



MAPOON ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL Aerial Feral Animal Control Policy 2019-20

RESOLUTION NO147/19. VERSION V2

This is an official copy of the **Aerial Feral Animal Control Policy 2019-20** of **Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council**, made in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act and Regulations, Public Records Act, Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council's Local Laws, Subordinate Local Laws and current Council Policies.

The **Aerial Feral Animal Control Policy 2019-20** is a Statutory Policy.

Statutory policies are prepared in response to legislative requirements and mandate employee behaviour. This Policy is approved by the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council for the guidance of Council and Council staff.

1. HEAD OF POWER

- *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld)
- *Local Government Regulations 2012* (Qld)
- *Weapons Act 1990* (Qld)
- *Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001* (Qld)
- *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (Qld)
- *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Qld)
- *Stock Act 1915* (Qld)
- Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (Cth) ss143-4

This policy is adapted from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy and Guideline for Aerial Sampling Operations.

2. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and information to efficiently and safely undertake aerial control of feral animals.

The potentially hazardous nature of aerial shooting requires that safety protocols be strictly followed. Each team member must be aware of and trained in all aspects of helicopter and firearm safety.

Shooting pigs by helicopter is most effective where pigs exist in reasonable numbers and are observable from the air. It is usually too costly for low-density populations.

In the dry tropics, aerial shooting has been shown to be the most cost effective method of control.



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Shooting from a helicopter can be hazardous particularly in areas of rugged topography. The combination of low-level flight, close proximity to obstacles (trees, rocks, wires) and the use of firearms makes this task extremely hazardous.

3. APPLICATION OF POLICY

The principles that guide the application of this policy are:

- PASC will abide by all animal welfare legislation to ensure humane treatment of animals affected by the policy.
- The Environment Manager is responsible for ensuring all parties who have responsibilities under the policy are aware of their duties.
- Council will undertake an annual audit of all firearms safety requirements.

4. SCOPE

This procedure applies to the employer, employees, and volunteers of the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council and those contracted by the Council to undertake aerial feral animal control on land managed by the Council.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

All actions undertaken by the any employee under this policy will be in accordance with the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* which states that it is an offence to kill an animal in a way that it is inhumane.

The Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals sets out the firearms and ammunition suitable for the humane destruction of feral livestock animals.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council 'Firearms Safety Policy'.

a) Ranger Program Responsibilities

Appropriate stakeholders must be consulted on the nature and timing of the intended activity to gain permission for access and to prevent conflict with other activities in the area and ensure the safety of members of the public.

Aerial shooting activities should only be undertaken with the permission of the Council CEO, Environmental Manager or their appointed delegate.



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Before aerial shooting takes place, the community and traditional owners should be informed by posting messages on a community notice boards or any other method that is deemed effective notification.

Community notices should provide information regarding the date/s and location/s of shooting activities. These may include maps showing areas where shooting will occur.

b) Marksman Responsibilities

Firearm users must strictly observe all relevant safety guidelines relating to firearm possession and use from a helicopter.

All aerial marksmen must:

- hold a relevant firearms licence; and
- hold a valid Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) instrument to carry and discharge firearms from aircraft
- undertake annual firearms safety course to ensure that safety skills and knowledge are current
- complete an Aerial Platform Shooting training course

Shooters are expected to act humanely, ethically, confidentially, legally and responsibly at all times. Marksmen should not shoot an animal unless they are confident of cleanly killing it.

Accredited shooters will ensure that all aerial shooting programs are conducted in a safe, humane, effective and professional manner in accordance with relevant legislation and policy administered by the Council.

6. PROCEDURE

When the marksman approaches (or departs) the helicopter, they must ensure that:

- the firearm muzzle is pointed at the ground, away from the helicopter
- the firearm is 'safe' (unloaded, cleared and safety catch applied).

Note: Bolt action and lever action firearms must be maintained clear with their action open.

Once the pilot has indicated that it is appropriate (by 'thumbs up' or other signal) to approach the helicopter, the marksman:

- opens the action for the pilot to check that the rifle is safe; then



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- positions the firearm in the helicopter with the muzzle pointing downwards
- places magazines at their feet in a position that does not impede their technique.

Note: The firearm is always positioned in the helicopter before attempting to get in. Similarly, when exiting the helicopter, the firearm is removed by the marksman after getting out.

Important: A firearm must not be discharged without permission from the pilot to do so. The pilot is in command of the aircraft and responsible for the safety of its operation.

It is essential that ejected firearm shells do not interfere with the safe operations of the helicopter. It may be necessary to fit a deflector plate to the firearm to ensure shells are ejected safely away from the helicopter and its rotor blades

a) Helicopter Operator Responsibilities

Pre-flight safety briefings are conducted by the pilot prior to the activity commencing. All instructions given by the pilot must be immediately followed. All relevant safety briefs must be conducted prior to operations commencing.

It is the responsibility of all officers involved in working around helicopters to maintain situational awareness of themselves as well as their team members and immediately alert them if they see that they are entering an unsafe position.

Aircrew should ensure that goods carried in cockpit do not impede operation of flight controls and loose objects are secured.

7. EQUIPMENT

Adequate hearing protection should be worn by the shooter and others in the immediate vicinity of the shooter. Repeated exposure to firearm noise can cause irreversible hearing damage.

Safety glasses should be worn to protect the eyes from gases, metal fragments and other particles.

It is recommended that GPS (global positioning systems) and computer mapping equipment such as GIS (geographic information systems) are used to assist in the accurate recording of information (e.g. where animals are shot) and to eliminate the risk of shooting in off-target areas.

Flight headset with intercom for communication with the pilot

If safety harnesses are used, they must be CASA approved and inspected regularly for serviceability.

Fire resistant clothing should be worn. Other personal protective equipment including lace-up boots, gloves and appropriate eye and hearing protection should also be worn.

Survival kit (including a first aid kit) should be accessible.

Emergency locating beacon should be on board the helicopter.



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8. SUITABLE FIREARMS FOR AERIAL SAMPLING

The use of appropriate firearms is essential in maintain high standards of animal welfare.

The *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Feral Livestock Animals* recommends the use of higher-calibre, semi-automatic rifles as a best practice measure for culling of larger animals in remote areas.

In general, the use of the following is recommended:

- .308 calibre (7.62 mm) self loading rifles (SLR) with large magazine capacity (e.g. Springfield M14 and M1A, L1A1 SLR).
- red dot/aim point sights or 2 x quality telescopic scopes.

When sampling feral pigs, 12 gauge shotguns with 28–30 inch barrels on $\frac{3}{4}$ to full choke are suitable.

9. VARIATIONS

PASC reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

10. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Firearms Policy



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DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	DATE	RESOLUTION N ^o .	DETAILS
1.0	19/08/19		Responsible Officer: Governance Officer Policy Type: Statutory Policy
			EXPIRY 30 July 2020

1. Policy Version and Revision Information

Policy authorised and adopted by:

Naseem Begam Chetty: Chief Executive Officer
 and The Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council.

Original issue: 19/8/19

Policy Maintained by: Willie Ase:

Acting Executive Manager Environmental
 Services

This version: 1.0

Date Adopted:

Review date: 31/7/2020



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2. Workplace Participant Acknowledgement

I acknowledge:

- a) Receiving this MASC Policy:
- b) That I should comply with this policy; and
- c) That there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, including termination of employment.

Your name:

Signed:

Date:
