

Victorian hunters GMA survey results adds weight to call for mandatory testing

A survey of more than 4000 Victorian hunters has revealed some surprising results, adding weight to the call to introduce a mandatory knowledge test for all hunters.

[PETER HUNT](#), The Weekly Times

|
December 22, 2020 9:00am

EXCLUSIVE: MOST Victorian hunters are unable to correctly identify issues of personal safety and whether game species can be spotlighted.

A Game Management Authority survey of 4381 hunters has found major knowledge gaps, reinforcing its push to introduce a mandatory knowledge test for all hunters, beyond the wildlife identification test for duck hunters and the hound hunting test.

While the GMA withheld the survey questions, so they could be used in the development of a future knowledge test, the results showed only:

46 per cent of deer hunters got detailed questions on storing ammunition correct, which must be in a closed container, separated from firearms and not inside a vehicle where it is accessible to occupants.

42 per cent of all hunters got a general knowledge question on personal safety correct.

35 per cent of deer hunters answered the question on spotlighting correctly, a practice that is banned for game hunting.

26 per cent clearly understood the rules on interacting with a GMA or any other authorised officer, who have the right to inspect and seize firearms, game, wildlife, boats or vehicles.

20 per cent of duck and quail hunters were able to identify a three-part question on identifying game species.

37 per cent of duck hunters were able to correctly answer a two-part question on wounding.

13 per cent correctly answered a detailed question on the dispatch of downed ducks.

But there was some good news for farmers, given 98 per cent of the respondents knew their obligations when hunting on private land, such as seeking landholder permission.

More generally, respondents performed well in answering questions on the risks of mixing alcohol and hunting, basic safety when it came to not carrying guns while crossing fences and the need to report illegal hunting.

The most knowledgeable group were hound deer hunters, while duck hunters using dogs performed the worst.

As it stands anyone can obtain a game licence without undertaking a knowledge test.

Australian Deer Association executive officer Barry Howlett said the ADA supported a knowledge tests.

But Field and Game Australia chief executive Dean O'Hara said "we support hunter education and training, but can't test mandatory testing at the moment until we get more detail on the benefits and dis-benefits".