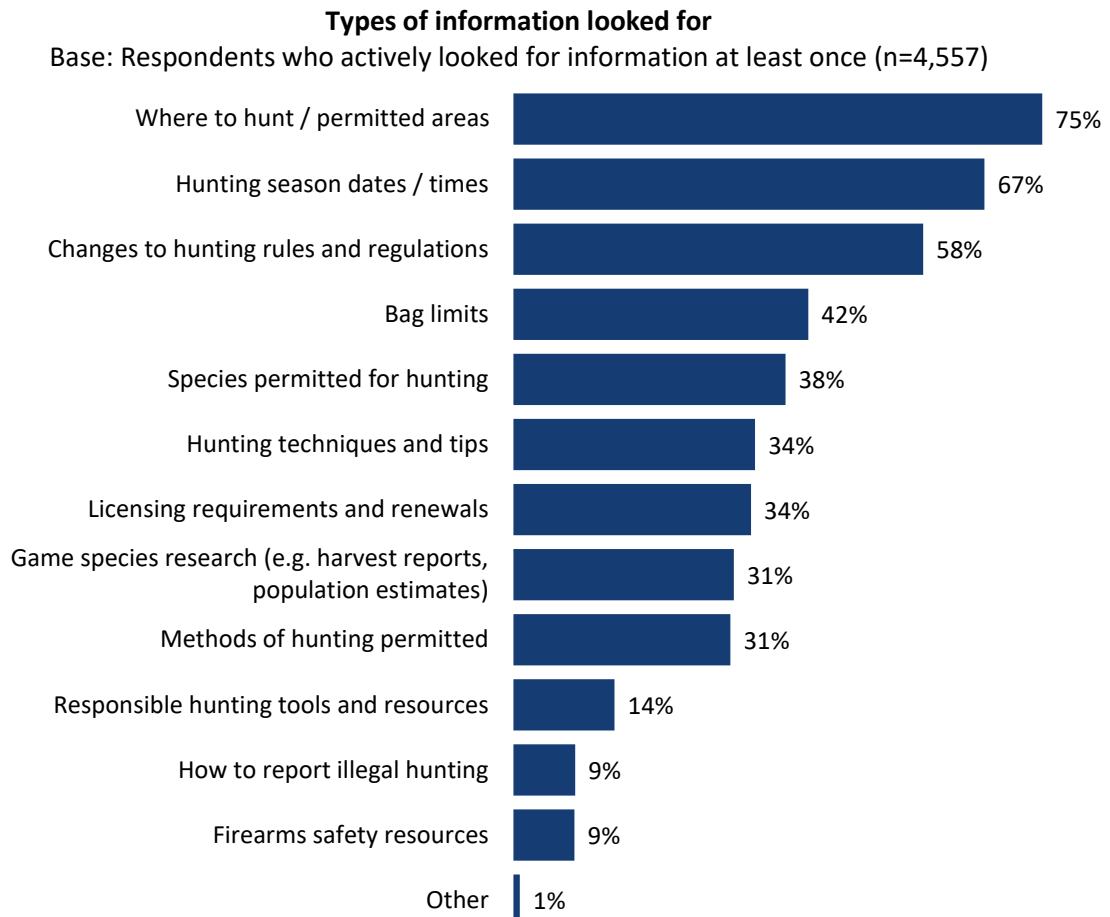
- **Before hunting season** – to look for information about season dates, permitted hunting areas and any changes to hunting rules and regulations since the previous season;
- **During hunting season** – to monitor any changes to permitted hunting areas (e.g. closure of wetlands for duck hunting); and
- **After the end of hunting season** – to look at harvest statistics and species reports for the season.

"You look up information when you're at home before heading out, and when you're packing up, putting your waders in the car"–Duck hunter participant

"I like to check up every day [through the season], to see if the lakes I have been going to for 30 years are closed so I don't go all the way out there for nothing"–Quail hunter participant

The main types of information game licence holders actively looked for were:

- Where to hunt / permitted areas (75%);
- Hunting season dates / times (67%); and
- Changes to hunting rules and regulations (58%).



Most qualitative participants also reported that they most commonly looked for **information about when, where and how to hunt legally**, as they were aware that rules could change from one season to the next and wanted to avoid penalties for hunting illegally (e.g. loss of licence, fines or conviction). In addition, some participants reported that they **felt it was their responsibility as a hunter to be aware of the latest rules and regulations**, and felt that any illegal or irresponsible behaviour by hunters would reflect poorly on the hunting community as a whole, potentially exacerbating negative stereotypes about hunters.

“The onus is on you as a hunter to be doing the right thing. For yourself, and also for the general community” –Deer hunter participant

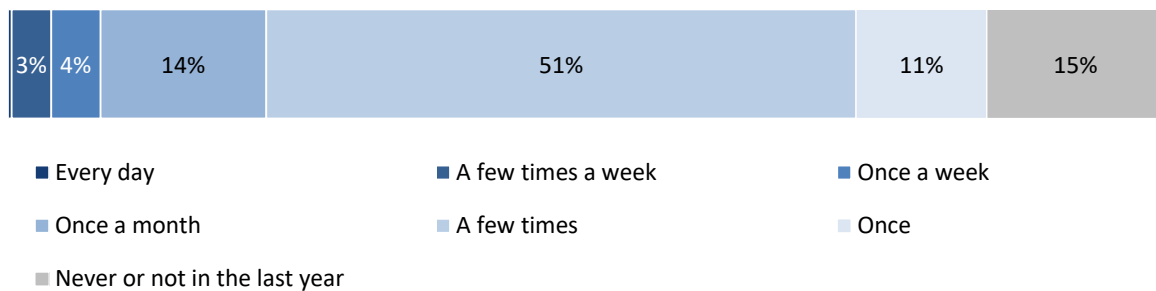
Most game licence holders (85%) had *received* information about game hunting in the last 12 months. However, the majority (62%) recalled only receiving information once or a few times.

The following groups reported receiving information more often:

- Those endorsed to hunt deer and gamebirds (29% once a month or more often) or gamebirds only (25%), compared to those only endorsed to hunt deer (18%); and
- Members of a hunting association or club (31%, compared to 10% of those who were not members).

How often *received* information about game hunting

Base: All respondents (n=4,551)



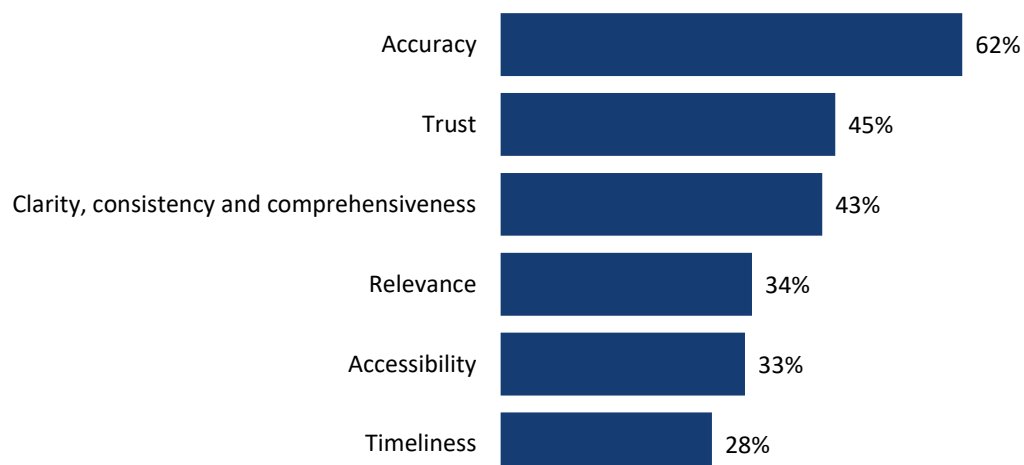
Perceptions of information

'Accuracy' (62%) was the most important characteristic to game licence holders when thinking about game hunting information, followed by 'trust' (45%) and 'clarity / consistency / comprehensiveness' (43%).

'Timeliness' was considered more important among those endorsed to hunt deer and gamebirds (33%) or gamebirds only (37%), compared to those only endorsed to hunt deer (23%).

Perceived importance of qualities of information

Base: All respondents (n=4,976)





Findings from the qualitative research aligned with the quantitative results, with participants identifying **accuracy and clarity as the most important qualities** of information.

All participants reported that having **accurate information** about game hunting was **of high importance**, as incorrect information could lead them to **unintentionally break the law**. Participants felt there was a **high chance of being caught** if they engaged in illegal hunting behaviours (even accidentally) and that the **consequences of illegal hunting were severe** (i.e. losing their game hunting licence, having equipment confiscated, or receiving a fine or conviction).

In addition, participants reported that having **access to clear information** was important to **reduce any ambiguity about hunters' legal requirements and responsibilities**. They reported that this was particularly important when there had been **changes in rules and regulations since the previous hunting season**.

"You really just want to know what's legal and what's not legal. Everyone tries to stay on the legal side of things, but if you can't find it easily on a page, you're likely to get caught up somewhere"—Duck hunter participant

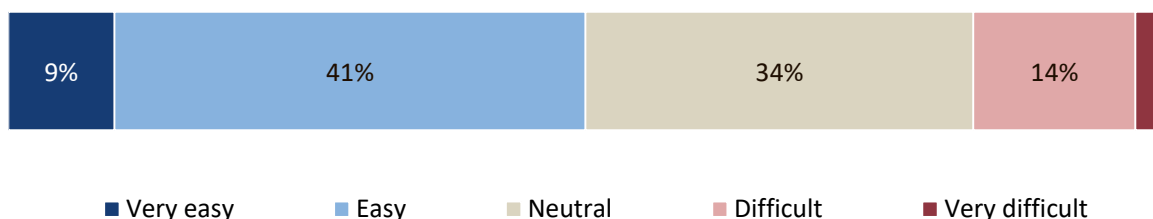
"The consequences are pretty severe – immediate loss of licence, they'll take your firearms too... or your car"—Quail hunter participant

Around half (50%) of game licence holders felt it was 'easy' to find information about game hunting. The following groups found it easier to find information:

- Those who were members of hunting associations or clubs (53%, compared to 47% of those who were not);
- Those aged 55+ (53%, compared to 45% of those aged 16-34); and
 - Interestingly, younger respondents looked for information more frequently but were less likely to feel that information was easy to find.

Ease of finding information about game hunting

Base: All respondents (n=4,913)

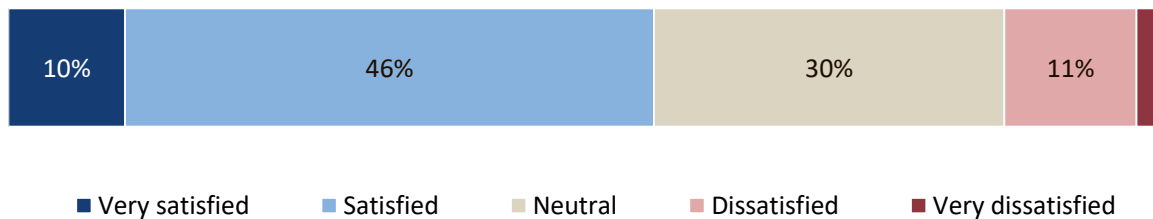


Just over half (56%) of game licence holders were satisfied with the current information available about game hunting. Similarly, the groups that found it easier to find information reported higher satisfaction with the information currently available:

- Those who were members of hunting associations or clubs (59%, compared to 54% of those who were not); and
- Those aged 55+ (59%, compared to 51% of those aged 16-34).

Satisfaction with current information about game hunting available

Base: All respondents (n=4,914)



Those who were satisfied mainly reported this was because:

- They were able to find the information they needed easily – including on the GMA website; and
“There are several reliable sources that have current information on endorsement, regulation, legal issues, legal hunting areas and track information.”
“The sources of information are very good online and through family and friends who have had their licenses for 10+ years. They update me when changes happen to the rules as well.”
“Between the GMA and Parks Vic websites I have never not found what I have been searching for.”
- They felt information was accurate and reliable.
“The website is easy to access and its material is up to date and relevant.”
“GMA website appears to be up to date, I receive regular enough updates if things change (e.g. duck bag limits, new dogs added for deer hunting, etc.) and the information isn't spread across multiple pages through endless links.”

Those who were *dissatisfied* (14%) mainly reported this was because:

- Information was received or released too late (e.g. around hunting seasons, closure of wetlands) – noting that in many cases perceptions were influenced by timing of government decision making, which determines when GMA can provide the information;
“The notification on duck hunting open date is left way too late. We should be able to get a lock in date way earlier than what happens now.”
“Due to the timeliness of information provided. Up until very late, all of the information available pointed to the legislated season arrangements and did not reflect the actual conditions that were in place when the season started.”
- It was hard to find clear information about where to legally hunt, including hunting maps and locations (e.g. map boundaries were unclear);
 - Some felt data was not accurate or inconsistent between sources (e.g. source says it is legal to hunt in particular areas, when it is not);

"It is extremely hard to figure out what public land is able to be hunted and often referred to the More to Explore VIC app which says many areas are able to be hunted for sambar and hog deer which I don't believe."

"I'm yet to find a source that shows legal areas to hunt where it's confirmed accurate. The More to Explore and GMA maps tell you to contact local authorities. When you do so they reference the maps. I don't want to do the wrong thing but have no way of knowing what the right thing is."

"Access to accurate maps of hunting areas is difficult. Topographical maps of all hunting areas should be available to hunters upon request. As a hunter I am held responsible where I hunt and yet the relevant authorities who make the boundaries can't provide maps that they will stand behind."

- It was hard to find up-to-date information about hunting locations that would help hunters to decide whether it is worth going hunting (e.g. water levels, game numbers, terrain);

"Little to no information available regards water at state game reserves and count information on game species."

"You can check out any map but can't know if there any deer in the area or if you are going to waste the entire weekend."

- The information they required was not all in a central location;

"There is no comprehensive correct information of where to hunt. All such information comes with the reservation like "check with the local authorities". Is there no central authority?"

"There needs to be a dedicated website with regular updates and customer support in order to give correct and up to date info about hunting laws. Most websites I have went to were either out of order or out of date and kept linking back to random pages."

"Information seems to be scattered between MyGL, More to Explore website/app and Firearms Act."

- They did not receive frequent updates about game hunting in Victoria, including changes to rules and regulations; and

"Need to search everywhere to see if anything has changed regulation wise every time before you go out in case something has changed you haven't heard about. There is no one place that you can rely on to be sure your up to date with the latest regulations. Between gun rules, hunting rules and access to hunting areas that you normally go to it is difficult to be sure your up to date with the latest regulations."

"You have to search hard for information when any changes should be notified."

- Websites were difficult to navigate.

"Very confusing, not clear, links back and forth, search function is not reliable or accurate. No direct simple answer to any question."

"I find that most of the regulatory information is too self-referential and links to too many other webpages and agencies. This creates confusion over where I can hunt certain species and often results in me triple checking things just to make sure I haven't accidentally been misinformed."

Awareness and understanding

Out of the types of information tested in the survey, game licence holders were most confident in their awareness and understanding of:

- When you can legally hunt (63%);
- Bag limits (62%); and
- Where you can legally hunt (57%).

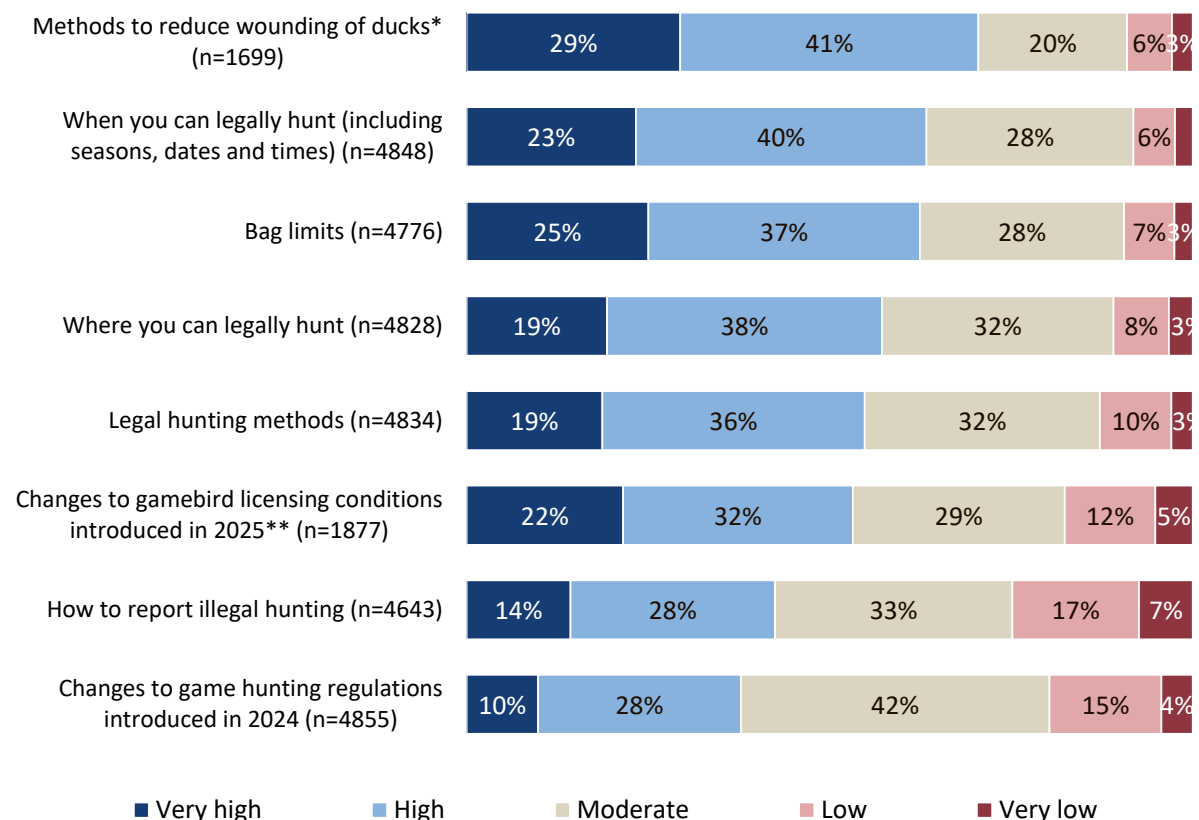
In contrast, they were less confident about how to report illegal hunting (42%) and changes to hunting regulations introduced in 2024 (38%).

The following groups reported lower awareness and understanding of all aspects:

- Those who were endorsed for deer only, compared to those endorsed for gamebirds or both;
- Those who had been hunting for less than 3 years – and confidence increased with how long respondents had been hunting for; and
- Those who were *not* members of hunting associations or clubs.

Self-rated awareness and understanding about aspects of game hunting

Base: All respondents / *Duck licence holders only / **Gamebird licence holders only



How to report illegal hunting

The qualitative research found that **most participants were aware that they could report illegal hunting to the GMA**. Sources of information about illegal hunting included:

- **Information provided upon receiving their game hunting licence** – many participants reported that they had seen information about reporting illegal hunting, including the phone number to report, when they received their game hunting licences in the mail;
- **Advertisements from the GMA** – some participants had seen online advertisements from the GMA about reporting illegal hunting; and
- **The GMA website** – a few reported seeing information about reporting illegal hunting on the GMA website when looking at other information.

While participants felt it was important to have information about reporting illegal activity available to hunters, no participants reported having actively sought out information on the topic.

The qualitative research also found that **no participants had personally reported illegal hunting before**, and identified the following barriers to doing so:

- **Limited opportunity to directly observe other hunters** – many participants reported that, due to the solitary nature of hunting, they rarely saw other hunters in the field and so had limited opportunities to directly observe the behaviours of other hunters (including potentially illegal behaviours);
- **Challenges identifying legal and illegal hunting behaviours** – some participants reported that some illegal hunting behaviours (e.g. using the wrong type of shot or not holding a current licence) could not be easily identified through observation alone. In addition, these participants reported they were unlikely to question other hunters about the legality of their practices; and
- **Misconceptions about what was required as part of the reporting process** – a few participants believed that, if they were to report illegal hunting to the GMA, they would need to wait for GMA or police officers to attend the site and / or be involved in the investigation process after reporting, which they felt would be time and effort intensive.

The research found that the first two barriers were not addressable through communications. However, the findings suggest that **the third barrier could be mitigated** by providing information to game hunters about what was required of them during and after submitting a report about illegal hunting, to **reduce the perceived inconvenience and time burden** of doing so.

Only a couple of participants were **aware of the option to report illegal protester activity**. Although most participants felt positively about having this option when shown information about reporting illegal protester activity, there was **limited awareness of what would constitute illegal protester activity** and how to identify this among many participants. In addition, some participants felt that there was a low likelihood that any enforcement action would be taken against protesters, as they had not previously heard of any actions being taken against protesters from such reporting. As such, participants felt that having **more prominent information about how to identify and report illegal protester activity**, as well as about any enforcement outcomes of such reports, would be important.

"In over 40 years of hunting, I find it pretty rare to bump into other [hunters]. Victoria is a very big place"—Quail hunter participant

"If I was out there, it's taken me how many hours to drive there, and I've seen one guy do something illegal, a) do I have reception, b) can I get in contact quick enough, and then c) how long is it going to take them to turn up, and then that person [may have disappeared]"—Quail hunter participant

Shooting skills

Most participants had **limited awareness of the availability of shooting skills educational resources** on the GMA website (e.g. shooting techniques, firing positions), and only a couple of participants had previously accessed these resources. While **participants felt positively about the availability of these resources** once shown, many reported that they were unlikely to access this type of information from the GMA, as the GMA was mainly associated with regulatory responsibilities and information. These participants reported that they would **prefer to receive information about shooting and hunting skills from other hunters**, either through official hunting associations or via their personal networks.

However, a few participants who were **newer to hunting** and who may not have connections with hunting associations and other hunters reported that they would **consider using the GMA's resources to build their hunting and shooting knowledge**. In addition, a few other participants with a strong personal interest in the technical aspects of hunting and shooting also reported that they may **access these materials**. These participants felt there could be **value in more widely communicating the availability** of the range of shooting and hunting skills resources on the GMA website, for those interested.

"Improving your shooting and your skills, isn't really something that I am interested in [learning from the GMA website]. There are probably people I can call that know more and better, which is better than a website telling you how to shoot"—Quail hunter participant

Cultural heritage

No participants in the qualitative research reported that they had actively sought out information about cultural heritage, and only one participant had previously seen information about cultural heritage whilst completing licence renewal modules. Most participants were unaware that the GMA had resources available on this topic and, even once informed, most reported they were unlikely to access these due to the **limited perceived relevance and interest of this type of information** to hunters.

The qualitative research found that participants generally had neutral sentiments in relation to the inclusion of this type of information on the GMA website, and a couple reported **concerns that cultural heritage "requirements" might result in further limitations on when and where they could hunt**. However, a few other participants felt that learning about cultural heritage could be a **positive addition to their experiences as game hunters** (i.e. by enhancing their experience in / enjoyment of the natural environment). These findings suggest a **need to increase the perceived relevance and value** of information about cultural heritage to game hunters, including by presenting this information as something which could enrich rather than limit their hunting experience. The research also indicated that **'push' channels will likely be required** to get this information to hunters, as they were unlikely to seek it out themselves.

"I don't understand why [information about cultural heritage] is there at all, to be honest"—Duck hunter participant

"I think it's great, it's good to embrace Australia's cultural heritage. Respecting it is good"—Quail hunter participant

III. GMA channels of information

Awareness and usage of GMA information

Most game licence holders (94%) were aware that the GMA develops materials for hunters in relation to game hunting. Game licence holders were most commonly aware of materials related to:

- Licensing requirements and renewals (88%); and
- Game hunting laws and regulations (84%).

Game licence holders were least likely to be aware of the GMA's research projects, programs and findings (51%).

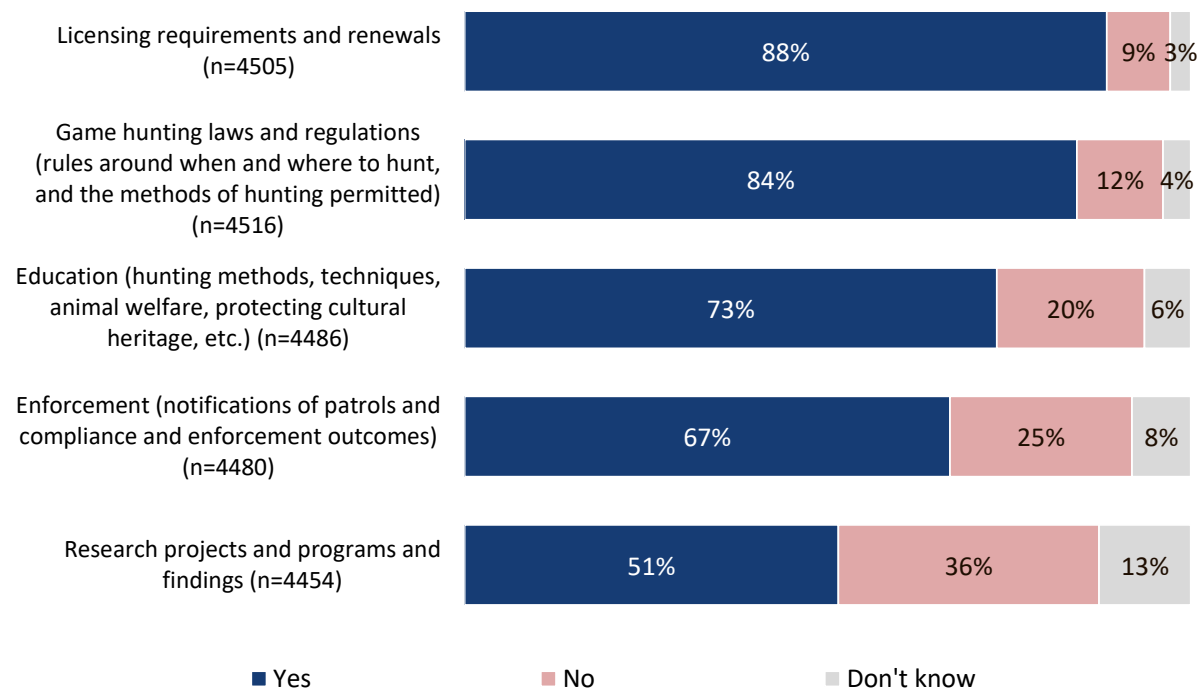
Awareness of all the GMA's materials was lower among:

- Those who were endorsed for deer only, compared to those endorsed for gamebirds or both;
- Those who had been hunting for less than 3 years; and
- Those who were *not* members of hunting associations or clubs.

Awareness of education resources, enforcement materials and research projects, programs and findings was higher among those who were more engaged with GMA channels. For instance, those who visited the GMA website more frequently (71-91% of those who visited once a week or more often, compared to 62-85% of those who had visited only once or a few times) and those who followed the GMA Facebook page (75-90%, compared to 63-84% of those who had seen information on the GMA Facebook, but did not follow the page).

Awareness of types of materials GMA develops for hunters

Base: All respondents



Most game licence holders (79%) had seen or heard information from the GMA in the last 12 months. Reflecting overall awareness of these types of information, game licence holders had most commonly seen GMA information related to game hunting laws and regulations (61%) and licensing renewals and requirements (55%).

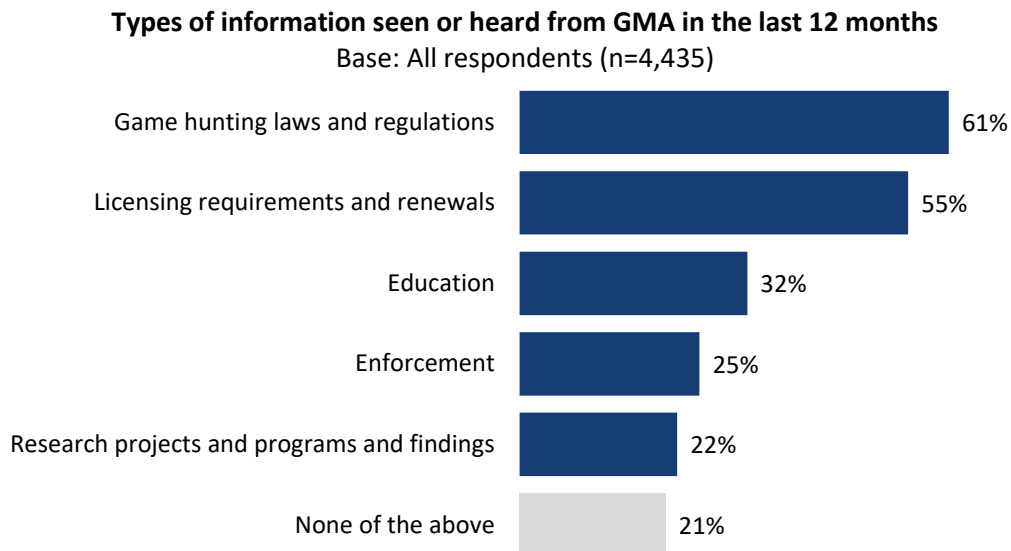
Usage of all types of information was lower among:

- Those who were endorsed for deer only (74% had seen any information), compared to those endorsed for gamebirds (88%) or both (85%);
- Those who had been hunting for less than 3 years (71%, compared to 83% of those more than 10 years); and
- Those who were *not* members of hunting associations or clubs (73%, compared to 83% of those who were members).

While game hunting laws / regulations and licensing requirements / renewals were the main types of information seen / heard among all age groups, younger respondents aged 16-34 were more likely to have seen or heard GMA information about:

- Education (37%, compared to 30% of those aged 55+);
- Enforcement (31%, compared to 22%); and
- Research projects, programs and findings (27%, compared to 21%).

This may reflect the fact that younger game licence holders looked for information about game hunting more frequently compared to older game licence holders.

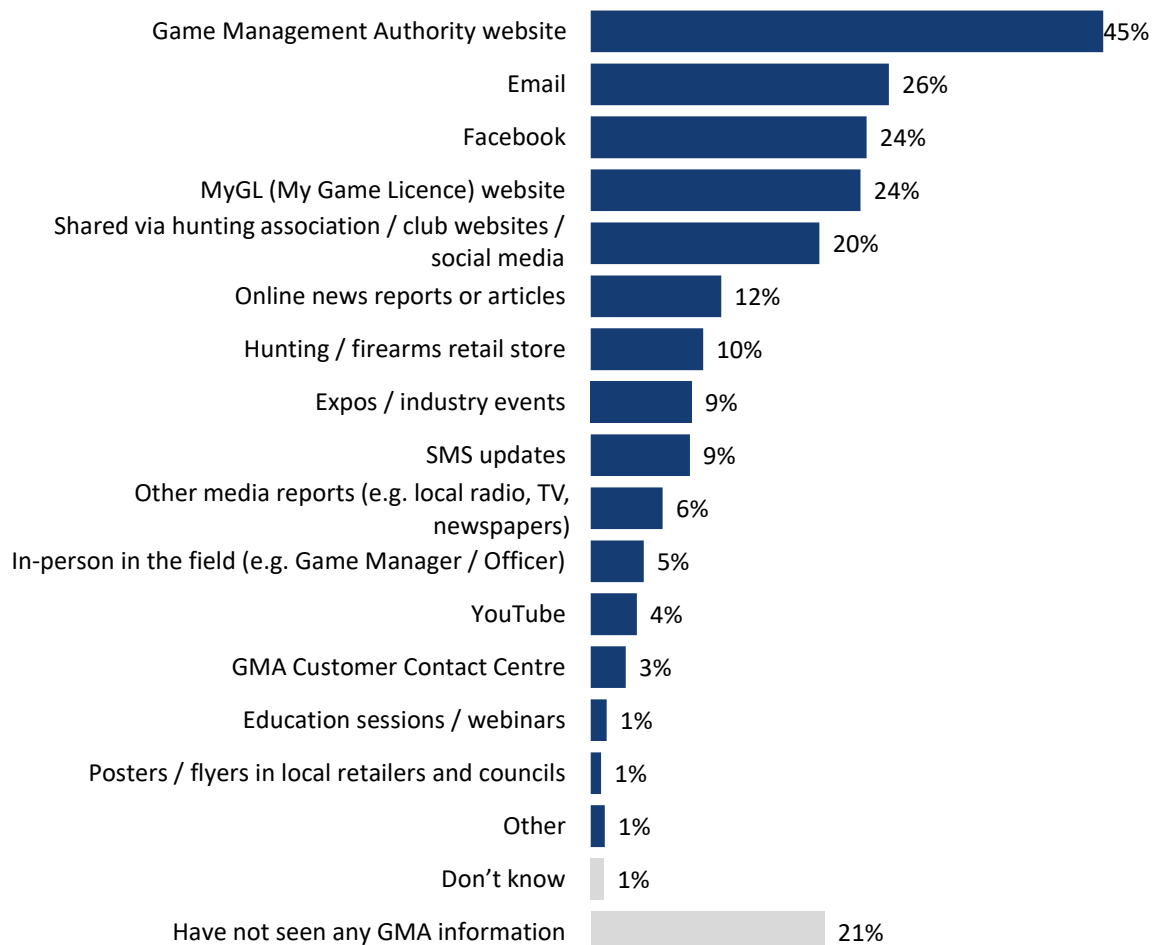


The main channels game licence holders had seen or heard information from the GMA in the last 12 months were:

- The GMA website (45%);
- Email (26%);
- Facebook (24%);
- MyGL website (24%); and
- Through hunting association / club websites or social media (20%).

Channels where seen or heard information from GMA in the last 12 months

Base: All respondents (n=4,428)



While the GMA website was the main channel game licence holders of all ages had seen information, a greater proportion of those aged 55+ had seen information on the website (48%, compared to 42% of those aged 16-34). Game licence holders aged 55+ were also more likely to have seen or heard information:

- Via a hunting association / club (25%, compared to 15% of those aged 16-34);
- Online news reports and articles (13%, compared to 9%);
- From SMS updates (11%, compared to 6%); and
- Other media reports (9%, compared to 5%).

Younger game licence holders aged 16-34 were more likely to have seen information on the GMA Facebook (36%, compared to 18% of those aged 55+) and YouTube (6%, compared to 3%).

Overall satisfaction with GMA information

Overall, the majority (67%) of those who had seen or heard information from the GMA were satisfied with the information.

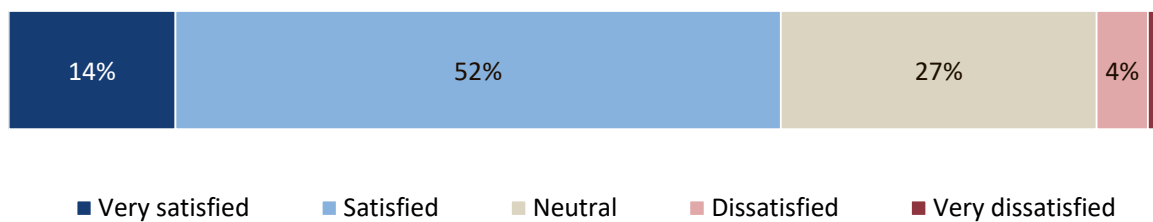
Satisfaction with GMA information was higher among:

- Those aged 55+ (71%, compared to 60% of those aged 16-34); and
- Those endorsed to hunt gamebirds only (72%, compared to 65% of those endorsed to hunt deer only and 66% endorsed to hunt both).

Positive perceptions of the GMA's services more broadly were also associated with higher satisfaction with GMA's information. Overall satisfaction with GMA information was higher among those who agreed that the GMA's services assist them to be a lawful and responsible hunter (76%, compared to 27% of those who disagreed).

Overall satisfaction with GMA information

Base: Respondents who had seen or heard GMA information (n=3,445)



Participants in the qualitative research also reported that they were **generally satisfied with the information provided by the GMA**. In particular, most participants reported that information from the GMA was:

- **Comprehensive** – with participants reporting that there was a large amount of information available on the GMA website;
- **Trustworthy** – as the GMA was understood to be the regulator and hence a trusted source for information about rules and regulations; and
- **Visually appealing** – most participants reported that information from the GMA was clearly formatted and used relevant and appealing images, and described the GMA's website as being visually appealing and “polished” / “professional”.

However, some participants reported **challenges finding and accessing the information they needed from the GMA website**. This included challenges in:

- **Navigating through different sections of the website** to locate their desired topic. Participants reported that this was particularly challenging when navigating between the GMA website and MyGL platform; and
- **Finding the specific details they needed** about rules and regulations within the “large” amount of information on specific web pages.

Participants felt that these challenges could be addressed by:

- **Reducing the complexity of navigation** between different sections of the website – i.e. by condensing the number of website sections and making it easier to move between the GMA and MyGL websites; and
- **Presenting high-priority information about rules and regulations clearly and prominently** on the website – such as in callout boxes at the top of webpages or through concise factsheets which summarised recent changes to game hunting rules.

In addition, a few participants reported **lower levels of satisfaction with the GMA’s research reports and lethality table resources**. These participants felt that the data presented in these resources did not align with their personal observations (e.g. of gamebird harvests or population numbers) and felt that they “overstated” the impacts of game hunting on species numbers, and so had lower levels of trust in the accuracy of this information.

“The information that is there is great, but it can be vague and you go through rabbit holes to find things” – Quail hunter participant

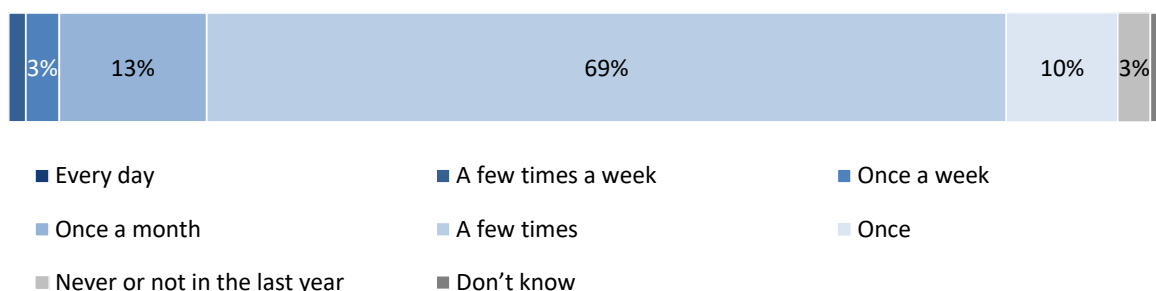
GMA and MyGL website

Overall, just over half (52%) of game licence holders had obtained information from the GMA or My Game Licence (MyGL) website.

Of those who had visited the GMA website, most (79%) had only visited once or a few times in the last 12 months. Younger game licence holders aged 16-34 (28% ‘once a month’ or more often, compared to 15% of those aged 55+) and those who were members of hunting associations / clubs (19%, compared to 13% of non-members) who visited the GMA website did so more frequently compared to their counterparts.

Usage of the GMA and MyGL website in last 12 months

Base: Respondents who had visited the GMA or MyGL website (n=2,175)



Game licence holders who had visited the GMA or MyGL website were most commonly looking for information about game hunting laws and regulations (75%) and licensing requirements and renewals (57%). A notable proportion were looking for deer hunting tools / resources (31%), the game hunting in Victoria manual (27%) and game species research (27%).

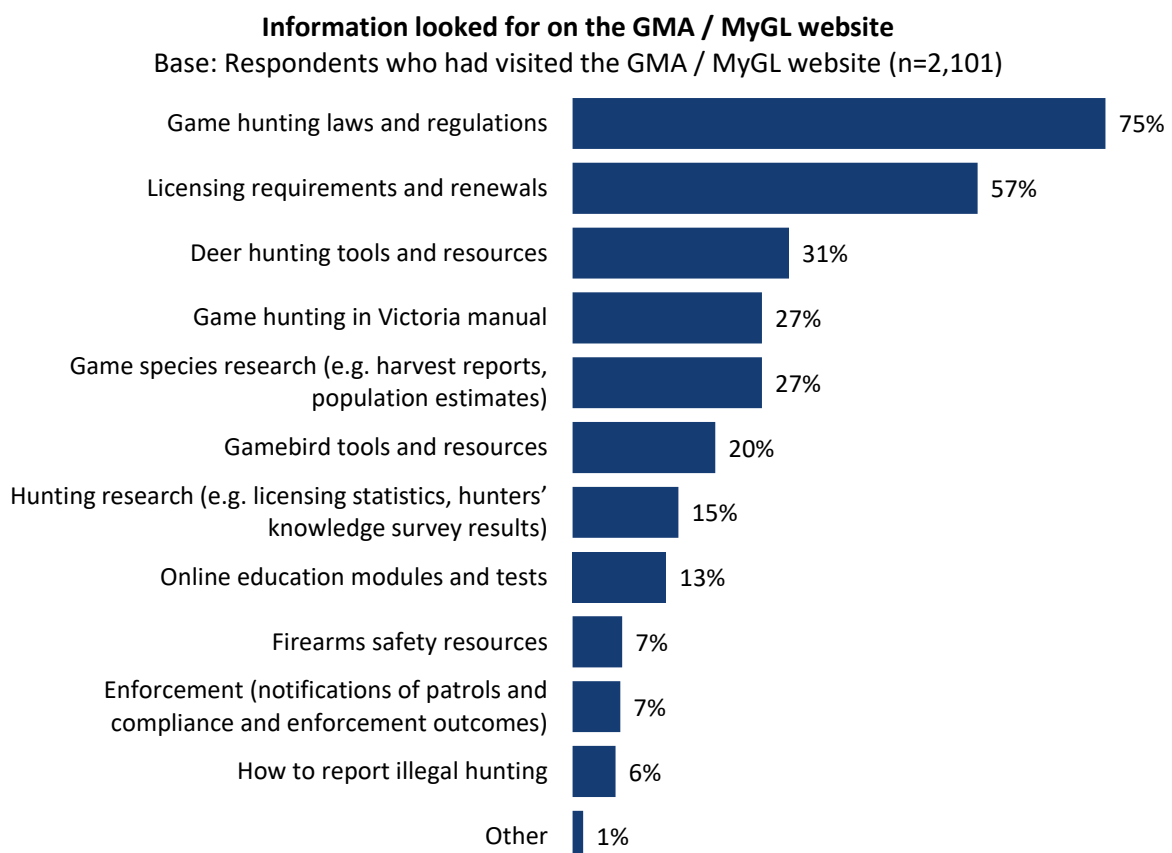
Few game licence holders were looking for information about firearms safety (7%), enforcement (7%) and how to report illegal hunting (6%).

Some differences in the types of information game licence holders looked for existed by group.

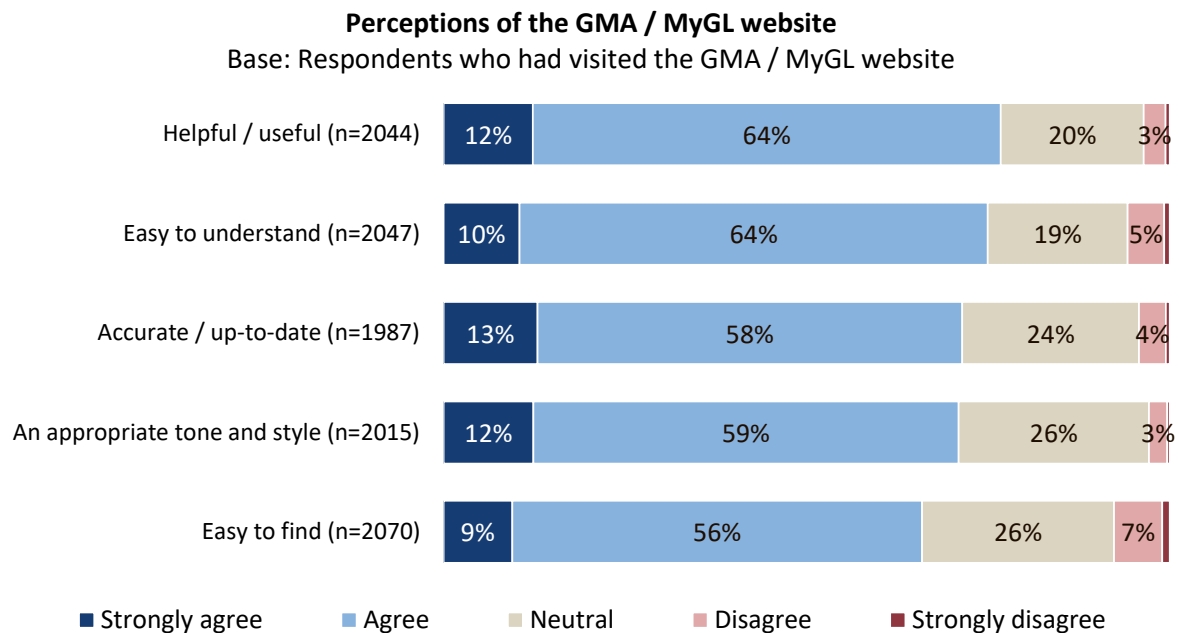
Older game licence holders aged 55+ were generally less likely to have looked for any educational materials on the GMA website (6-25%), compared to younger game licence holders aged 16-34 (9-37%). However, they were more likely to have looked for the game hunting in Victoria manual (29%, compared to 25% of those aged 16-34) and how to report illegal hunting (7%, compared to 4%).

Newer game licence holders with less than 3 years' experience were more likely to have looked for education materials including deer hunting tools and resources (48%, compared to 23% of those with over 10 years' experience), online education modules (23%, compared to 11%) and firearms safety resources (15%, compared to 5%).

Those who were members of a hunting association or club were more likely to have looked for information on game species research (30%, compared to 23% of non-members), gamebird tools and resources (22%, compared to 17%) and hunting research (17%, compared to 12%) and enforcement (8%, compared to 5%).



Those who had visited the GMA or MyGL website had generally positive perceptions of the information provided on the website. However, game licence holders were least likely to agree that information was easy to find (66%).



Specific findings on selected sections of the GMA website tested in the qualitative research are presented in *Chapter IV: Findings from materials testing*.

Suggestions for improvement

When asked how the GMA or MyGL websites could be improved, a notable proportion of game licence holders indicated they were currently happy with the website (24%). Suggestions for improvement to the GMA and MyGL websites mainly related to:

- **Navigation / ease of finding information / user friendliness** (21%) – including perceptions that information was scattered across too many pages or required too many clicks to get to the page you wanted;

“The GMA needs to stop linking to other subpages during an answer to a question. If some material is relevant to the answer, supply it rather than sending people on a scavenger hunt.”

“Menu options are broad, not particularly well classified and structured. In many cases a Google search was needed to find the info, as I could not navigate within the site.”

“Streamline menus by hunting specifics. I have no interest in hound hunting at all or bow hunting but I'm very keen to know exactly what is in and out in the duck season as well as any implications for hunting deer on public land.”

- Some game licence holders provided specific feedback about the **licensing process and/or platform** being hard to navigate (6%) – including difficulty finding hog deer tag applications;

“I feel the MyGL part of the website is difficult to navigate by people with low computer skills. The registration process and licence renewal sections could be made more user friendly.”

“The MyGL website just for renewing the game licence is terrible, not simple or straight forward. I feel sorry for the older generation that aren't so tech savvy. Also to try and find and apply for hog deer tags is just a pain. A simple "apply for hog deer tags" tab on the home page would save a lot of time and effort.”

- Information about **where you can legally hunt** (11%) – including providing more accurate / clearer information about hunting locations, making hunting maps more detailed and making hunting maps more interactive; and
 - In particular, those endorsed to hunt deer only (17%, compared to 3% of those endorsed to hunt gamebirds and 8% endorsed for both) and newer hunters with less than 3 years' experience (18%, compared to 8% of those with more than 10 years' experience) were more likely to feel this information could be improved;

“Be more accurate especially with deer hunting areas. Having been chastised over 'being in a no hunting area' that both GMA and the maps say IS a hunting area causes undue stress and poor satisfaction with both GMA and Parks Victoria.”

“If you could click on a map or type in an area, then what you want to hunt and have it bring up the info for that area, including bag limits, species, times, license/permit required.”

“The where to hunt info on maps I find a bit difficult because there are often no road or track names. So I find it a bit hard to exactly determine the legal to hunt area.”

- **Notification of changes** / rules and regulations (10%) – including providing this information on the home page or another easily accessible page, ensuring information about changes is clear (e.g. in plain English) and how changes would impact hunters (e.g. by providing examples);

“Have a page of updates, what's been updated, and what it changed from.”

“Making new rules or changes on its home page with a hatched box and flashing to alert anyone reading to take notice of this flashing information.”

“The information provided is clear, however more 'real-life' examples of applying the regulations in the field would be most beneficial. Perhaps a list of common 'can I – can't I' examples, [which is] used well on the CFA website regarding fire lightings during different periods.”

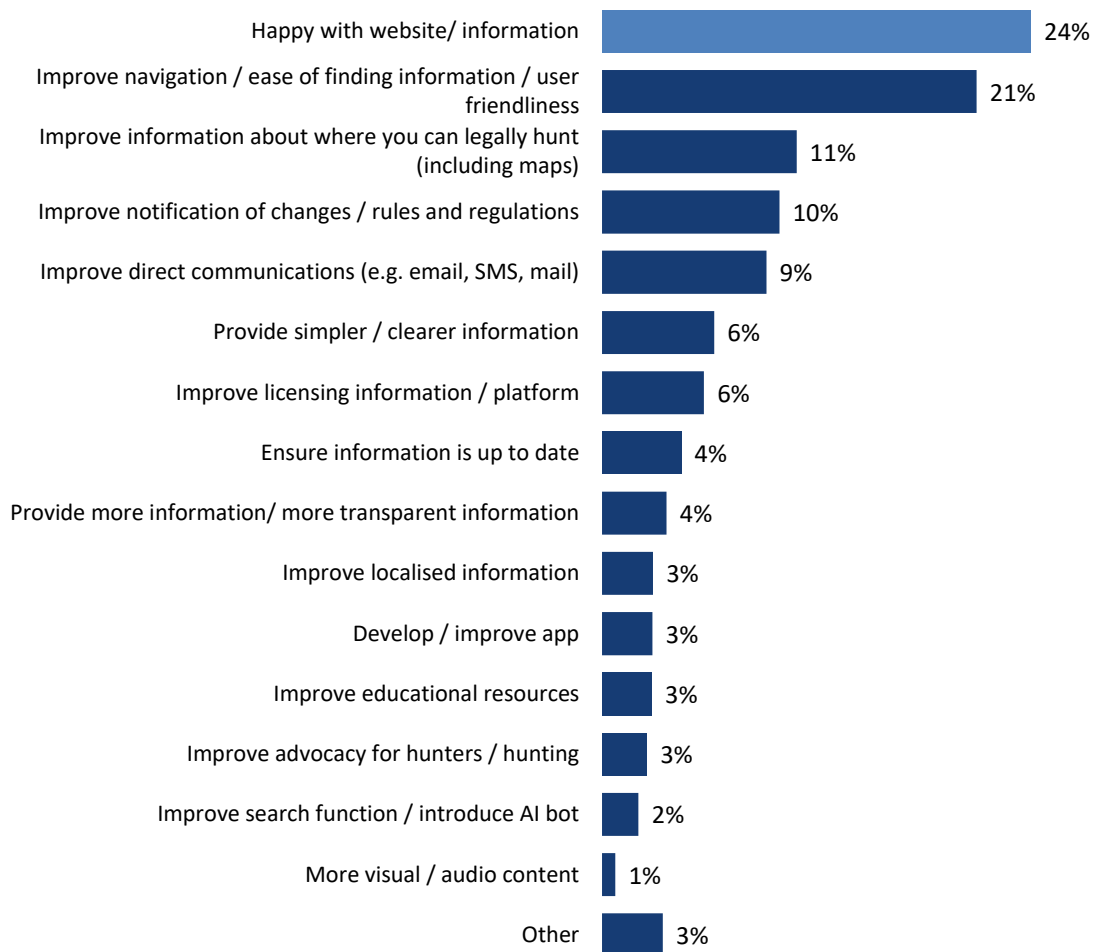
- Desire to obtain information through **direct communications** (9%) rather than through the website, such as via email, SMS and mail.

“Major changes to current legislation / regulations should be pushed via email / SMS. For example, I've only just found out via other media that hospitals swamps will be open for duck hunting soon. Why wasn't I advised even if I have a licence for duck and I live around the area?”

“At present, there's no communication or indication that changes to rules and regulations have been made. The only way I found out was when trying to get a license, and saw that compulsory education is required, and changes to testing etc is also in place. Is it that hard to email updates to people that subscribe or have licenses?”

Suggestions to improve information provided on the GMA / MyGL website

Base: Respondents who had visited the GMA / MyGL website (n=923)



GMA social media

Facebook

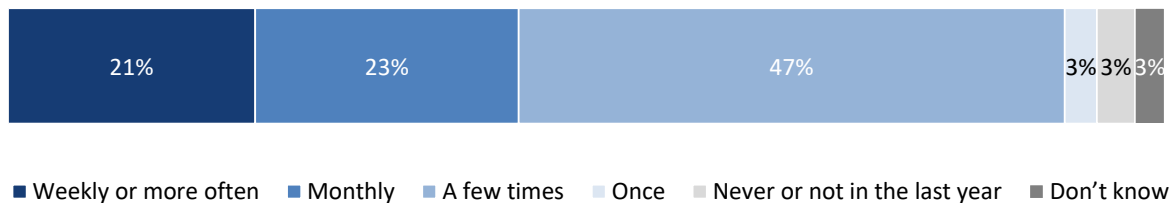
Around one quarter (24%) of game licence holders had seen information on the GMA's Facebook page. Younger game licence holders aged 16-34 (36%, compared to 18% of those aged 55+) and those who were members of a hunting association or club (28%, compared to 18% of non-members) were more likely to have seen information on Facebook.

Of those who recalled seeing information on Facebook, most (91%) recalled seeing Facebook posts at least 'a few times' or more often in the last 12 months.

Most (77%) of those who recalled seeing Facebook posts indicated that they did follow the GMA on Facebook.

How often seen GMA Facebook posts in last 12 months

Base: Respondents who had seen GMA Facebook posts (n=1,057)



Those who had seen GMA Facebook posts reported generally positive perceptions of the page and posts, particularly posts being easy to understand (81%) and relevant to their game hunting (79%). However, while still positive, there was lower agreement that GMA Facebook posts capture their attention (68%) compared to other aspects.

Suggestions provided by game licence holders to improve how to capture attention included:

- Using real people (such as hunters) and stories to convey information; and

“Use people, use actual hunters to help get the message across. This could prove difficult as a lot of the stuff you’re trying to push across people won’t like, but just try make it more relatable.”

“Make it more personable. Maybe have familiar faces or consistency with speakers / reps.”

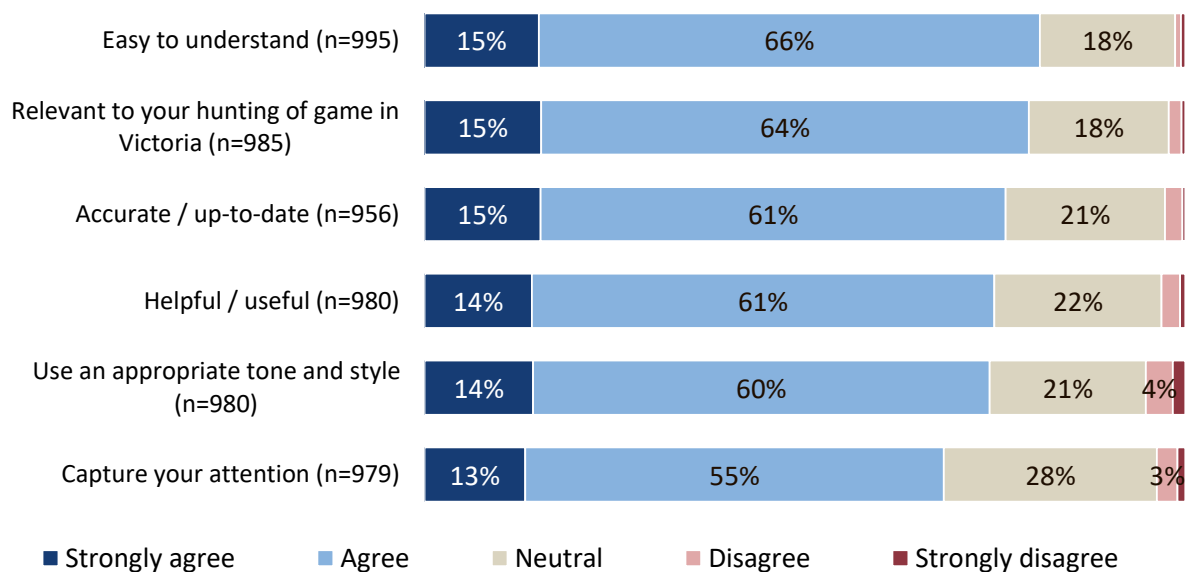
- Presenting information in a more ‘creative’ way.

“Engaging content, I feel it’s far too government style and enforcement based, it’s a bit daggy.”

“Once again, reasons behind the changes, and get someone with a creative streak to design it. Most of the content is dry, bland, and boring to read.”

Perceptions of GMA Facebook page and posts

Base: Respondents who had seen GMA Facebook posts



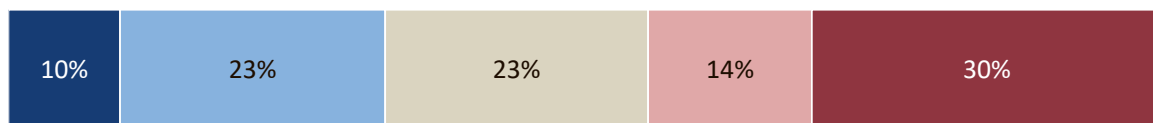
Specific findings on selected Facebook materials tested in the qualitative research are presented in *Chapter IV: Findings from materials testing*.

Around half (44%) of game licence holders were aware that the GMA had a Facebook page. However, only around one third (33%) of those not aware said they were 'likely' to follow or visit the GMA Facebook page.

The main reason game licence holders were unlikely to visit or follow the GMA Facebook was because they don't use Facebook (84%). Only very few of these game licence holders who did not use Facebook said they got information from other social media channels like Instagram (2%) or TikTok (<1%). Instead, these respondents indicated the best way for them to get information was through the GMA website, email and SMS updates.

Likelihood of visiting / following GMA Facebook page in next 12 months

Base: Respondents who were not aware the GMA had a Facebook page (n=2,342)



■ Extremely likely ■ Very likely ■ Somewhat likely ■ Not very likely ■ Not at all likely

YouTube

Very few (4%) game licence holders had seen information from the GMA on YouTube in the last 12 months. Younger game licence holders aged 16-34 (6%, compared to 3% of those aged 55+) were more likely to have seen information on YouTube.

The majority (60%) of those who had seen information from the GMA YouTube indicated they had watched GMA videos at least 'a few times' or more often. Notably, around one quarter (26%) said they had not watched GMA videos in the last year, suggesting that these respondents may have been misattributing where they had seen information on YouTube or seen other game hunting content on YouTube (not from the GMA).

Only 37% of those who had visited the GMA YouTube channel were subscribed to it.

How often watched GMA YouTube videos in last 12 months

Base: Respondents who had seen GMA YouTube videos (n=162)

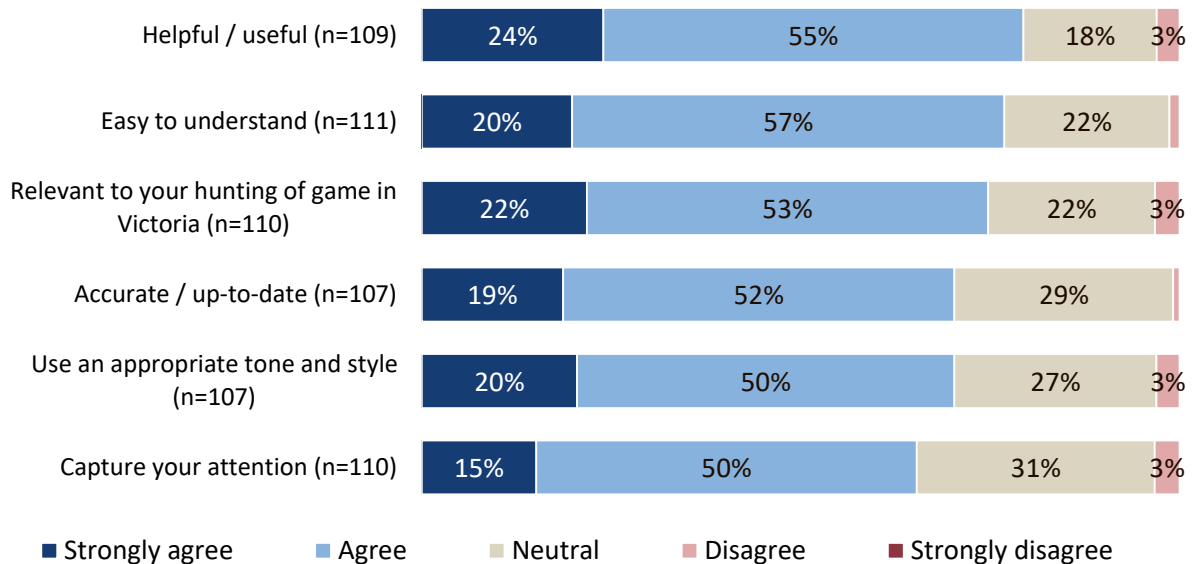


■ More than five times ■ A few times ■ Once ■ Never or not in the last year ■ Don't know/ not sure

Those who had seen GMA YouTube videos reported generally positive perceptions of them, particularly videos being helpful / useful (79%). However, while still positive, agreement was lower that GMA YouTube videos were accurate / up-to-date (70%), use an appropriate tone and style (70%) and capture their attention (65%) compared to other aspects.

Perceptions of GMA YouTube videos

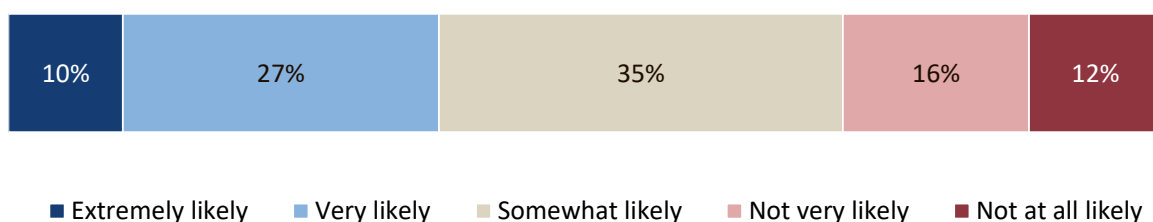
Base: Respondents who had seen GMA YouTube videos



Overall awareness of the GMA YouTube channel was fairly low among game licence holders (16%). Just over one third (37%) of those who were not aware of it said they were 'likely' to visit or subscribe to the GMA YouTube in the next 12 months. The main reason game licence holders were unlikely to visit or subscribe to the GMA YouTube channel was because they did not use YouTube (55%).

Likelihood of visiting / subscribing to GMA YouTube channel in next 12 months

Base: Respondents who were not aware the GMA had a YouTube channel (n=3,511)



Similar to the quantitative research, the qualitative research also found that, while most participants felt positively about the availability of video content from the GMA, they were unlikely to actively seek out or subscribe to the GMA YouTube channel for this content. These participants reported that they were more likely to engage with video content that was shared by the GMA on other platforms, such as Facebook.

Specific findings on selected YouTube videos tested in the qualitative research are presented in *Chapter IV: Findings from materials testing*.

Suggestions for improvement

When asked how the GMA could improve information it provides on its social media, a notable proportion of game licence holders indicated they were currently happy with the information (16%). Suggestions for improvement to the GMA social media channels mainly related to:

- Making more **positive posts** about hunting / hunters / advocating for hunting (15%) – including content about positive interactions with hunters in the field, highlighting how the GMA is supporting hunters and promoting hunting and its benefits (it is noted that promoting hunting is outside the GMA's remit);
 - Younger hunters aged 18-34 were more likely to mention they wanted to see more positive posts (27%, compared to 8% of those aged 55+);

"Be more positive and supporting of the people doing the right things, all I see is rules and posts of people doing the wrong things."

"Be a stronger advocate of hunters. Great to see post catching illegal hunting but would be great to also see more positive posts about hunters and the benefits of hunting to the community, environment and people's wellbeing."

"Seems like the only stuff I see posted is about compliance or people getting caught poaching. I don't care about that stuff - I want to see and hear more info around game management initiatives, info on game animals and time and effort put into actually providing 'management' not just 'compliance, as it would seem is the only thing that is done, based off correspondence I've seen."

"A few more good news stories and quotes from positive interactions and the promotion of hunting and the GMA's work as public servants. Promote hunting because without it there will be no GMA."

- Posting more **often / regularly** (15%) in general –although few comments included suggestions about preferred frequency of posts;

"Have someone who understands hunting and is posting on a regular basis. Not daily but regularly enough."

"Be more active and post more regularly stating how they are trying to better help hunters and listen to what we want."

"Regular posts and good timing."

- Improving **visibility / awareness** of the GMA's social media channels (11%); and

"More promotion of online presence."

"Get more involved with hunting club Facebook pages including clubs outside Victoria."

"Have links in their posts linked to their other sites - for example, links to their YouTube materials can be included in Facebook posts as lots of people see their Facebook posts."

- Improving the **clarity / detail** of information (9%) – particularly to ensure that information is not misinterpreted;

"Make it more simple to understand. I feel like the ambiguity of information is deliberately off putting so shooters give up looking."

"By being more thorough in providing information. I find information to be very broad and can get easily misinterpreted."

"Perhaps more videos from key staff talking through changes in regulation, what it means and then vs now. Providing succinct, plain English explanations and scenarios to the community."

- Providing more information on **rules and regulations**, including hunting locations (7%).

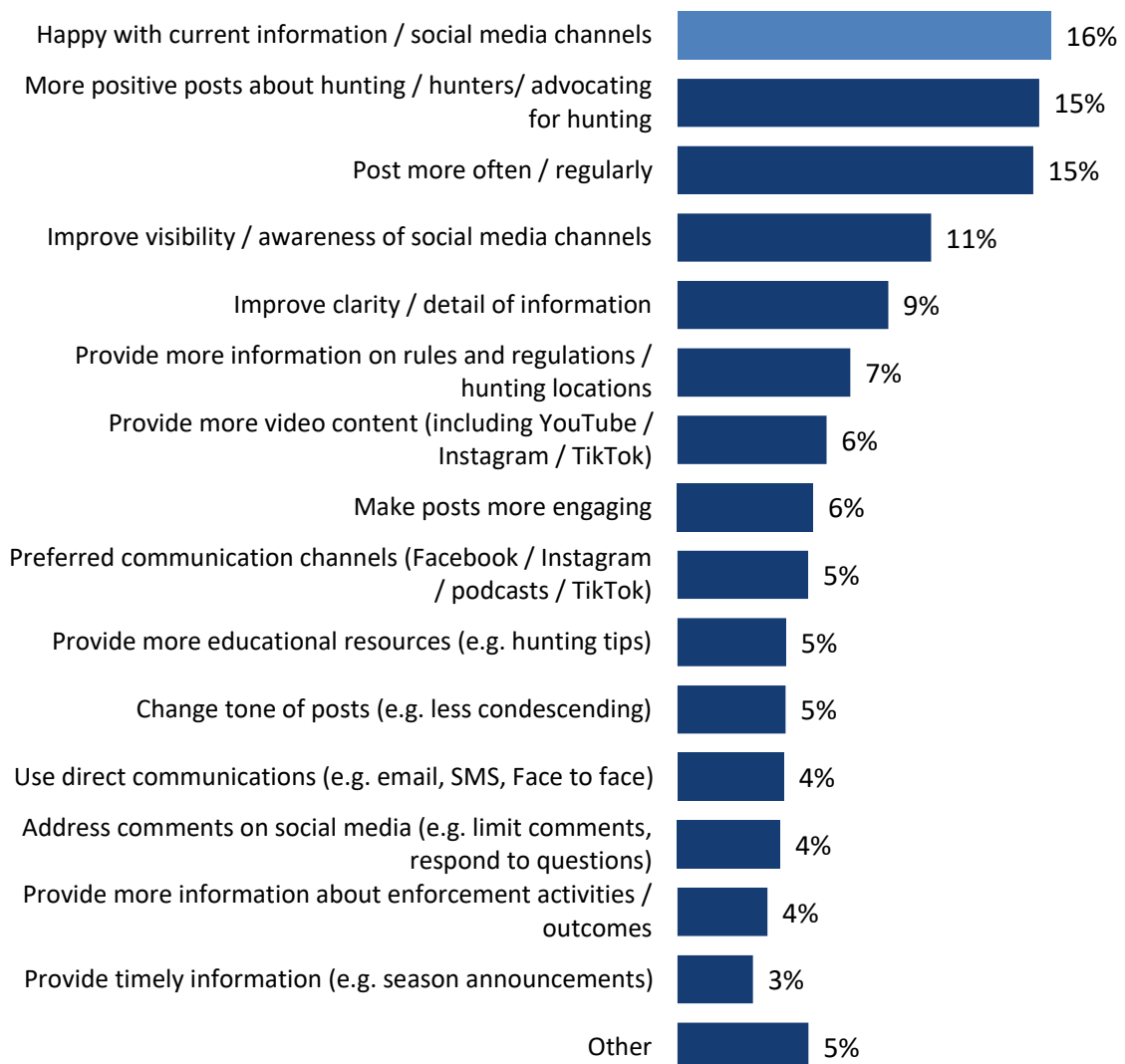
"To be very clear on where we are allowed to hunt and to have easy access to that information."

"Areas open and areas closed. Stop telling us how to hunt and start education about what is legal and illegal."

"More comprehensive list of laws / regulations. Especially regarding the use of a firearm for hunting. More details as to what offenders were doing when breaking the rules. Videos of positive and negative interactions with hunters in the field."

Suggestions to improve how GMA provides information on its social media

Base: Respondents who had used GMA Facebook or YouTube (n=434)



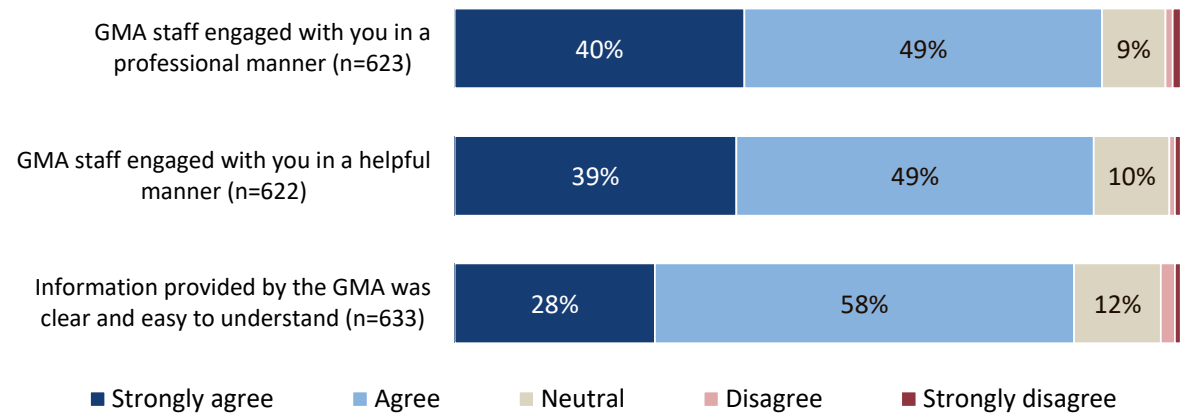
GMA staff

Overall, 15% of game licence holders had seen or heard information from GMA staff through its Customer Contact Centre, an expo or industry event or a GMA Game Officer in the field.

Those who had seen or heard information from GMA staff had positive perceptions of their interactions, particularly GMA staff being professional (89%) and helpful (88%).

Perceptions of interactions with GMA staff

Base: Respondents who had gotten information from the GMA through its Customer Contact Centre, an expo or industry event or a GMA Game Officer in the field



REDUCE Wounding campaign

Around half (42%) of game licence holders recalled seeing advertisements or information about the REDUCE Wounding campaign. Those endorsed to hunt duck (65%, compared to 27% of those not endorsed to hunt duck), or who were members of a hunting association or club (50%, compared to 30% of those who were not), were more likely to recall seeing campaign materials.

Those who recalled seeing it most commonly saw it on Facebook (47%), the GMA website (40%), through a hunting association / club website (26%) or the MyGL website / education modules (23%).

Younger game licence holders aged 16-34 were more likely to have seen information about the REDUCE Wounding campaign on Facebook (68%, compared to 33% of those aged 55+). In contrast, those aged 55+ were more likely to have seen information about the campaign on the GMA website (43%, compared to 33% of those aged 16-34) and hunting association / club websites (34%, compared to 14%).

Where saw information about the REDUCE Wounding campaign

Base: Respondents who had seen advertisements or information about the REDUCE Wounding campaign (n=1,757)



Specific findings on selected REDUCE Wounding campaign materials tested in the qualitative research are presented in *Chapter IV: Findings from materials testing*.

IV. Information preferences

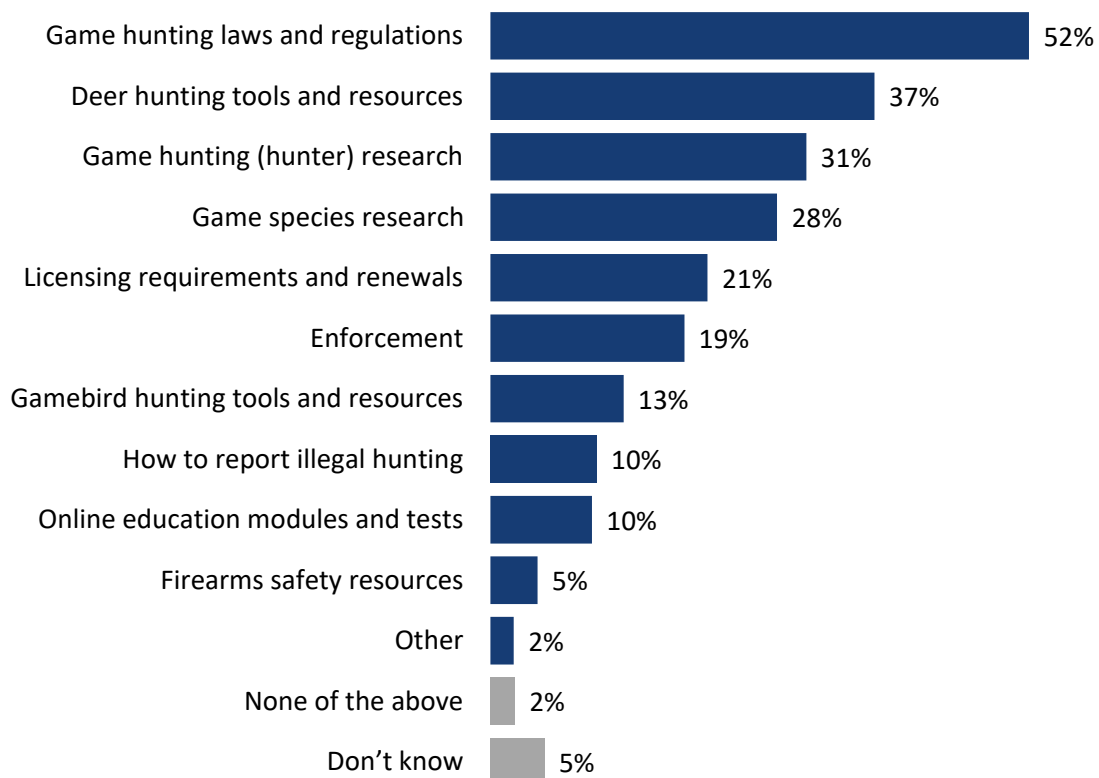
The main type of information game licence holders wanted to see more of from the GMA in the next 12 months was information about game hunting laws and regulations (52%). Around one third wanted to see more information about:

- Deer hunting tools and resources (37%);
- Game hunting research (31%); and
- Game species research (28%).

Those who had been hunting for more than 10 years expressed greater interest in seeing information about enforcement (21%, compared to 14% of those for less than 3 years) and how to report illegal hunting (11%, compared to 8%). Similarly, those who were members of a hunting association or club were more interested in seeing enforcement information (21%, compared to 15% of non-members), suggesting that more engaged hunters are more interested in enforcement.

Types of information would like to see more of from the GMA

Base: All respondents (n=4,188)



As shown in the charts below and overleaf, the preferred channels of information for hunting seasons, changes to hunting laws and regulations, and education resources were the same. The GMA website was the most preferred channel of information, followed by email newsletter, Facebook and SMS update. These results suggest that game licence holders have a strong preference for direct communications (particularly email) but also value having a go-to source of information like the GMA website.

These were the preferred channels for all age groups, however younger game licence holders aged 16-34 were more likely to prefer getting information from:

- Social media channels including Facebook (35-36%, compared to 17-18% of those aged 55+), Instagram (9-10%, compared to 1-2%) and YouTube (6-14%, compared to 4-6%); and
- Hunting / firearms retail stores (13-19%, compared to 9-10%).

Older respondents aged 55+ were more likely to want information from their hunting association / club website (24-26%, compared to 7-8% of those aged 16-34), reflecting that this cohort were more likely to be members of a hunting association or club.

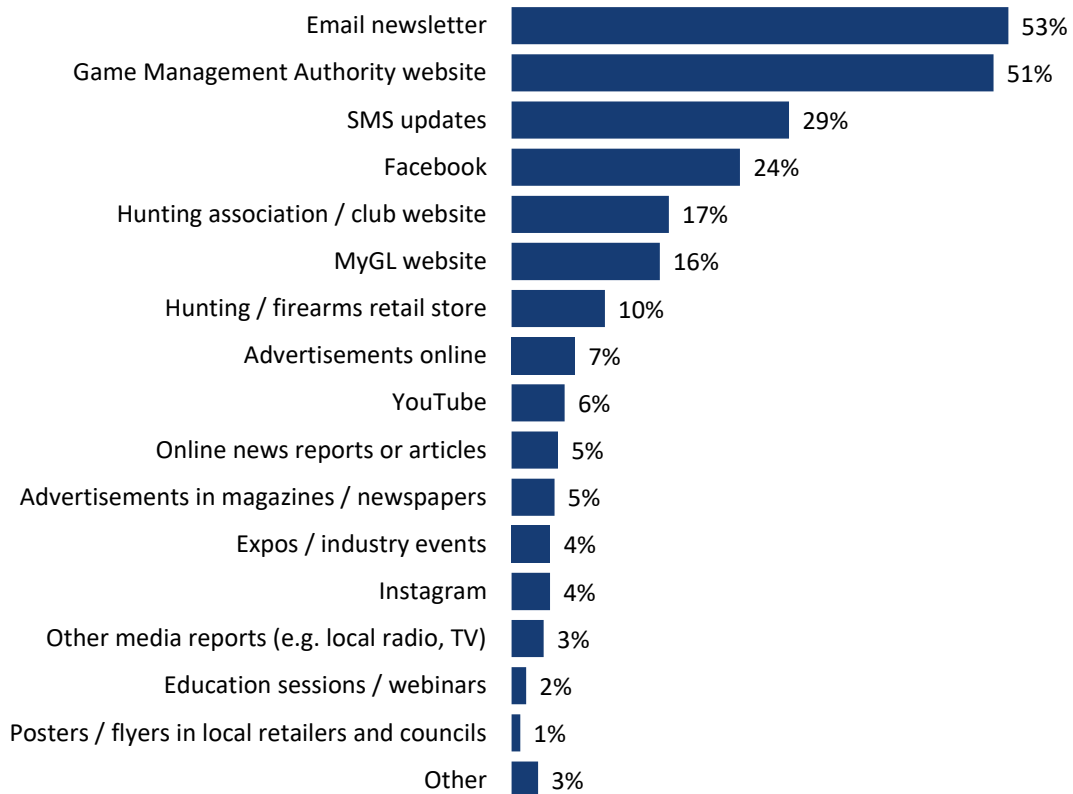
Preferred channels of information for hunting seasons

Base: All respondents (n=4,253)

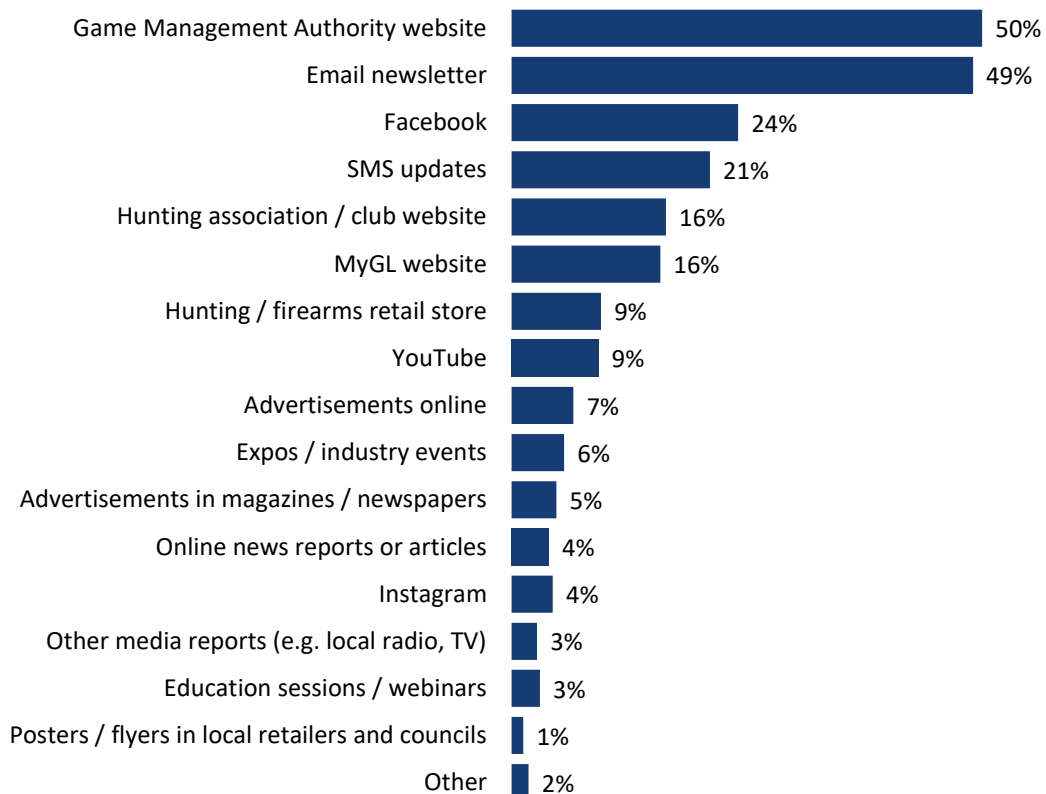


Preferred channels of information for changes to hunting laws and regulations

Base: All respondents (n=4,238)

**Preferred channels of information for education resources**

Base: All respondents (n=4,220)





The qualitative research found that many participants **expressed a preference for receiving ‘push’ information** about changes to hunting rules and regulations by direct communication channels from the GMA (i.e. email and SMS), as this was felt to be **important information that needed to be received in a timely manner**. Without direct communications, participants reported that they may miss key information/ updates if they were not regularly checking the website / the relevant sections of the website, which may contribute to unintentional illegal hunting behaviours (e.g. hunting in an area that had recently closed).

“If something is changing mid-season... let the people know what’s going on”–Duck hunter participant

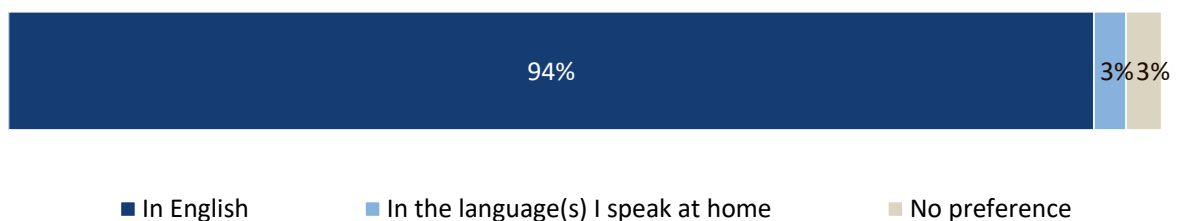
Materials provided in another language

Nearly all game licence holders (94%) who spoke a language other than English at home indicated they preferred to receive information about game hunting in Victoria in English.

Those who preferred to receive information in the language they spoke at home were more likely to be new hunters with less than 3 years’ experience (7%, compared to 2% of those with 3-10 years’ and 2% of those with more than 10 years’ experience).

Preferred language to receive information about game hunting in Victoria

Base: Respondents who speak a language other than English at home (n=467)



General suggestions for improvement

When asked about whether they have any general suggestions to improve how GMA communicates with them, a notable proportion of game licence holders indicated they were currently happy with GMA's current communications (17%). Suggestions for improvement to the GMA social media channels most commonly related to increasing direct communications and improving how they are notified about changes, specifically:

- Improving communications through **email** (32%) – including suggestions for a regular email newsletter and desire for email updates regarding changes to hunting rules and regulations, licence renewal reminders and area closures;

"Emails are more frequently checked so new information and updates would be ideal. Opt-in to certain emails would tailor what people are interested in (education, research etc). Social media updates can get drowned out amongst all the other posts."

"I think a monthly email with major updates would be great. Something that is simple to the point and easy to read. Doesn't have to be long or complicated."

"If any changes are made to laws (e.g. lead free ammo) this should be sent via text and email to ensure hunters are aware. We try to do the right thing however it's not reasonable or pro focal for us to search through the website before each and every hunt to see if anything has changed (the fact changes are not very often also means we wouldn't really think to do this)."

"My preference is email. I tend to read more on emails than anywhere else. SMS I tend to read and dismiss but emails I can go back to and read at my leisure."

- Providing timely **notifications about changes** (13%) – including announcements for hunting seasons and closures and changes to hunting rules and regulations; and

"Would be great if the GMA contacted people with game licences about any change to practice via mail with heaps of notice before change i.e. change of use of lead shot on private property. I only found out through my gun shop. This could have been a very serious offence."

"Provide information (dates, licences, lake closures and duck count numbers) much earlier not days / a week prior to season commencing."

"With laws surrounding game hunting and firearms, I think most people want to do the right thing but are worried about missing some law or doing something wrong (which is probably why people ask questions on forums). If info is provided clearly on the website as the authority it puts people at ease that they've got the correct info."

"It would be good to see more information sent about updates on closures. More frequent updates and reminders would be good also."

- Improving communication through **SMS** (12%) – including updates regarding changes to hunting rules and regulations, area closures and licence renewal reminders (as well as providing links to further information).

"Any change to laws, regulations or hunting season times and bag limits should be notified by SMS. Details can be reviewed on the MyGL / GMA websites after being made aware by SMS."

"SMS notifications would be handy provided they are pertinent to something that needs immediate attention from a trusted source such as changes to hunting dates / bag limits / laws / license expiration reminders etc, otherwise the usual emails are fine."

"SMS update so you know you have to look at their website for news."

"I think email and SMS are the best way to communicate, at least they can advise of information that needs to be read and provided links to take you to that information."

Other suggestions provided by game licence holders included:

- Offering a **regular newsletter or updates** (10%), such as on a monthly or quarterly basis, to communicate key updates;

"I would like to see a regular emailed newsletter containing all changes to rules and regulations, hunting season information, wetland closures and links to educational material, etc."

"Monthly email, containing various information and providing links to assist with all my hunting needs."

"A monthly newsletter would be good. With law changes, prosecutions and show that you're earning your money and actually making progress on illegal activity."

- Providing **hard copy** materials (7%) such as booklets, mailed updates and information in hunting magazines;

"Maybe mail through any rule changes so we have a physical copy and can't just scroll past it."

"Go back to sending out the game management book because I used to take that with me every time I went hunting."

"Our sport spans generations, all wanting to receive or be privy to information that they simply cannot access. Not everyone pursues information around hunting / firearms, sometimes it needs to 'pop up'... For the older generation, letters, Facebook and getting some coverage in local news outlets would help."

- Increasing **advocacy for hunters / hunting** (7%) – although many of these comments related to promoting hunting, some comments expressed a desire for more positive information and engagement with hunters;
 - This was more commonly mentioned among younger hunters aged 16-34 (8%, compared to 3% of those aged 55+);

"Promote hunters hunting doing the right thing and make the information relating to regulation changes clear."

"Tell us how you are helping hunters, we pay a lot of money for our licences but don't see any material outcomes for this investment i.e. how are you campaigning for greater access to public land / reduction in aerial culls etc."

"Just be more proactive. Don't just communicate with hunters, educate the general public and turn around the stigma that's still attached to hunting."

- Using **social media or other digital channels** (7%) – including making regular posts and utilising a range of channels; and

"Continue to send Facebook updates as I find them useful."

"I like how Victoria Fisheries Authority manage their Facebook page and post a lot about where money from our licence fees goes towards. I believe GMA could do a similar thing and share with everyone what goes on behind the scenes at GMA would be good to know."

"For hunters 40 years and under, we need a vibrant and thriving Instagram and Facebook page, which interacts with its followers and posts regularly."

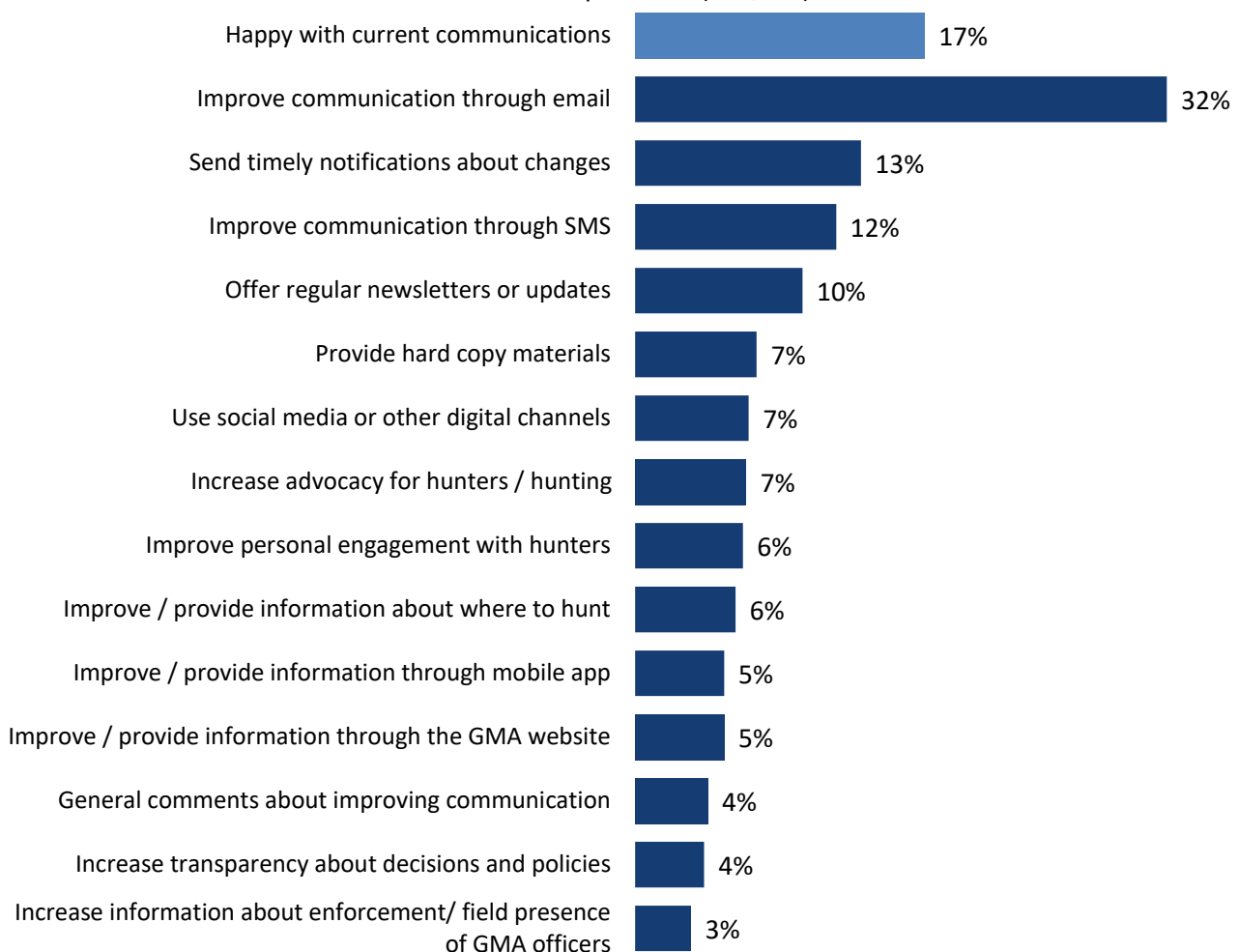
- Improving / increasing **personal engagement** with hunters (6%), such as through the Customer Contact Centre, interactions with Game Officers, educational outreach and collecting feedback from hunters.

"I'm happy with the level of communication but older people I've noticed in my group struggle. They definitely prefer a more personal one on one with people so more sessions and more interactions with game wardens would be beneficial for those guys."

"Be approachable and communicate with hunters in a fair and reasonable way. Every time one of you guys turn up it is a moment of dread thinking you have done something wrong because most of the time it's the only time we see you."

General comments and suggestions to improve how GMA communicates with game licence holders (Top 15)

Base: All respondents (n=1,075)



V. Overall perceptions of GMA

Three quarters (75%) of game licence holders agreed the GMA's services assist them to be a lawful and responsible hunter. This figure is higher than 68% recorded in the last game licence holder survey in 2021, noting that the results are not directly comparable due to the differences in the 2021 survey content compared to this project.

Overall agreement declined with hunting experience. Those with less than 3 years' experience were most positive (81%), while those with more than 10 years' experience were least positive (72%).

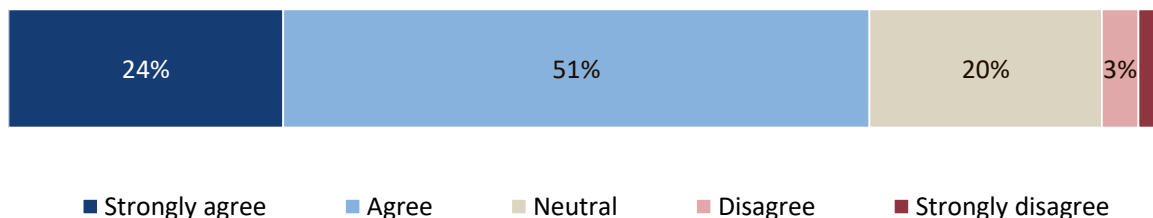
More positive perceptions of the GMA were linked with more positive perceptions of information about game hunting in Victoria. Those who agreed the GMA's services assist them to be a lawful and responsible hunter were generally more confident in their knowledge of game hunting and were more likely to have:

- Actively looked for information about game hunting (95%, compared to 88% of those who disagreed);
- Received information about game hunting (87%, compared to 70%); and
- Seen / heard information from GMA in the last 12 months (85%, compared to 60%).


Those who *disagreed* that the GMA assisted them to be a lawful and responsible hunter were much less likely to prefer to get information from the GMA website. Instead, these game licence holders had a stronger preference to receive information via email newsletter and SMS updates.

The GMA's services assist me to be a lawful and responsible hunter

Base: All respondents (n=4,123)



VI. Findings from materials testing

 A range of materials from the GMA's website, Facebook page and YouTube channel were tested in the qualitative research. These materials included **general information** about game hunting in Victoria, which were tested with participants across multiple focus groups, as well as **materials specific to duck, quail and deer hunting** which were each tested in the relevant focus group only.

Overall findings on the tested materials

Overall, most participants felt the tested materials were effective and appropriate to communicate key information hunters needed to know. The research also found that the range of channels and formats was effective and met participants' needs. More specifically, the research found that the tested materials were most effective when they:

- **Were concise and clear** – particularly when they presented information via dot points, used simple and clear wording, and had an appropriate balance of text and blank space to support readability;
- **Used relevant imagery** – e.g. by including images of ducks with information about duck hunting, depicted a deer in a spotlight in materials about illegal spotlighting. Participants reported that having relevant images alongside the text supported cut-through, engagement and understanding; and
- **Had a balanced tone** – participants reported positive perceptions of materials which cast hunting in a positive light, such as by emphasising that enforcement activities found that the majority of hunters were doing the right thing, and which helped to “build excitement” about hunting seasons, such as by “counting down” to the beginning of hunting season or sharing an overview of statistics from the season after it had closed.

Some **suggested refinements** to further strengthen the materials were also identified through the qualitative research. Detailed findings about the tested materials, including suggested refinements, are outlined in the pages to follow.

Overall findings about the GMA website

Overall, qualitative participants had **positive perceptions of the GMA website** as they felt the information presented was accurate, trustworthy and of good quality, and reported that the information was presented in an engaging way. Some participants also felt that the website had **improved in recent years**. However, some areas for improvement were also identified to support understanding and ease of finding desired information.

Deer

Deer hunting is a popular activity in Victoria. Deer introduced by acclimatisation societies have been recorded in the wild in Victoria since at least the 1860s.

Today, Victoria has a deer population, predominantly made up of Sambar, Fallow and Red Deer.

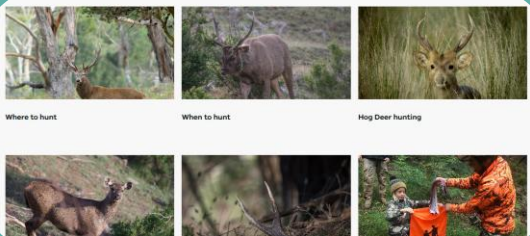
Most deer hunting occurs in the east of the state, however, as deer populations expand, more deer hunting is occurring in the west of the state.

Except for Hog Deer, there is no bag limit for deer. There is also no closed season for deer, except for Hog Deer and Sambar Deer hunting with hounds. Recreational hunting isn't permitted at night (half an hour after sunset until half an hour before sunrise).


There are over 50,000 licensed deer hunters in Victoria. Deer hunting supports industry and generates economic activity in regional areas. However, deer can cause damage to crops, fences and other infrastructure, as well as compete with livestock for feed on private properties. Where they are causing damage, deer can be controlled using methods that aren't permitted for recreational hunting, under strict controls.

(Photo by Hog Dorian)

Hunting with hounds → Hunting maze → Deer hunting fact sheets → Deer hunting education module →



Where to hunt When to hunt Hog Deer hunting



✓ **Appealing and relevant imagery** – which was found to increase engagement.

Hunting Maps

The Victorian hunting maps show where hunting game and pest species is permitted on public land in Victoria.

Some areas open to hunting can be easily identified due to distinct and easily recognisable boundaries (e.g. roads) while others can be difficult to identify and are only defined by physical features or lines on a map.

There are two options you can choose from to check where hunting is permitted on public land in Victoria.

+ Expand all - Collapse all


More To Explore app

New electronic hunting maps have now been added as a layer to the 'More To Explore' mobile phone app.

The electronic mapping system shows all public land available to hunting and the species that can be hunted in specific areas, including game species and pests.

The maps can also be downloaded for use offline, when out of mobile range.

The app also provides comprehensive information on State Forest camping sites and other activities, including bushwalking and mountain bike trails as well as 4WD tracks and seasonal road closures.



✓ **Use of links and expanding sub-menus** – to present “high” level and summarised information, with option to seek greater detail where desired.

Stubble Quail

The Stubble Quail is the only native species that can be legally hunted in Victoria. Approximately 150,000 stubble quail are harvested each year predominantly on private property in stubble paddocks and pasture. [Public land State Game Reserves](#) are open to Stubble Quail hunting.

From 2025 lead shot is banned under the new [Wildlife \(Game\) Regulations 2024](#).

Stubble Quail season arrangements

Open season: the season opens on the first Saturday of April and closes on the last day of June, each year. Hunting is permitted from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset throughout the season.

Bag limit: maximum 20 birds per day.

Hunting Methods: shotgun only, not exceeding 12 gauge. Lead shot is prohibited for all game bird hunting, including for Stubble Quail. Hunters are required to use non-toxic shot only. Non-toxic shot options are listed in [Schedule 6](#) of the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024.

Gundogs may be used to assist in hunting Stubble Quail.

The use of electronic quail callers is not permitted.

Stubble Quail hunting maps → Stubble Quail research → Quail hunting education module → Non toxic shot types →

GMA Recommendation on 2025 Stubble Quail season arrangements →

Duck hunting methods and laws

In Victoria, you can only use a shotgun to hunt ducks that does not exceed 12 gauge or have more than two barrels. Only non-toxic shot can be used and hunters caught using or possessing lead shot run the risk of fines, firearms seizure and court.

You must have passed the [Waterfowl Identification Test](#) in order to obtain a game licence to hunt ducks. Make sure you have a valid game and firearms licence when you are hunting.

All hunters must leave a fully-feathered wing on any harvested duck until immediately prior to cooking or until the duck has been taken to the person's ordinary place of residence. This allows Authorised Officers to quickly and accurately identify all waterfowl in a hunter's possession.

Recovering gamebirds → Hunting with gundogs → Hunting from a boat →

Blinds and hides → Non-toxic shot types → Public safety on wetlands →

Duck hunting laws

Recreational duck hunting in Victoria is managed sustainably, with the bag limits and season dates set to ensure that hunting does not threaten the conservation status of game duck species.

Duck seasons arrangements may change from time to time; and hunters should always check current regulations, season dates, and bag limits.

Some game species may be protected from hunting at particular times, such as during drought, or bag limits may be changed in response to population numbers and/or environmental conditions.

Overall findings about the GMA website (cont'd)

- ✗ **Placement of key information** (e.g. about laws, regulations and licensing requirements) – which participants felt was difficult to find due to being placed at the bottom of webpages and/ or not clearly signposted (e.g. without specific section headings).
- **Consider increasing the prominence of information on laws, regulations and licencing requirements, particularly where these had been changed** (e.g. a summary of legal requirements or changes to rules and regulations at the top of the webpage or through concise factsheets).

"The information's there, but it's not quite clear enough. It's not really that black and white 'if you're doing this, you're doing the wrong thing'" – Deer hunter participant

Where to hunt

There are many land classifications throughout Victoria and, depending on the type, hunting may or may not be permitted. The table below provides general information on where you may hunt.

More detailed information on the land classifications can be found at the bottom of [this page](#).

For more specific details, refer to the additional information provided and visit the [Victorian Government's website](#). If you are unsure about hunting on a particular area, you can check the status of a particular area of public land, contact the [pastoralist/DCCA office](#) or [ask a ranger](#) at the nearest office. An advice hunting is permitted on or around <https://www.sustainable.vic.gov.au/forestry/land-use/forestry>.

Notes: the below pages are not able to be searched for on the hunting maps:

- Thompson Forest Forest Reserve
- Deakin Area Forest Reserve
- Heath Creek Sanctuary
- Goodwin Creek Forest Reserve

See the information below for more information about these sites.

Hunting Maps →	Areas closed to all Deer Hunting →
Areas closed to all feral hunting →	Seasonal road closures →

Hunting locations explained

Location	Is hunting permitted?
State forest, forest parks, ex-Conservation and (State) and (State) forest	Game species may be hunted during the season season only. Pest animals may be hunted at any time. Only deer hunting is permitted in the Thompson Forest Forest Reserve
Crown land	

- ✕ **Limited detail about how rules and regulations could be practically applied to everyday hunting situations** (e.g. what equipment to use, where to hunt) – which participants reported meant that they needed to supplement GMA information with other sources. A couple of participants also reported that they had unintentionally broken the law as a result of not finding the information they needed.
- **Consider increasing specificity of legal information** – to provide greater granularity and clarification about legal requirements and specifications. In particular, participants reported a desire for concise and practical summary lists of legal requirements (e.g. a list of legal ‘do’s and ‘do-not’s) presented by equipment type/ game licence type.

Changes to gamebird licensing conditions

From 2025 (inclusive), there are important changes to licensing conditions for new gamebird hunters.

As a condition of their licence, all new gamebird hunters must complete the online education modules and knowledge tests, before being permitted to hunt gamebirds in Victoria.

All new duck hunters must first complete:

- The **Hunting** **basics** online education module
- The **Duck** **Hunting** **basics** online education module
- The **Waterfowl** **Identification Test** online education module.

All new **Stubble Quail** and **introduced** gamebird hunters need to complete:

- The **Hunting** **basics** online education module
- The **Quail** and **introduced** gamebirds online education module.

Knowledge tests are conducted in each education module. Applicants must pass the knowledge test to successfully complete the module.

If you have not held a gamebird licence previously, you are considered a new gamebird hunter.

New applicants for a Game Licence to hunt duck or quail in 2025

New gamebird licence applicants can access the online education modules in MyGL from 17 February 2025.

To complete the online education modules, applicants for a Game Licence to hunt duck or quail must first [register for a MyGL account](#).¹⁷

By registering for a MyGL account, applicants will be able to access the online education modules and tests and apply for a Game Licence from 17 February 2025.

The online education modules can be completed within MyGL at any time, prior to applying for a Gamebird Licence.

The Hunting **basics** online education module only needs to be completed once if an applicant wants to apply for a Game Licence for both duck and quail.

Complete your online education modules and apply for a Game Licence (MyGL) →

Existing and previous gamebird hunters

People who hold a current gamebird licence or have previously held a gamebird licence do not need to complete the education modules and knowledge tests prior to hunting in the 2025 season.

For previous gamebird hunters, to apply for a gamebird licence in 2025 without completing the online education modules, you will need to provide your date of birth and species you want to hunt, via email to game.licensing@bma.vic.gov.au.

From 2026, all new gamebird hunters and anyone reapplying for a gamebird licence will need to complete the online education modules and knowledge test.

Existing and previous gamebird hunters do not need to repeat the Waterfowl Identification Test.

See [Licensing and Documents](#) for more information on the renewal process.

Renew my Game Licence (MyGL) →

New and renewing duck hunters are not automatically endorsed to hunt quail

From February 2025, new and renewing duck hunters will no longer be automatically permitted to hunt quail and introduced gamebirds in Victoria.

To be eligible to hunt quail and introduced gamebirds, new hunters must first complete the quail education modules and knowledge tests.

There is no additional fee to add quail to a Game Licence endorsed to hunt duck, and vice versa.

Existing licence holders endorsed to hunt duck can continue to hunt quail until renewal of their Game Licence. Upon renewal, to hunt duck and quail in Victoria, hunters must first complete the **Hunting** **basics**, **Duck** **Hunting** **basics** and **Quail** and **introduced** gamebirds education modules.

Quail and introduced gamebird hunting education

The **Stubble Duck** is the most common non-native quail species in Australia, and is the only quail species that can be legally hunted as **Victorian Stubble Duck** may only be hunted during the open season. There is a daily bag limit and specific times that apply to hunting stubble and introduced.



The information contained in the **Quail and introduced gamebird education module** is based on Victoria's legislated hunting seasons. The course encompasses any changes made over time. Hunters should check the **Stubble Duck Hunting** page for more information.

Most **Stubble Duck** hunting occurs on private property. There are also Victorian State Game Reserves that allow the hunting of **Stubble Duck** during the open season.



All species of pheasant and partridge, francolin, quail and California Quail are introduced game birds, and may only be hunted in Victoria throughout the year on public and private property. Introduced game bird hunting generally occurs on private land, unless commercial game bird farms.

The **Victorian game bird checklist** - **Mitigating Education Program Handbook** and the **Quail and introduced game bird education module** have information on hunting **Stubble Duck** and introduced francolin and quail, including illustrations, diagrams and videos.

Education module: Quail and introduced gamebirds-Quail section

Introduced gamebird species

Equipment

Stubble Duck and introduced game bird hunters are only permitted to use shotguns, and must be no greater than 12 gauge and with no more than three barrels. Hunters are required to use new time shot only New Time shot options are listed on [Stubble 12](#) of the **Victorian Game Regulations 2016**.


Chokes and loads

Different loads have different ball sizes and types, and these factors may change the choke and chokeball combination required.

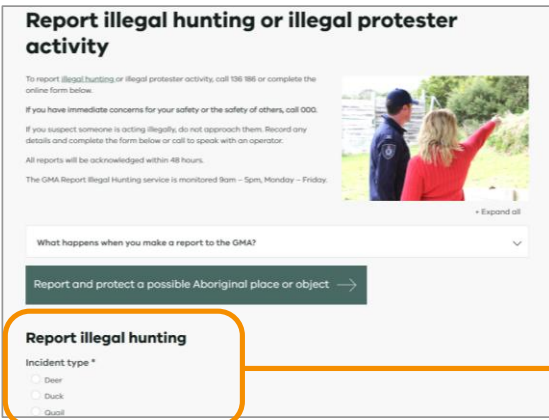
A common mistake made by many game bird hunters is the incorrect chokeball of shot used. This affects the ability to meet minimum patterns and penetration requirements. It is important to understand that the shot can vary depending on the gun or cartridge. Load may not be the same on that gun for another.

Check out the **Shooting club section** of the **Quail and introduced game birds education module** for more information on selecting choke and chokeball combinations.

Two choices, reliable, ball, before you can be used to check the shot on range and



Specific findings about the reporting illegal hunting webpage



Report illegal hunting or illegal protester activity

To report illegal hunting or illegal protester activity, call 136 186 or complete the online form below.

If you have immediate concerns for your safety or the safety of others, call 000.

If you suspect someone is acting illegally, do not approach them. Record any details and complete the form below or call to speak with an operator.

All reports will be acknowledged within 48 hours.

The GMA Report Illegal Hunting service is monitored 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday.

What happens when you make a report to the GMA?

Report and protect a possible Aboriginal place or object →

Report illegal hunting

Incident type *

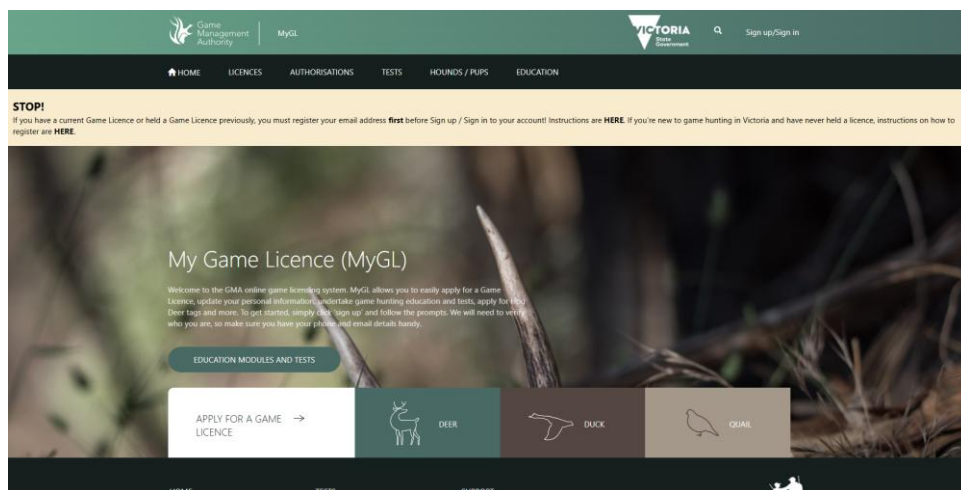
☐ Deer

☐ Duck

☐ Quail


- ✕ **Reference to illegal hunting only** (rather than illegal hunting and protesting) – which reduced awareness of ability to report both types of illegal activity. For a couple of participants this also increased the perception that reports of illegal protester activity were less likely to be followed up compared to reports of illegal hunting.
- » **Include information about both illegal hunting and illegal protesting behaviour on webpage.**
- » **Update title of online reporting form to 'Report illegal hunting or illegal protestor activity' or similar.**

Specific findings about the MyGL website



- ✕ **Challenges finding required information on MyGL website** – participants reported that it was unclear when to access the GMA website and MyGL website to access the information they needed and often found they were redirected between the two websites when searching for information.
- » **Consider how the navigation between the MyGL and GMA website could be improved to increase ease of access to information and enhance user experience.**

Specific findings about the spotlighting webpage and video



Report illegal spotlighting

Game Management Authority
2.35K subscribers

19 Share Download

Spotlighting laws

A spotlight is defined as a source of artificial light, infrared, night vision or thermo-imaging device but does not include a source of light used for domestic purposes, emergency purposes or a light fitted to a motor vehicle that complies with any requirement in the Road Safety (Vehicle Regulation 2021) relating to a light of that kind.

Spotlighting involves a person using a spotlight to hunt animals.

Is spotlighting legal for recreational game hunting?

It is illegal to hunt any game deer, duck, Stubble Quail or other game birds at night. The use of spotlights for recreational hunting of any game species is prohibited, with the exception of hand-held thermo-imaging devices during the day only. See "Thermo-imaging devices" below for more information.

Illegal spotlighting is dangerous and unethical. Illegal spotlighting can result in firearm-related incidents, including injuries to persons or wildlife or damage to property.

Is spotlighting legal for hunting pest animals?

Pest animals can be hunted at night with spotlights on private property and some public land that is not recognised deer habitat. See below for more information on recognised deer habitat.

Pest animals are non-indigenous species including rabbits, hares, foxes, pig goats, feral cats and wild dogs.

Note, the recreational hunting of pest animals on Crown land does not extend to feral cats and wild dog/dingoes. Only public land managers and their agents can shoot feral cats and wild dog/dingoes on Crown land. Spotlights can be used to assist in the control of feral cats and wild dogs where that activity is permitted. See [Pest animals - Game Management Authority](#) for more information.

Can you spotlight game animals that are causing damage to crops or other assets?

Spotlights can be used to control game species where they are causing damage to assets, such as crops, pastures, re-vegetation plantings, gardens, or damage to infrastructure, such as fences and farm dams.

Controlling game species in these circumstances is not recreational hunting, but is part of managing the impacts of wildlife. Permission to control game using spotlights is provided for under the Wildlife Act 1975 including with an Authority to Control Wildlife, a Governor in Council Order or other legal instruments. These permissions will include certain conditions. For more information about the control of wildlife, including game species, contact the Conservation Regulator on 136 186 or visit [Wildlife management and control authorities | Wildlife](#)

✓ Effective and appealing video.

- Deer hunter participants reported that the video was **emotive and impactful**, particularly in relation to the creative device of the slow-motion bullet flying past the koala and campers, towards the people in the home which **effectively portrayed the risks** associated with spotlighting.
- The **drawn animation style** of the video was felt to be an **appealing and eye-catching**, supporting cut-through of information.

"It drives the message home quite eloquently – spotlighting is dangerous and it's not on" – Deer hunter participant

- However, participants also felt that spotlighting was a **well-known issue**, and as such there was scope for the GMA to expand materials to address more "modern" issues, such as thermal imaging.
- **Continue to keep up to date on current issues in relation to illegal and unethical hunting behaviours.**
- While participants expressed interest in video content as an effective format for communicating information, the GMA YouTube channel was **not a top-of-mind or preferred source**.
- **Consider posting shortform video content, such as the 'Report illegal spotlighting' video, to the GMA Facebook page to increase engagement.**

Findings about reporting illegal hunting posters

Overall, participants **felt positively** about the tested reporting illegal hunting posters, and a few had seen the posters previously. In particular, the imagery was felt to be **engaging and effective**, with the right **level of information** provided for this format.

Participants suggested that the posters would be effective if displayed on noticeboards in common hunting locations or could be promoted through the GMA's social media or via hunting associations/clubs.

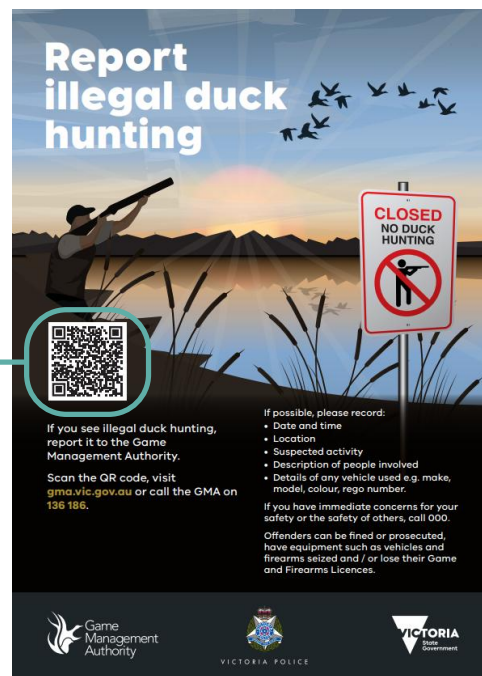
- ✓ **Appealing, effective imagery** – the drawn/ graphic style was felt to be engaging and appropriate for depicting topic.



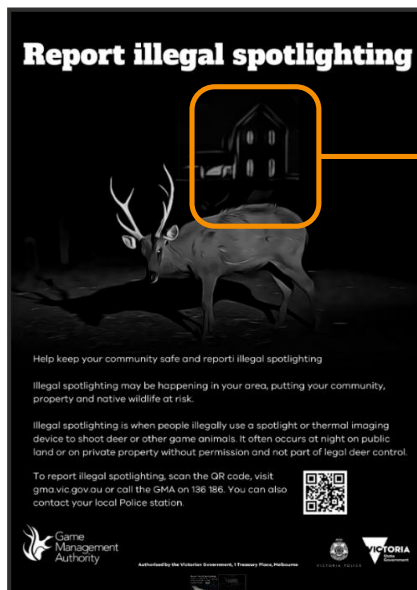
- ✓ **Summary of information needed to report** – which was felt to be important to know if they were to make a report in the future.
- ✓ **Clear and concise dot point list** – which increased cut-through and memorability of information.

"Now that the information is in front of me, I understand why they need to know this and if I see [illegal hunting] out in the field, I'll know what to look for to make a report" – Quail hunter participant

- ✓ **Use of QR code** – to allow quick and easy access to reporting website.



Findings about reporting illegal hunting posters (cont'd)



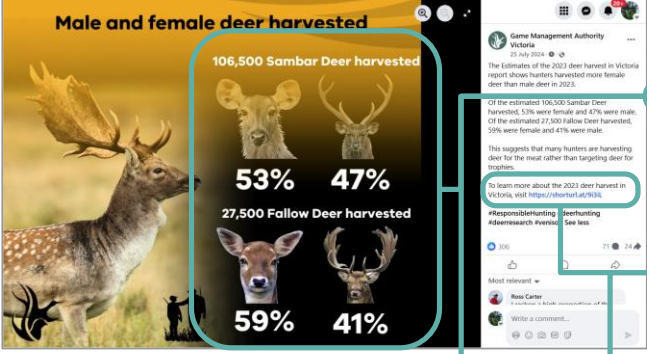
- ✕ Visually “dark” colour scheme – which participants reported made it difficult to identify the house behind the deer, which they felt was an important detail to demonstrate the risks of spotlighting.
- » Consider increasing the contrast of the poster to ensure the home is clearly identifiable.

- ✕ Light not clearly originating from spotlight – since participants felt the spotlight could be confused for vehicle headlights, which limited key message take-out.
- » Consider shifting the spotlight to the top of the vehicle to enhance clarity.



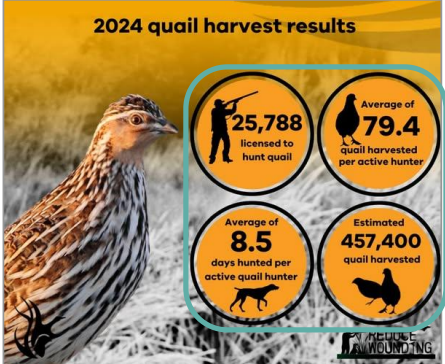
Findings on the Facebook materials

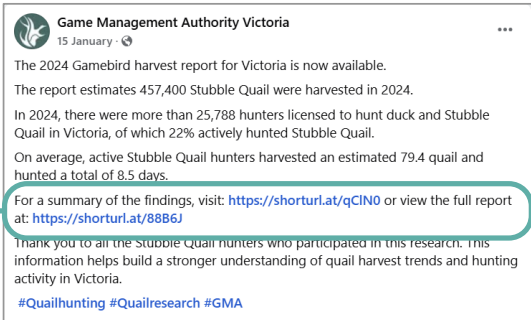
Participants felt that the GMA Facebook page was an important channel to receive regular updates on hunting information. Overall, the tested social media materials were felt to be **effective in communicating key information**, with some areas for improvement or refinement identified.



✓ **Use of statistics and infographics** – which participants reported were engaging and easy to understand.

✓ **Links to the full report in lead-in post** – which provided a convenient way of accessing the full report for a couple of participants who were interested in this information.





✓ **Appealing, relevant imagery** – which enhanced engagement.



✗ **“Dated” branding** – participants reported that the branding, particularly the yellow colour and gradient colour fade did not look “modern”, which reduced the visual appeal of the materials.

» **If possible, consider updating and “modernising” the look and feel of the branding.**

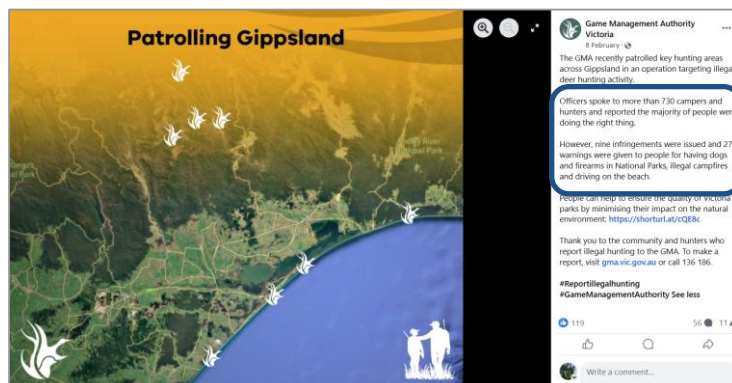
“Style-wise it could use some work. It looks a bit out of date... I’d lose the piss yellow” — Quail hunter participant

Findings on the Facebook materials (cont'd)

- ✗ Overall “negative” tone of Facebook content about duck hunting – duck hunter participants felt that the overall tone of the Facebook content was negatively skewed, due to higher perceived prevalence of “negative” or “critical” content relating to duck hunting (e.g. prevalence of ‘REDUCE Wounding’ campaign materials and compliance activity content) compared with than positive or neutral content.
 - However, the “be safe this duck season” material was found to have a more positive tone.

» Consider increasing the frequency/ prevalence of social media content about duck hunting/ hunters with a neutral or positive tone to balance “negative” content.

“You rarely see posts [on the GMA Facebook] about a successful opening season for duck hunting or about a good day out in the wetlands... it’s all about the negative stuff” – Duck hunter participant

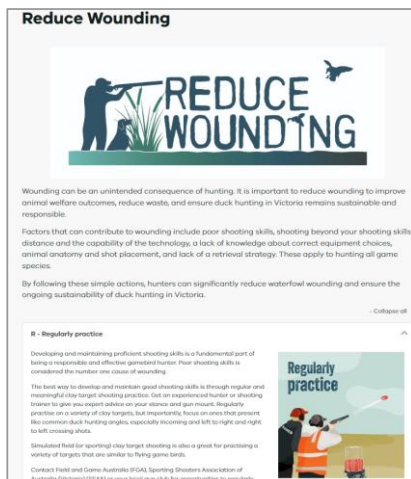


- There was mixed interest in posts about compliance activity and outcomes amongst participants:
 - ✓ Among deer and quail hunter participants, there was some interest in compliance posts and participants felt that such posts could **reflect positively on the GMA** (i.e. demonstrating that the GMA were being **proactive** in their regulatory role).
 - ✗ However, duck licence holder participants were found to be less positive about seeing this type of content, as they felt this perpetuated negative stereotypes about duck hunters.
 - ✓ However, duck licence holder participants responded more positively to compliance activity materials which highlighted **positive/ legal behaviour among hunters** (e.g. “the majority of people were doing the right thing” in the lead in text of the ‘Patrolling Gippsland’ post).
- » Continue to maintain a neutral to positive tone in posts about compliance.
- » Maintain inclusion of information about illegal/ unethical hunting behaviours only being performed by a minority of hunters.

Findings on the ‘REDUCE Wounding’ materials

Duck licence holders felt that the ‘REDUCE Wounding’ campaign contained important key messaging, and reported this issue was **top-of-mind** and that they were **taking active measures to avoid wounding** when hunting. Participants were found to have **strong awareness** of the ‘REDUCE Wounding’ campaign, with most duck hunter participants reporting they had seen materials from the GMA on this topic. However, the following less favourable findings were also identified about the campaign at an overall level:

- **Perception that the campaign portrayed duck hunters negatively** – given that the topic was well known, participants felt that the tested materials presented “**obvious**” information. Continued use of the campaign over time was also felt to imply that duck hunters were unaware of the topic or were not currently doing the right thing, which was particularly concerning for participants due to the **high perceived scrutiny** received by duck hunters by the media and general public; and
- **High wear-out** – as participants reported they were unlikely to engage with content if it did not present new information.



For ducks' sake, reduce wounding by not shooting beyond 30 metres.

Game Management Authority

Subscribe

19

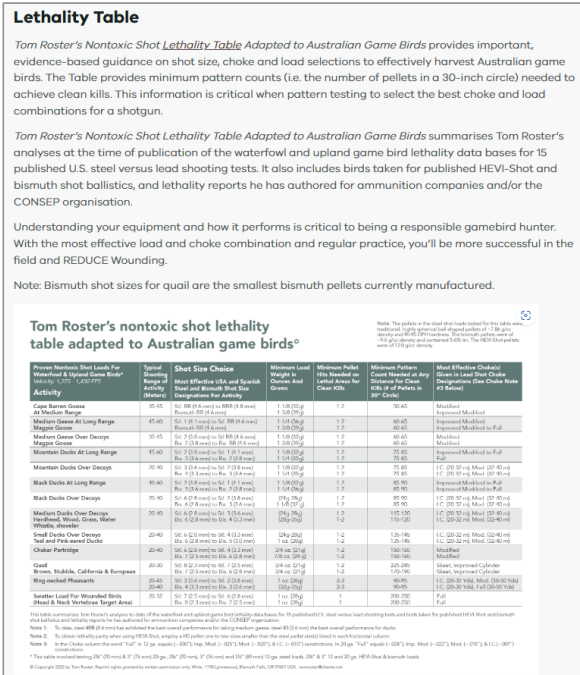
Share

Download

- ✕ **“For ducks’ sake” tagline** – which was not positively received by duck licence holder participants as the implied use of a swear word was felt to portray duck hunters in a negative way.
- **Consider utilising an alternate tagline.**

“It makes us hunters seem like rednecks... there’s a lot of negativity [about duck hunting] and the last thing we need is innuendo” – Duck hunter participant

Generally, **participants had low interest in reading the full reports**, though there was some **interest in the reports for a few participants** who were particularly passionate in hunting and were interested in receiving a large amount of data and information on the topic.



- ✓ Participants were interested in seeing **high-level information depicted in the infographic-style Facebook posts**.
- ✓ Participants appreciated the **embedded links** in the Facebook pages that allowed them to access the reports directly.

"It's cool information and [the infographic] is nicer to look at. I'm not reading 40 pages worth of stuff, this is more where I'm at" – Quail hunter participant

Findings on guidelines for humane dispatch of downed ducks



- A few participants recalled receiving a similar **booklet in the mail** with their licence renewal in the past. While participants were most positive about the previous physical format of guidelines, **online formats were also felt to be effective to communicate this information**. However, participants reported they were **not likely to seek out the information in a digital format**.

» One participant suggested that a short one-page infographic summary could be a helpful reminder to keep this information ‘top-of-mind’, including for experienced hunters.

Findings on education modules

Online education modules

The GMA has developed a suite of game hunting education modules, to help game hunters learn about their responsibilities and get the most from their recreation.

The modules contain instructional videos and interactive quizzes, providing an engaging way to learn the basic principles of effective and responsible hunting.

These online education modules are for information purposes only and do not include the required knowledge tests for new gamebird hunters. To apply for a new gamebird licence and complete your education modules, visit MyGL from 17 February 2025.

Complete my education modules and apply for a Game Licence (MyGL) ¹⁷

The information contained in the Duck hunting basics and the Quail and introduced gamebirds education modules is based on Victoria's legislated hunting seasons. The season arrangements may change each year. Hunters should regularly check the Duck hunting and Stubble Quail hunting pages for more information.

Click on the modules below to get started!



- Participants had **limited awareness** of the education modules, besides those required for licensing.
- Participants felt the modules would be **beneficial for newer hunters**, and a couple of participants expressed interest in accessing the modules following the research sessions.
- A few participants suggested that the GMA should **advertise the availability of the education modules** (e.g. through ‘push’ channels).

VII. Conclusions and recommendations



Continue to focus on providing information to game licence holders about licensing, laws and regulations and consider how this information could be improved, particularly information about where to hunt.

The GMA is a primary source of information for game licence holders, especially in relation to licensing, rules and regulations. Game licence holders emphasised the importance of clear information about licensing, laws and regulations to ensure they are hunting legally. This included information about *where* they were legally allowed to hunt, which some game licence holders felt could be clearer or more detailed (including providing more accurate / clearer information about hunting locations, making hunting maps more detailed and making hunting maps more interactive).



Continue to ensure the GMA website is up-to-date and consider how the website navigation could be improved so that information is easier to find.

The GMA website is the go-to channel for many game licence holders, particularly for information about licensing, rules and regulations. Hence, it is important to maintain up-to-date and easy to access information on the website.

While game licence holders were generally positive about the quality of content, some felt the website could be improved by making content easier to find and more prominently displaying information about changes to rules and regulations.



Increase direct communication to game licence holders via email, particularly to disseminate information about rules and regulations (e.g. season dates and bag limits), including changes to rules and regulations.

Game licence holders wanted to receive this information directly as it would provide assurance they were complying with the rules and had not missed any changes.

While many game licence holders were generally content with information on an 'as needed' basis, some also expressed interest in receiving more regular updates (e.g. a monthly email newsletter) that may include more general hunting information.

In particular, older game licence holders (aged 55+) actively look for information about game hunting less often, suggesting direct communications are required to reach this group. This could include utilising hunting associations and clubs to disseminate information, as this cohort are more reliant on communications from hunting associations and clubs compared to younger age groups.

4



Maintain the GMA Facebook as its primary social media channel but consider how posts could be more engaging.

While direct communications were considered important, social media was still a strongly preferred channel for receiving information – particularly for younger game licence holders. Although perceptions of the GMA’s social media were generally positive, some felt posts could be more engaging (e.g. by including ‘real hunters’ and stories to convey information).

5



Game licence holders are less likely to use or seek educational resources (e.g. how to hunt, firearms safety) from the GMA and hence these resources should not be relied upon in isolation to convey important educational messages to game licence holders.

Game licence holders reported lower awareness and demand for the GMA’s educational resources, although there was greater interest in this information among younger hunters (aged 16-34) and less experienced hunters. Many hunters in the qualitative research felt they would prefer to get this information from sources other than the GMA (e.g. directly from people who hunt).

The results suggest that if the GMA wishes to relay any educational messages, this information will be best disseminated via ‘push’ channels (e.g. like the REDUCE Wounding campaign) or included as part of the licensing process (e.g. mandatory education modules for new hunters).