
OPTIONS FOR
ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE
NEW ZEALAND
GAME ANIMAL
COUNCIL:

A discussion paper

September 2009

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Executive summary

This discussion paper sets out proposed options to provide for the establishment of a New Zealand Big Game Animal Council. The last major change in legislation governing wild animals took place more than 30 years ago and since then there have been great changes in conservation, recreation, farming and methods of animal control in New Zealand. Following a 2008 Ministerial report on future management of deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs the Minister of Conservation moved to establish one national-level body to manage and represent hunting interests.

This paper sets out options for creating that body, to be known as the NZ Game Animal Council. It begins with the present law governing wild animals, public conservation land, pest management and biosecurity, and looks at other statutory processes concerning the management of game animals. It identifies stakeholder groups across the spectrum of governmental and public interests including conservation, recreation, farming, and hunting (recreational, commercial, traditional, and wild animal/pest control).

After looking at existing models of game management the Committee proposes that the NZ Game Animal Council should be a single national management body consisting of 17 representatives of stakeholder groups, plus an independent Chair. This Council should decide policy in keeping with its terms of reference and functions that include advocacy for hunting and farming of deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs; co-ordinating hunting activities to reduce conflicts, and establishing agreed national standards for hunting activities. Other functions include the development of management strategies for big game animals, including wild animal management plans, and advising the Minister.

At an operational level, there should be initially be a head office in Wellington with an annual operating budget of around \$850,000. Numerous options for funding the Council are set out. While the Council should be self-funding, the value of the contribution of hunting to the managing of game animal numbers should be recognised by government, and included among the funding options is contracting with private landowners and government agencies to manage game animals on their land. The Council should ensure that the diverse recreational, commercial and cultural interests of all involved in hunting are fairly and equitably represented in relevant forums at national, regional and local levels, including tangata whenua.

Council does not propose to exert any management over private land, but can help landowners and national and local government to integrate and co-ordinate hunting activities in ways that increase recreational hunting participation and benefits while optimising environmental and commercial benefits, including wild animal control, assessing populations and commissioning research.

A large part of the Council's work is aimed at managing hunters and the animals they hunt, including, advocacy, co-ordination and conflict resolution, and setting safety standards and ethics. Council should also provide improved hunter information services, strive to improve hunting opportunities where possible, and provide specialist management services to deer farming and game estates. It will also seek to increase participation, success rates and satisfaction with the hunting experience, and develop a membership base. The Council will maximise the benefits wild animals provide, while having regard to best practice in land use and any constraints imposed by the land manager. Council should consider issues such as the contribution of wild animals to the economy and wealth of the nation, including traditional Maori and tourism value.

The Wild Animal Control Act sets out that all of the Department of Conservation's management must be based on controlling or eradicating wild animals. This inhibits DOC

from managing game animals for their resource value, and conflicts with its responsibility to promote recreation. However, the Conservation Act and the Conservation General Policy do allow DOC to encourage the hunting of deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs. Since at present DOC is not exercising any direct animal control on most of the conservation land it manages, the Game Animal Council can exert some management of these areas to provide a balance between biodiversity outcomes and recreational and commercial value. The Council would be involved in deciding where the conservation priorities lie and DOC would have input into the management by the Game Animal Council.

The opportunity is provided for public input to the process and answers to some questions are invited from stakeholders. A timetable sets out steps for establishing the Council in 2010.

1.0 Introduction & background

This paper outlines issues and options and a proposed process for establishing the New Zealand Game Animal Council. It is a discussion document to assist in formulating recommendations to the Minister of Conservation with regard to establishing the Council in 2010.

1.1 The Ministerial Panel process and report of 2008

What's the background to setting up the Game Animal Council?

Scientific studies suggest that many New Zealanders are unwilling to accept that their support for the conservation of native species and ecosystems must necessarily come at the cost of denying any place in New Zealand's wild lands for introduced animals such as deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs.

The law governing these animals in New Zealand is an uncomfortable mix of legislation and policy that focuses solely on them as pests to be controlled or eradicated, and takes no account of their resource value in the wild.

The Game Animal Council is the outcome of a 3-year process of reviewing game animal management in New Zealand. This resulted in a recommendation to establish a Big Game Hunting Council to co-ordinate and foster hunting and farming interests in deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs.

In 2007 a Ministerial Panel was set up as part of the previous Government's Confidence and Supply Agreement with United Future, and charged with investigating and making recommendations for the future management of deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs in New Zealand, consistent with conservation of indigenous biodiversity, biosecurity, recreational food and trophy value of the animals, and other issues considering forestry, farming and tourism. (For the Terms of Reference see 1.3.) The Panel was charged with ascertaining the extent to which there was agreement on these issues among stakeholders, and consulted widely to make recommendations for the future, conducting workshops to hear expert opinion and receiving 4,170 submissions (3,949 responses to a questionnaire, 54 written organisational submissions, and 167 written submissions from individuals).

One clear message from the Ministerial Panel was a need for greater co-ordination of New Zealand's many and varied hunting sector groups and interests. A majority of the Panel recommended the establishment of a Big Game Hunting Council to co-ordinate and foster hunting and farming interests in deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs.

The Panel identified three options for the Minister's consideration:

1. Enhancement of the status quo with greater hunter input to management, and managerial innovation by statutory agencies, particularly the Department of Conservation (DOC). This would be achievable within existing legislation and maintain the emphasis on biodiversity. The Panel recommended better representation and accommodation of interests regarding deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs within existing policy and planning, and the establishment of a Wild Animal Control Advisory Committee to improve wild animal advice and policy. (These options have subsequently been partly progressed.)

2. The setting up of a Wild Animal Control Advisory Committee to address a range of issues including optimal conservation/hunting trade-off with some recognition of the animals as a resource, and a Big Game Hunting Council ‘to enhance management [also ‘to co-ordinate and foster hunting and farming interests’] of hunting and game farming’. (The Wild Animal Control Advisory Committee was convened to examine issues other than those recommended by the Panel. This has been completed and DOC is implementing the recommendations from that Committee.)
3. The third option entailed establishing a Hunter Management Authority to represent and govern all hunters on public lands where threats to native biodiversity could be managed, and which would be set aside with recreation as the primary purpose. (This option would require change to the Conservation and Wildlife Acts and has not been progressed.)

One of the Panel’s specific recommendations is the reason for the present process:

Recommendation 3: A majority of the Panel (4–1) recommends the establishment of a Big Game Hunting Council to co-ordinate and foster hunting and farming interests in deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs ... The primary aim is to encourage participation in hunting and farming of these animals, with a secondary aim of assisting with their control, by co-ordinating and establishing agreed national standards for hunting activities to reduce conflict while increasing recreational, meat and trophy value within the constraints and goals of the landowner or managers ... The Minister should establish a Steering Committee under the Wild Animal Control Act and that committee, including the major stakeholder, be mandated to develop a formal proposal for a NZ Big Game Hunting Council. That proposal should include evaluation of the feasibility of the possible functions and responsibilities identified above, along with others that might be proposed by the Ministers, and others identified as a priority by the Committee itself. It should also consider whether new statutory powers are needed. The Steering Committee should present a proposal to the Ministers of Conservation and Biosecurity within one year of establishment ...

1.2 Establishing the process to set up a NZ Game Animal Council

In September 2008 the then Minister of Conservation, Hon Steve Chadwick, established terms of reference for and appointed a committee to establish what is now proposed (see 2.1) to be named the NZ Game Animal Council. Following a change of government in November 2008, the new Associate Minister of Conservation, Hon Kate Wilkinson, as part of the National Government’s Confidence and Supply Agreement with United Future, issued amended terms of reference for that committee and the process recommenced.

1.3 Terms of reference of the Establishment Committee

The 2009 Terms of Reference state:

The role of this Establishment Committee is to support New Zealand’s range of hunting interests across the sector to develop one national-level body that represents and advocates all their interests.

The Establishment Committee will advise the government on the creation of the Big Game Hunting Council, as a statutory authority, to carry out, inter alia, the following functions and responsibilities:

- To encourage participation in hunting and farming of deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs.
- To co-ordinate hunting activities to reduce conflicts.
- To establish agreed national standards for hunting activities.
- To advocate for the interests of its membership to the Minister of Conservation and to the public generally.
- Develop management strategies for big game animals.
- To advise the Minister on matters relating to the management of big game animals in New Zealand.
- Any other matters the Establishment Committee or the Minister may consider necessary.

Membership:

The Establishment Committee will comprise 5 members appointed by the Minister. The members will represent the interests of the following sub-sectors:

- Recreational deer, tahr and chamois hunting
- Pig hunting
- Commercial deer hunting
- Guiding services to recreational hunters
- Deer farming and Safari park operators

Appointments will be made of suitable persons after consultation with leaders within the sub-sectors. The members will choose a chairperson from among their membership.

Members of the Big Game Hunting Council will also be appointed by the Minister.

Work plan:

- The Establishment Committee will first develop a plan that details its intended programme of action (in line with these Terms of Reference) and a timeline for its activities, including when it expects to finish. It shall provide this to the Minister of Conservation.

Tasks:

The Establishment Committee's responsibility for assisting with the establishment of a Big Game Hunting Council will involve it helping the Council to cover initial costs associated with setting itself up and establishing itself with the sectors it seeks to represent. This assistance will be provided for a period of not more than two years.

Context:

In developing the proposal, the committee shall take into account the following matters.

- The Council will be an overarching body, covering the entire big game sector, and able to operate co-operatively with existing sub-sector bodies.

- This Council will be owned by its membership and be self-funding (this funding might come from membership fees, industry levies, and by contracting with landowners and managers to undertake management of and by hunters. There will be no ongoing government funding for its basic activities. This would not, however, preclude the body from seeking government or agency funding for particular functions that were in the national interest, on the same basis as any other organisation.

In establishing the Council, the Establishment Committee will work in partnership with the sector, and operate in a way that builds cooperation between sub-sectors.

Funding:

- The Establishment committee will be funded to a maximum of \$200,000, spread across 2008/09 and 2009/10 financial years. This money will be provided from Vote: Conservation.
- All expenditure must accord with the provisions of the Public Finance Act, and the committee will report regularly to the Director General of Conservation for its use of funds, in a format agreed to by him.
- Any payments to members of the Establishment committee for attendance at meetings and any payments to consultants must meet SSC guidelines.
- Government funding for the Establishment committee must be used in the financial year for which it has been allocated, except where prior agreement has been obtained.

1.4 Present legislative environment

Most legislation managing animals that live in the wild has not undergone major change since 1977. Deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs are primarily managed as ‘wild animals’ (along with wild goat, possum and wallaby) under the Wild Animal Control Act (1977). This Act provides for ‘control of harmful species of introduced animals’. Other legislation on control, management and administration of these animals includes the National Parks Act (1980), the Conservation Act (1987), the Biosecurity Act (1991), and the Resource Management Act (1993). When these animals are used as livestock or kept on game estates they are also subject to the Animal Welfare Act (1999) and the Animal Products Act (1999).

The term ‘wild animal’ has a strict legal meaning that excludes many other introduced species living in the wild, e.g. rabbit, hare, rat, mouse, hedgehog and birds.

‘Game’ is a group of both native and introduced birds hunted in the wild (e.g. mallard and pukeko), in a subset of ‘wildlife’ under the Wildlife Act.

‘Wild animals’ are expressly excluded from the definition of ‘wildlife’ under the Wildlife Act.

All ‘wild animals’ are introduced species but ‘wildlife’ includes certain species of both native and introduced animals.

Provisions of the National Parks Act and Conservation Act take precedence over the WAC Act on national park land and conservation land respectively, and the WAC Act takes precedence over the Biosecurity Act.

Deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs were formerly defined as noxious animals under the (defunct) Noxious Animals Act (1956). The WAC Act eliminated the term 'noxious animal' and replaced it with the broader, less value-ridden term 'wild animal'.

The Conservation Act attributes 'intrinsic value' to indigenous species but not to 'wild animals'.

Deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs may also be defined as pests and controlled through a Pest Management Strategy produced under the Biosecurity Act. However, this does not generally apply on public conservation land.

'Wild animals' on farms, game estates and safari parks (farmed deer and managed game) are administered under the WAC Act.

The underlying principle of the current legislative environment is the control of animal numbers. There is no current mandate for managing deer, tahr, chamois or wild pigs for their recreation, commercial or tourism values.

1.5 Present statutory processes for the management of public conservation land

The following statutory framework and processes apply to the management of various animals living in the wild in New Zealand.

1.5.1 Legislation. At the top of the whole process is the conservation legislation. All decisions relating to conservation of our natural and historic resources are based on the purposes of the relevant laws. The Department of Conservation administers more than 20 different Acts including:

- Conservation Act
- National Parks Act
- Walking Access Act
- Reserves Act
- Marine Reserves Act
- Other Acts specifically referred to in the First Schedule of the Conservation Act, such as the Wild Animal Control Act.

1.5.2 General policy. There are three main general policies that relate to conservation in New Zealand:

- Conservation General Policy (for the Conservation, Wildlife, Marine Reserves, Marine Mammals Protection, Reserves and Wild Animal Control Acts)
- National Parks General Policy (for the National Parks Act)
- New Zealand Walkways Policy

The purpose of a general policy is to provide guidance for the interpretation of conservation legislation and the development of conservation management strategies and plans.

1.5.3 Conservation Management Strategies (CMSs). These are the DOC planning manuals explaining how the purposes and aims of the legislation will be carried out by the DOC conservancy in each region. They implement the directions provided in the general policies. They aim at providing integrated management of public conservation land. This means they are designed to provide for management that gives the best opportunities for a wide range of conservation outcomes, such as species protection and recovery, provision of recreation opportunities and appreciation of historical heritage. They also balance out the sometimes conflicting desired outcomes for the various interests in particular areas of public conservation land.

1.5.4 Management Plans. These include:

- Conservation Management Plans (CMPs): detailed site-specific plans for particular sites that are designed to achieve the goals set out in the CMS. They relate to the management of a particular conservation area in a region. CMPs are not required unless they have been specifically mentioned as a task in the relevant CMS. However, each national park has a management plan.
- Sports Fish and Game Management Plans. Both DOC and Fish and Game Councils have functions relating to recreational freshwater fisheries, but the Fish and Game functions are to do with sports fish, and in particular trout and salmon. Fish and Game Councils also have responsibilities to do with game birds. Just as DOC prepares planning documents and follows a process which allows for the public to have their say, so too does Fish and Game for sports fish and game birds. Those plans cannot be contrary to what a conservation management strategy or national park management plan says for public conservation land.
- National Park Management Plans. Each National Park has a management plan. These are similar to Conservation Management Plans but are subject to the General Policy for National Parks and the National Parks Act.

1.5.5 Minister of Conservation. The Minister is accountable to parliament and Cabinet for the management of public conservation land and reserves. The Minister of Conservation also has decision making powers as of right over issues such as concessions.

1.5.6 National Park Management Plans. The Director-General of Conservation implements (through the Department) the Conservation General Policy and the National Parks General Policy, and prepares conservation management strategies, national park management plans and conservation management plans.

1.5.7 New Zealand Conservation Authority. Consists of 13 members of the public who are appointed by the Minister of Conservation. It is responsible for approving conservation management strategies, national park management plans, and sometimes conservation management plans. It also adopts national park general policy, and advises the Minister of Conservation on other general policy statements. It also advises the Minister of Conservation and the Director-General of Conservation on matters of national importance. It also has input to reviewing and reporting on DOC's management and budget priorities, and liaises with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.

1.5.8 Conservation Boards. There are 14 conservation boards, which have a regional focus with specific responsibilities to their region. The conservation boards are appointed by the Minister of Conservation to provide advice to the Department on conservation issues. They approve conservation management plans and recommend the approval of conservation management strategies to the New Zealand Conservation Authority. They also liaise with regional Fish and Game Councils.

1.5.9 Maori/Iwi. The Conservation Act, and all the Acts listed in its First Schedule, must be interpreted and administered to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Effective partnerships with tangata whenua can achieve enhanced conservation of natural resources and historical and cultural heritage. Tangata whenua responsibilities to this heritage are embodied in the ethic of kaitiakitanga (exercise of customary practices of guardianship, protection, stewardship and sustainable use by tangata whenua in relation to ancestral lands, waters, sites, wahi tapu and other taonga). Tangata whenua are consulted during the preparation of conservation management strategies, national park management plans and conservation management plans.

1.5.10 Pest Management Strategies. These are of two kinds – national and regional – under the Biosecurity Act 1993. A Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) is a five-year

plan describing why and how various unwanted organisms (plants and animals) will be controlled in a specified region, and defining priorities and goals. Each is administered by the corresponding local authority.

A National Pest Management Strategy is set up for a specific management issue nationwide: the Animal Health Board administers the national Bovine Tuberculosis Pest Management Strategy, and places restrictions on the movement of farmed deer.

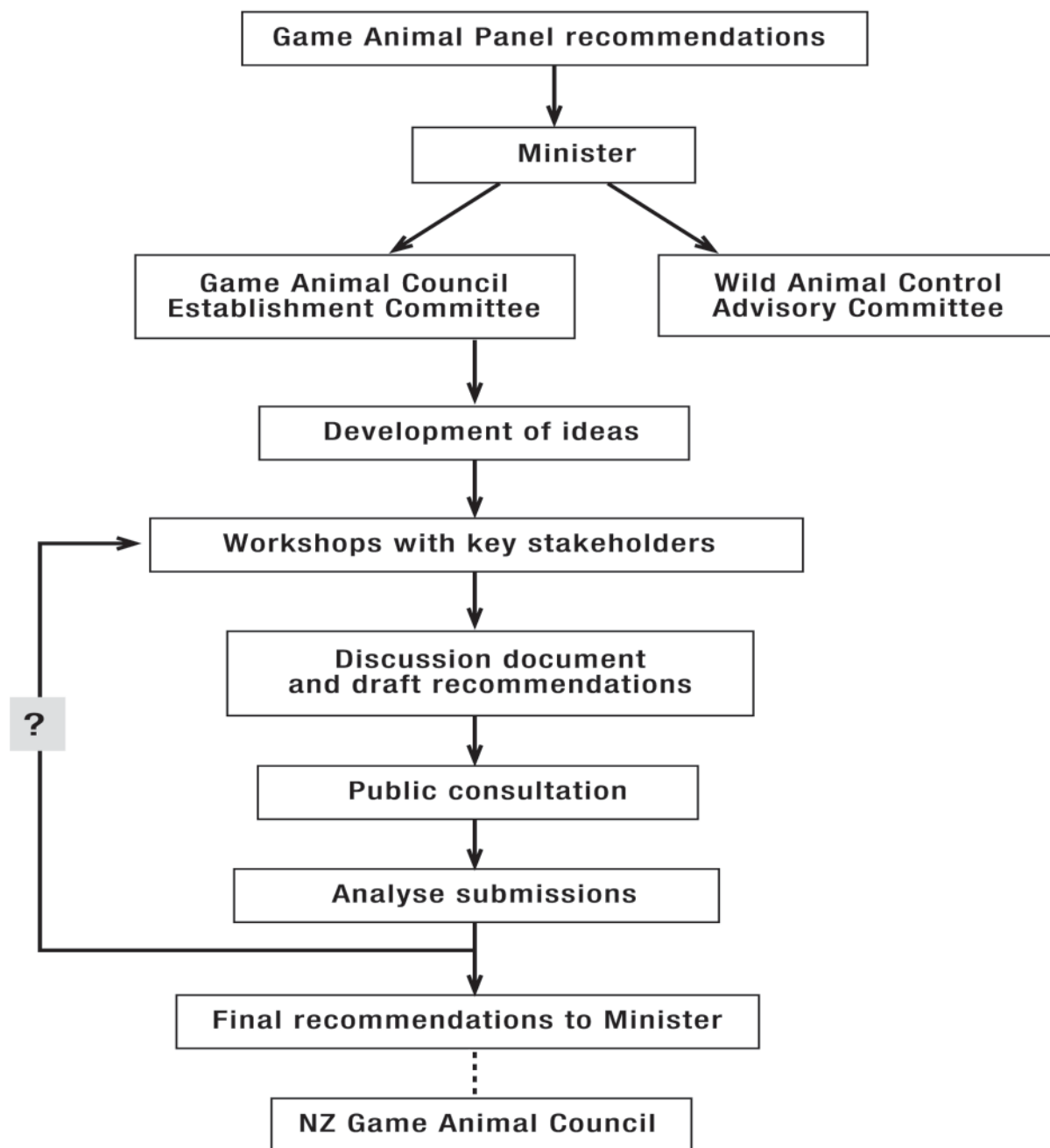
1.5.11 Regional and district plans. Regional and district plans contain policy and explain ways to manage the physical and natural resources of a district or region. They address functions of the corresponding regional council or territorial authority under the Resource Management Act, including sustainability, conservation of indigenous biodiversity, and obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi. They contain rules governing the use of resources in the region where they apply.

1.6 Process for the Establishment Committee. The Establishment Committee has developed a programme of action (in line with its Terms of Reference) and a timeline for its activities, and has scheduled to report to the Minister of Conservation by 28 February 2010. The process and timeline are summarised in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1: Timetable and process for formation of NZ Game Animal Council

Stage	Deadline for completion	Meetings	Comments
Research	Completed	Two Committee meetings and research, March–April	
Develop options	Completed	Two Committee meetings May–July	
Test options with key stakeholders (workshops by invitation)	Completed	Committee meeting/s + invited stakeholder group meeting August	Feedback from key stakeholders has been incorporated into this report
Refine options	Completed	One Committee meeting	
Public consultation	Submissions close 23 November.	Public meetings in Auckland, Te Awamutu, Taupo, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill, 12–28 October.	Some written submissions to be expected.
Analysis	Approx November	Committee meeting/s	
Feedback/re-test (if necessary)	?	?	
Recommendations to Minister	28 February 2010	Committee meeting + meeting with minister	
Establish Council	2010	Committee meetings	

Fig 1: Process for establishing NZ Game Animal Council



The Committee began by conducting research into comparable situations elsewhere in the world, i.e. where introduced ungulates were being managed in the absence of indigenous herbivores. However, it was unable to find any examples of places fitting all these criteria. The closest models of resource management were to be found in the Game Council of New South Wales and the NZ Fish and Game Councils. Although there were significant differences (e.g. NSW has native herbivores, and Fish & Game only administers birds and fish), both models were found to provide useful information and ideas.

The Committee then formulated options and drew up this discussion paper. As part of that process the Committee held a workshop with key stakeholders to seek input on a range of key issues. The next step will be to undertake public consultation, and if necessary in the light of public input, to consult further with key stakeholders. The Committee will then prepare recommendations to the Minister for the establishment of the Game Animal Council, and following this will commence establishing the NZ Game Animal Council.

2.0 Issues and options

As a result of its initial research, the Committee concluded that the proposed Council should consist of a suitably qualified group of councillors headed by an independent Chair. It should be appropriately constituted, resourced and have clear vision, objectives and aims, statement of purpose, and functions consistent with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

What will the Game Animal Council do?

The purpose of the Council is to represent nationally the interests of hunters and game animal managers, and to manage and regulate the game animal resource, while having regard to the animals' environmental effects.

The Council is being set up to provide one national-level body to represent everyone with an interest in hunting and in deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs. This includes recreational and commercial hunting, deer farming and game estates. The Game Animal Council will be operating specifically in the interests of hunters and game animal managers. A 'Game animal manager' means a farmer, game estate operator, or any person conducting wild animal control.

It will also assist with the overall control of game animals to provide conservation benefits. It will undertake the management of hunting, hunters, and game animals to provide quality hunting experiences. A large part of the Council's work is aimed at providing a higher level of services for recreational hunters by providing game management, advocacy, coordination and conflict resolution. It will also seek to increase participation, success rates and satisfaction with the hunting experience.

The Council could also undertake some tasks that are currently undertaken by DOC, such as issuing hunting permits. However it is totally separate from DOC, and the NZ Fish & Game Council.

The Council will also provide advice and expertise to community groups to facilitate the management of game animals in local areas.

2.1 Proposed name of the Council, and terminology used for animals

The original terms of reference referred to a 'Big Game Hunting' Council, but the Establishment Committee decided the name New Zealand 'Game Animal' Council was more appropriate because

- farmed and managed game on game estates are included in the Terms of Reference as well as wild game. Therefore management is not confined to hunting management, and
- 'big game' is a potentially misleading term often associated with animals not found in New Zealand.

For the purpose of establishing the Game Animal Council, 'game animal' refers to deer (fallow, red, rusa, sambar, sika, wapiti, whitetail), chamois, Himalayan tahr and wild pigs. Wild goats and wallabies are comparatively large animals that may also be regarded as game but are outside the terms of reference. So are smaller animals that can or could be regarded as game (e.g. hare, rabbits and possums) and game birds (which are defined separately by statute).

Game birds will continue to be managed exactly as before, by the Fish & Game Councils. The Game Animal Council is totally separate from Fish & Game.

The status of the following animals will remain unchanged: goats, wallabies, hares, rabbits, possums, mustelids. The Game Animal Council will not be directly involved in managing these. National and regional pest management strategies for these animals will remain in force as before. However, Council will act to represent hunters' interests to DOC, regional councils and the Animal Health Board to help them manage issues like deer bykill from possum control.

2.2 Management by Game Animal Council

What's the relationship between the Council and DOC?

The Department of Conservation is the manager of public conservation land and retains the overall responsibility for controlling deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs on public conservation land. Through public processes such as Conservation Management Strategies and management plans, DOC decides what areas are top conservation priorities, and manages these accordingly. However, the reality is that owing to funding constraints and priorities, on most conservation land no active control is carried out. At present DOC is not exercising any direct animal control over the vast majority of the conservation land it manages. This opens the possibility that the Game Animal Council could then manage these areas to provide a balance between biodiversity outcomes and recreational and commercial value. The GAC as with other statutory bodies would have input into deciding where the conservation priorities lie and DOC would have input into any management by the GAC.

The GAC could also be able to undertake some tasks such as permitting on behalf of DoC. This will provide significant savings to DoC allowing these resources to be focused on conservation priorities.

Clearly there will be some places where wild animals should be kept at very low levels (e.g. Murchison Mountains) or exterminated altogether (e.g. Secretary Island). This is consistent with DOC's concept of 'place-based' management, which recognises that some places have higher biodiversity and conservation values than others.

The Department of Conservation is the statutory manager of public conservation land. It also has overall responsibility for the control of game animals on public conservation land. The Committee is not proposing that the GAC would change this. The Wild Animal Control Act sets out that all of DOC's management must be based on controlling or eradicating wild animals. ("This Act shall apply to all land, having regard to the provisions of any Act applying to the land, and shall be for the purposes of controlling wild animals generally, and of eradicating wild animals locally where necessary and practicable, as dictated by proper land use.")

The WAC Act therefore inhibits DOC from managing game animals for their resource value regardless of the Department's responsibility for promoting recreation. The Establishment Committee identified a clear division between the responsibilities of DOC and the GAC. The primary focus for DOC is and should be on conservation and its limited resources should be prioritised in this area. The management of hunters, hunting and animals for hunting benefits

should be the role of the GAC. The GAC would assist with control in the areas and with the species it manages but would also manage to provide additional benefits to hunters and game animal managers that DOC is unable to provide. Recreational hunters kill more than 54,000 deer annually, plus commercial hunters take between 10,000 and 30,000. These are the two major controllers of deer populations. Ensuring that hunting is co-ordinated and that there is an ongoing programme of hunter recruitment and training is the most cost-effective way of maintaining control of deer, and providing a programme of hunting benefits is a major incentive for hunter recruitment.

Currently DOC expends significant resources on issuing hunting permits, operating ballots etc. The committee recommends that these services should be provided by the GAC, releasing significant resources for DOC to reassign for other conservation work.

Present DOC planning processes focus on the concept of “place” and what management is undertaken at which place. With regard to deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs, there are very few active management plans. The Himalayan Tahr Control Plan is one, and there are some wild animal control plans such as that for the Wapiti Area of Fiordland National Park. In general there is very little active management of game animals undertaken on public conservation land. Usually the resulting population of wild animals is the *de facto* level achieved through recreational and commercial hunting and by-kill during possum control programmes.

Current DOC planning defines places where game animals are to be specifically *controlled* for conservation purposes. It is therefore logical that in all other places game animals could be *managed* for their resource value, subject to some environmental constraints to ensure conservation values were protected.

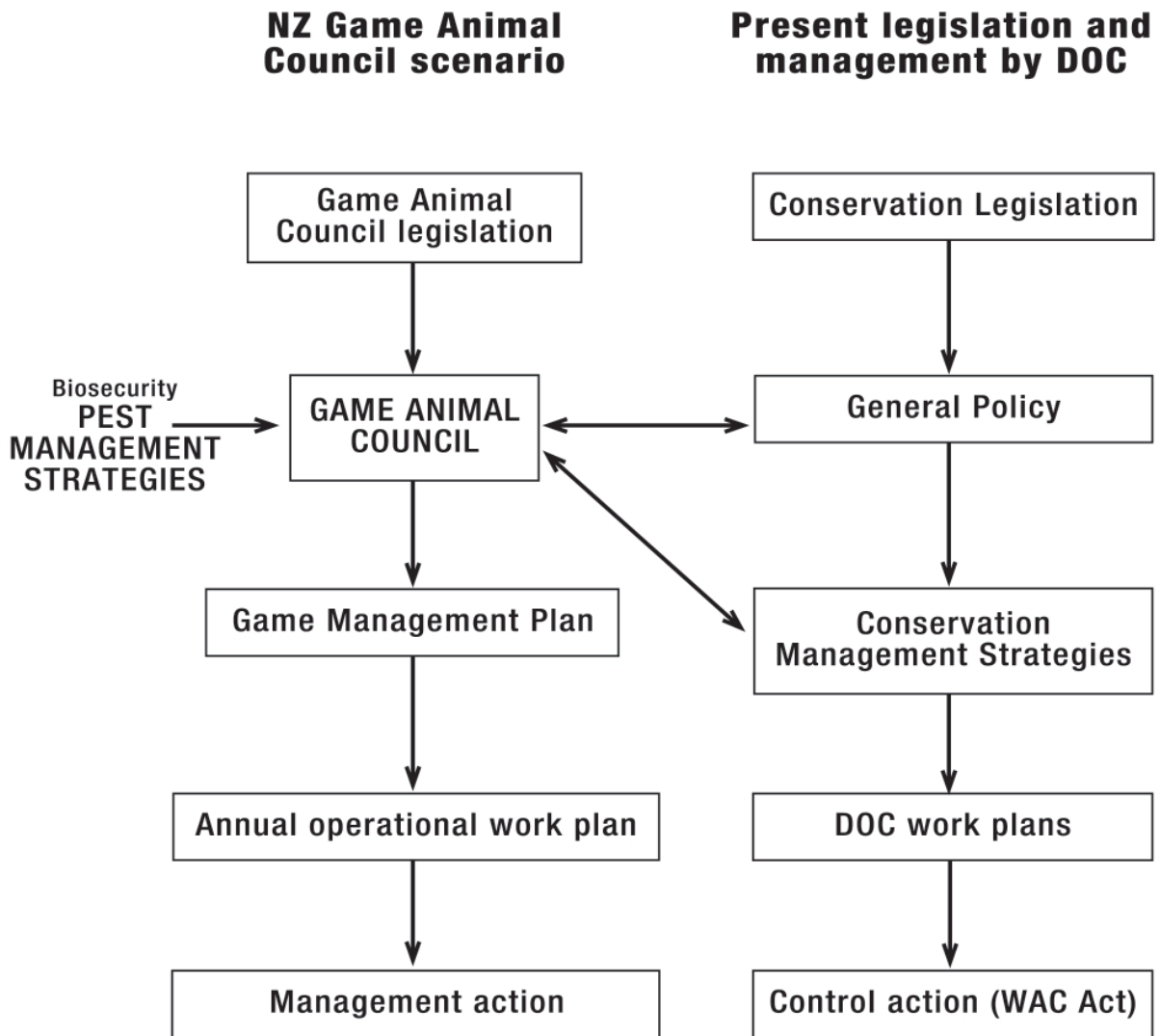
The Committee projects that pursuant to the above processes the Game Animal Council would have this general management mandate on public conservation land primarily, and on some other public land by negotiation. **The Council would have no mandate over private land other than negotiating with or contracting to landholders. The Council would, however, be involved in the management of cross-boundary issues that apply to both public and private land.**

The Game Animal Council would integrate into public planning processes in the same way as other public entities such as Fish and Game Councils, i.e. by compiling plans such as 10-year management plans and specific statutory game management plans. At present, priority areas for managing game animals only for conservation purposes are identified through the Conservation General Policy and National Parks General Policy, Conservation Management Strategies and the management planning process. It would be logical for this to continue be the case, as these are established public processes, with the Game Animal Council being an organisation to be consulted like other public entities such as Fish and Game Councils (Figure 3). Once the places are defined where game animals are to be managed expressly for conservation purposes, then the Game Animal Council could compile management plans for the other areas. This approach is consistent with current planning processes and also what actually takes place.

Such management would make a greater contribution to the overall control of game animals and the conservation benefits derived therefrom.

Maintaining a close working relationship with the Department of Conservation is essential to enable the Game Animal Council to provide both services to hunters and game animal managers and conservation benefits to the public.

Fig 2: Present vs. proposed management scenarios



2.3 Proposed Statement of Purpose of NZ Game Animal Council

“To represent nationally the interests of hunters and game animal managers, and to manage and regulate the game animal resource, while having regard to the environmental effects of these animals.”

This statement is congruent with the Terms of Reference and its terminology is to be interpreted broadly, for example ‘game animal manager’ includes farmers, game estate operators and persons conducting game animal control.

2.4 Proposed objectives of the NZ Game Animal Council

- A national game animal management organisation undertaking management of people and animals to the benefit of all stakeholders.
- Accountable to its stakeholders and producing better outcomes for them; respected for its balanced advocacy based on good science, research and authoritative advice.
- Effective, openly communicative and democratic, with sound structure and governance, backed by appropriate legislation and as far as possible, self-funded.

2.5 Proposed functions of the NZ Game Animal Council

2.5.1 General functions. The Council will seek to achieve its objectives through the following functions;

- Ensuring that the diverse recreational, commercial and cultural interests of those involved in hunting are fairly and equitably represented in relevant forums at national, regional and local levels, and to the relevant ministers as required.
- Helping landowners and national and local government to integrate and coordinate hunting activities in ways that increase recreational hunting participation and benefits while optimising commercial and environmental benefits.
- Developing a membership base and structure that equitably represent all game animal interests in New Zealand.
- Actively managing hunters and the animals they hunt to maximise the benefits those animals provide, while having regard to best practice in land use and any constraints imposed by the land manager.
- Developing and implementing systems to minimise or resolve competition between hunting groups for any limited hunting resource.
- Developing and implementing ethical guidelines and codes of practice for hunting and managing game animals.
- Developing a sustainable funding base.

2.5.2 Specific functions. These could include the following activities:

(a) Assessing and monitoring

- game animal populations;
- the success rate and degree of satisfaction of game animal managers, hunters and other stakeholders; and
- the condition and trend of ecosystems as habitats for game animals.

(b) Managing the game animal resource by

- maintaining and improving access;
- formulating and recommending to the Minister of Conservation conditions for game animal harvesting;
- ensuring there are sufficient resources to enforce conditions of hunting and farming;
- undertaking works to maintain the quality of game animals as a meat and trophy resource;
- supporting and encouraging the farming and keeping on game estates of game animals;
- promoting and educating stakeholders;
- defining and promoting ethical standards of behaviour to be followed by hunters and game animal managers;

- promoting and encouraging recreational and commercial use of game animals, including tourism; and
 - keeping hunters and managers informed on matters affecting their interests.
- (c) Assessing the costs of managing game animals in New Zealand, and recommending to the Minister of Conservation appropriate fees and levies to recover those costs.
- (d) Assessing the monetary value of the benefit to New Zealand of wild animal control by hunters, and making representations to government for corresponding cost recovery.
- (e) Representing the interests and aspirations of hunters and managers in the statutory planning process.
- (f) Formulating and adopting operational work plans.
- (g) Preparing and operating game animal management plans in accordance with its legislative requirement.
- (h) Identifying research needs and undertaking that research.
- (i) Liaising with the NZ Conservation Authority and Conservation Boards and Regional Councils.
- (j) The option of issuing permits for the purpose of
- hunting or killing game for recreation, meat, and trophy purposes;
 - hunting or capturing game for commercial purposes;
 - farming wild animals and operating game estates; and
 - conducting commercial guiding operations on public land.
- (k) Resolving conflicts between hunting and other activities, including
- conflicts between hunters and other users of public land, whether in regard to commercial or recreational activity;
 - conflicts between the meat and trophy value of game animals and any harm as unwanted organisms or pests under the Biosecurity Act 1993; and
 - conflicts between recreational and commercial hunters.
- (l) Contracting with private landowners and government agencies to manage game animals on their land.
- (m) Advising the Minister of Conservation on issues relating to game animals.
- (n)) Advising other relevant ministers on issues relating to game animals.
- (o) Performing such other functions as the Minister of Conservation may require in regard to game animals.

2.6 Formulation of game animal management plans

What's a game animal management plan?

A game animal management plan is a plan to manage game animals expressly in the interests of hunters, while ensuring that environmental standards are maintained. The Game Animal Council would seek legislative changes to enable this and the Council would draw up and implement the game animal management plans. DOC would identify areas where conservation values required active management by DOC at minimal or zero populations, and the Council would draw up game animal plans for remaining areas as required.

A game animal management plan would apply to a defined area and specific types of game animal. It would be developed by first determining management objectives like whether the herd was to be managed primarily for meat or trophy value, or for both. Target population levels would then be decided and terms for harvest would be set out in the management plan. Once the plan was approved the Game Animal Council would be responsible for managing the animals and the hunting by all or some of the following provisions: issuing hunting permits and conditions, controlling access, collecting hunting returns, monitoring the state of the herd, and enforcement.

The new game animal management plans, being administered by the GAC, would be about management by hunters, for hunters and for conservation.

In keeping with the directive to “Develop management strategies for [big] game animals” in the Terms of Reference, the Committee compiled the following draft purpose for a game animal management plan:

“The purpose of a game animal management plan is to establish and implement objectives for the management of game animals within any region or part of any region.

“The NZ Game Animal Council shall prepare for approval by the Minister such game animal management plans as it considers necessary for the management of game animals within its area of jurisdiction.

“When preparing a draft game animal management plan, the NZ Game Animal Council shall—

- Have regard to the sustainability of game animals in the area to which the plan relates; and
- Have regard to the impact that the management proposed in the draft is likely to have on other natural resources and other users of the habitat concerned; and
- Include such provisions as may be necessary to maximise opportunities for hunters and game animal managers.”

2.7 Options for structure of Game Animal Council

Taking into account the above functions the Committee considered what the most appropriate structure for the Game Animal Council would be in order to carry out those functions.

The Committee looked at other regimes for managing introduced ungulates in an environment that has no indigenous ungulate herbivores. There was no real precedent, although the management systems of the NSW Game Council and the NZ Fish and Game Council provided useful general models of game management. The Department of Conservation was used as the current example of government-run management.

How will the Council be structured?

The Establishment Committee has researched the various options and has come up with a recommendation (see below). Nonetheless, we welcome comments on our suggested structure.

Because all NZ's large game animals are introduced, our situation appears to be unique and we have no precedents for managing game animals in such an environment. The closest models are to be seen in the New South Wales Game Council (an independent body set up by the Australian government to manage hunting) and the NZ Department of Conservation (a government department with broad responsibilities for conservation and recreation). There are also some similarities with the NZ Fish and Game Councils. However, none of these present models exactly fits our situation, so we have come up with a proposal tailored to New Zealand, for stakeholders to consider.

We propose the Council to be a single national governing body – not a number of separate regional bodies like the Fish and Game Councils throughout NZ. We propose that the Council should be made up of about 17 representatives from stakeholder groups and the general hunting public plus an independent Chair, and that it should be responsible for direction and policy.

Council would then employ staff to do its day-to-day game management work, advocacy and administration (see later).

The Committee concluded the best option was for the Council to be a governing body of government and stakeholder representatives, headed by an independent Chair, and employing a Chief Executive Officer who would be responsible for employment and appointment of staff, and managing and providing services.

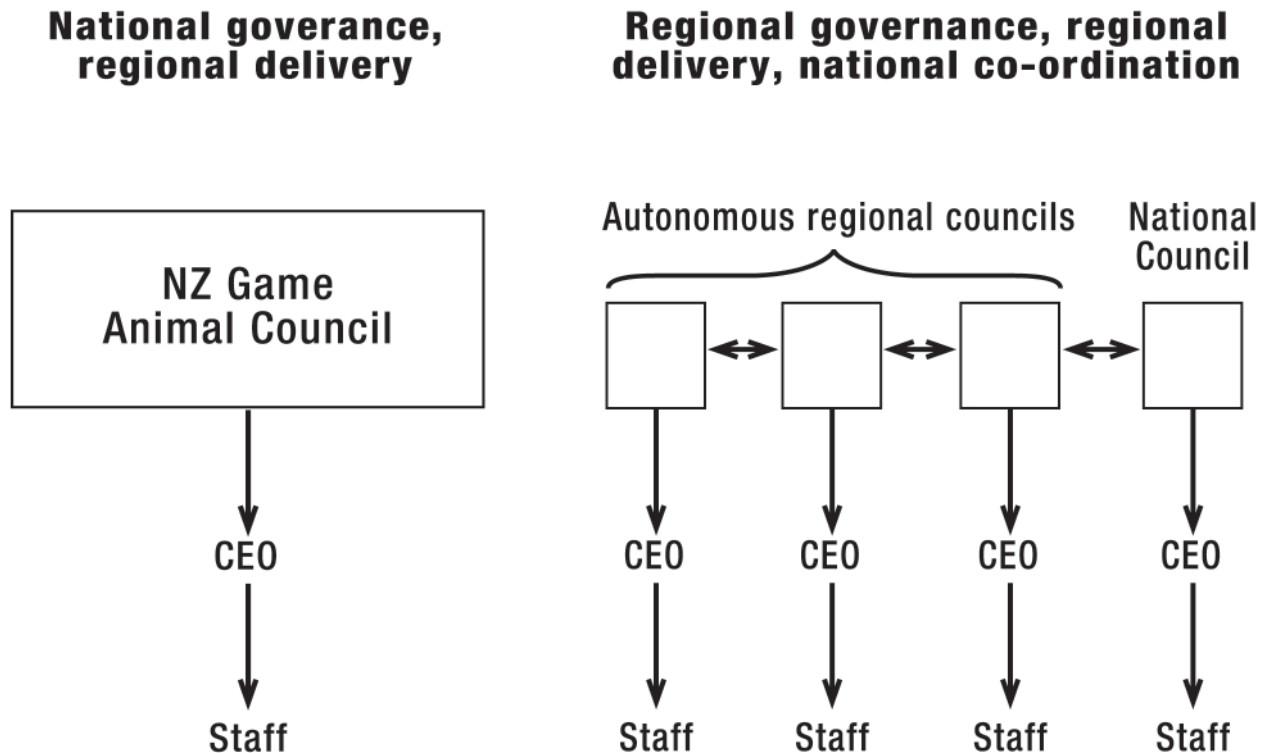
Identifying the skills this requires was comparatively straightforward. However, a larger issue regarding structure was whether to have

- regional governance (as seen with the 13 Fish & Game Councils throughout NZ, each of which is a regional governing body, and all of which are co-ordinated nationally through a single NZ Fish & Game Council), or
- national governance (as seen with the NSW Game Council model, a single national body with nationally managed regional services provided through a number of regional offices)

These two structures are shown in Figure 3.

The present thinking of the Committee is that the latter of these options is preferable.

Fig 3: National vs. regional governance



2.7.1. Preferred option. The preferred option is a single national body with nationally managed regional services through a number of regional offices.

Advantages:

- Good organisational size (NZ is not large enough to require separate regions.)
- Duplication of effort and management at regional level is avoided.
- Lower costs.
- Administratively simpler.
- Co-ordination more straightforward.
- More rapidly responsive to stakeholder needs.
- Single level of governance.

Disadvantages:

- Risk of executive or sectorial capture.
- Fewer administrative units.

In contrast, the model of regional governance and delivery with national co-ordination appears to offer fewer advantages:

Advantage:

- More difficult for sector interests to capture a number of separate regions.

Disadvantages:

- Large organisational size.
- Duplication and fragmentation of management.
- Higher costs.
- Administratively greater complexity.
- Less rapidly responsive to regional or sector-specific needs.
- Greater risk of regional conflict.

2.8 Composition of NZ Game Animal Council, and selection of Councillors

Who will be on the Council?

Again, at this stage we only have suggestions – nothing is set in concrete. We think that initially, Council members should be appointed by the Minister of Conservation from a list of people nominated by various stakeholder groups. This would ensure every interest group gets fair representation. These groups include:

- National hunting organisations
- The sports industry
- The farming community
- Iwi
- The scientific community
- Conservation non-government organisations
- MAF and DOC

These are all national bodies, but some stakeholder groups do not have a national body, eg. there is no national venison-recovery operators' organisation or national pig hunting club. Until that situation changes, we suggest each of these groups should be represented by a nominee from a prominent regional group, namely the Southern Aerial Game Recovery Association and the Tokoroa Pig Hunters Club.

Because many hunters do not belong to clubs, there should also be representation of those unaffiliated hunters.

Council members should be nominated for varying and staggered periods to ensure continuity and avoid sudden large changes of membership.

Council should also have the power to co-opt temporary members (without voting rights) to assist on special or local issues for a period of time as it may consider necessary. For example, organisations such as the Wapiti Foundation, SPARC, Mountain Safety Council, the Animal Health Board and the NZ Food Safety Authority.

2.8.1 Proposed composition

The Committee considers that the proposed single national body will need to consist of a sufficiently large number of representatives (councillors) to ensure the workload of governance is handled effectively, and to ensure fair and broad representation of stakeholder interests.

The Council will also need powers to co-opt further stakeholder interests or persons with specific expertise, to enable the efficient performance of its functions. This will be particularly important during the establishment phase of the Council.

Council members should be appointed by the Minister, having regard to the interests of conservation, recreation, commerce, tourism, farming and biosecurity.

The appointment process should begin with formulating a list of candidates. In the first instance this task falls within the Terms of Reference of the present Committee. Appointments should be made for varying terms (eg. one to three years), to avoid sudden major changes of Council composition and to ensure that key positions are not changed so frequently that they affect the continuity of crucial long-term tasks.

In the longer term an electoral college or appointment panel process within each organisation represented should be used to draw up lists of candidates for the Minister to consider. Eventually some Council positions may be filled by election, but this is a matter for the Council itself to decide.

The Committee acknowledges that a council of 17 is larger than ideal for governance but it is envisaged that the Council would create three or four management committees with broad areas of responsibility to the full Council. The full Council might only meet four times annually for policymaking and planning purposes.

What's an electoral college?

An electoral college is like a selection panel: a group of electors given the task of electing a candidate to a position. Often they are simply skilled or expert people whose wisdom should mean they will make a better choice than a larger group who might be swayed by candidates who appeal to the masses but lack the real skills needed. It represents a move away from the idea of "one man, one vote" in the direction of "one qualified person, one vote".

The electoral college system began in the US as a means of selecting the president, with an electoral college basically consisting of representatives of the 50 states, instead of every citizen voting.

The choice of system for selecting Councillors is one of the most important decisions leading to the setting up of the Game Animal Council. The choice may have both predicted and unexpected consequences. Short-term political interest can obscure the longer-term consequences of whatever electoral system is selected.

Electoral systems are crucially importance to good governance. For example, it is increasingly being recognised that an electoral system can be designed both to provide local geographic representation and to promote proportionality; to promote the development of unified groups, ensure the representation of minorities; and make sure that incentives and constraints are effective. However,

because of the Council's diverse composition and problems of identifying all constituencies, the Committee does not wish initially to be too prescriptive. Council would however expect each nominating organisation to move to a selection panel or electoral college process as soon as possible.

2.8.2 Chair. The foundational Chair of the NZ Game Animal Council will be the first and most crucial appointment. The Committee believes the Chair needs to be an independent Ministerial appointment, not an elected position. The foundational Chair should not be appointed from among the Councillors.

The skills required from the foundational Chair may not necessarily be the same as for successive Chairs, since the establishment process is not the same as ongoing operations.

The Committee considers it has the support of a sufficiently large constituency to function as the electoral college for the purpose of making recommendations to the Minister for the first appointment. Subsequent Chairs should be appointed on the recommendation of the council in a process to be set up by the Council.

The Chair should be paid by way of an annual honorarium .

2.8.3 Councillors from statutory organisations. The Committee considers that one appointee to represent each of the following organisations is necessary in view of their statutory responsibilities with regard to game animals and/or animals or game under the corresponding legislation:

- Department of Conservation (Conservation Act, Wild Animal Control Act, Wildlife Act, National Parks Act, Reserves Act)
- MAF / MAF Biosecurity NZ (MAF Acts including Biosecurity Act 1993, Animal Products Act 1999, Animal Welfare Act, etc.)

2.8.4 Councillors from non-statutory organisations and sector groups. The Committee considers that appointees should be made from nominations from the following organisations or sectors, as each has a particular interest in game animals:

- NZ Deerstalkers' Association (two nominations)
- NZ Professional Hunting Guides Association
- Safari Club International
- Tokoroa Pig Hunters Club (in the absence of any national pig hunters' association)
- The Committee also considers there should be two appointees to represent unaffiliated recreational hunting public. Initially these nominations would be made by the incoming Council.
- NZ Deer Farmers Association
- Southern Aerial Game Recovery Association (in the absence of any national association of commercial venison hunters)
- Sports Industry Association
- Federated Farmers

- NZ Association of Game Estates
- The Minister of Maori Affairs
- The scientific community
- Conservation NGOs

This is a total of 17 appointees, all of whom would have full voting rights, plus the Chair, who would not have a casting vote.

2.8.5 Other. As outlined earlier, there are additional groups that would require representation from time to time but not need permanent or regular presence on the Council. These groups usually are focused on one or a few issues, or a localised issue, and can be co-opted on an *ad hoc* basis, i.e. for a purpose and period as may be decided by the Council. Examples of these groups are the Wapiti Foundation, SPARC, Mountain Safety Council (outdoors and hunting stakeholders); Animal Health Board and NZ Food Safety Authority (statutory roles).

2.9 Process of appointment

Individual groups represented on the Council should have the power to select nominees, while always offering more than one for each position. Nominees should be selected from among their own constituencies, by an electoral college or appointment panel process. Each group should be issued with a set of basic criteria to consider before proposing each nominee, thereby ensuring they are selected for important qualities like ability and skill, rather than issues that at a national level may be peripheral or irrelevant (e.g. where they live, or their status in other fields). This should also help avoid the pitfalls of ‘single-issue’ capture and ensure the Minister is provided with a Council that has a broad range of skills. Every group should also be required to offer more than one nominee and state in writing its case for each. While on the face of it this does not offer the guarantee of democratic process inherent in an election, nor is there any inherent guarantee that popularly elected members would have the necessary skills and qualities. Having each Councillor appointed by and accountable to the Minister should ensure that they act with the best interests of the GAC while mitigating sectoral or parochial bias.

A process of electing members poses the problem of high cost which is exacerbated by the difficulty of identifying and locating all persons with a legitimate claim to voting rights in a first election.

3.0 Managing animals by the Game Animal Council

The initial staffing of the GAC Executive must be able to provide advocacy, policy and planning, governance and the management of hunters and game animal managers. The committee considers that, as with conservation being done by local communities, the actual management of game animals can be most efficiently carried out from within local communities. Accordingly, any animal management required should be preferably and principally done by the local community, although the Council will provide the expertise and possibly some funding.

3.1 Legislative requirements of NZ Game Animal Council

3.1.1 Public Entity. The Terms of Reference state that “The Establishment Committee will advise the government on the creation of the Big Game Hunting Council, as a statutory authority.” The Committee has examined the various categories of public bodies, and having regard to the proposed structure and functions of the Game Animal Council the Committee sees the Game Animal Council in a similar legislative position as Fish and Game Councils, namely as a Public Entity. The Game Animal Council is very similar in its legislative requirements and therefore it is the committee’s view that the Council should be established in the same way, via provisions in the Conservation Act.

3.1.2 Legal status and classification of animals. All animals are categorised for legislative purposes under the Wildlife Act and its Schedules. These Schedules detail the broad management objectives for each species and also which agency is responsible for that management. Currently game animals appear on Schedule 6 which designates them as “Wild Animals” to be managed under the Wild Animal Control Act which is administered by the Department of Conservation. In comparison, game birds appear on Schedule 1 which designates them as “game” so they are managed by Fish and Game Councils.

What changes to the law will be required?

At present, legally speaking, deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs are defined as ‘Wild Animals’ under the Wildlife Act, which states that they are to be managed under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 (WAC Act), today administered by DOC. With DOC’s focus today on “place-based” management, animals will be managed for different objectives at different places, and the law amended to reflect this.

Deer farmers want deer on farms to be legally redefined as ‘Farmed Game’ to maintain significant market access advantages for venison exports defined as ‘game’, but also require the farmed status that brings the deer industry under the auspices of MAF rather than DOC. Game estate owners want their animals legally designated as ‘Managed Game’, as they are neither farmed nor wild.

The GAC Committee considers that animals in the wild are essentially ‘Wild Game Animals’ and it would be logical for them to have such a status. This classification would be accomplished under the current system of schedules to the Wildlife Act. They would be categorised in a separate schedule as species to be managed by the Game Animal Council in places where they are to be managed for their hunting values.

In the places where they are to be managed for conservation purposes only, they could be identified and retained under the current schedule as 'Wild Animals' and managed by the Department of Conservation for those purposes. There may need to be some change to the Wild Animal Control Act with respect to the management of farmed and game estate deer and venison recovery.

With the focus now on management at particular places, animals will be managed for different objectives at different places. The Council would be able to manage game animals outside of those areas prioritised by the DOC planning process as being managed for conservation purposes only. It is therefore desirable that the animals' status should reflect the different types of management and the objectives of each.

The New Zealand Deer Farmers Association made submissions to the Game Animal Panel setting out its opposition to the status of 'Wild Animal' and wanted the status of deer on farms to be redefined as 'Farmed Game Animals'. This safeguards the international market access advantages conferred by the status of 'Game' while recognising that deer are treated as stock in every other respect and are governed by MAF requirements covering ownership, confinement, animal welfare, disease surveillance, animal health, etc.

Similarly, game estate owners wanted animals on game estates to be separately defined, with a suggested status as 'Estate Managed Game Animals'. Animals on game estates are already separately defined under the Animal Products Act and the venison from game estates has separate designation under food safety regulations (as 'wild game estate meat').

The third category of game applies to animals that are unconfined and owned by the Crown. The Committee considers that these are essentially 'Wild Game Animals' and it would be logical for them to have such a status. The classification of 'Game Animals' could be accomplished under the current system of schedules to the Wildlife Act under a separate schedule with management undertaken by the Game Animal Council, i.e. game animals in this schedule, then sub-defined by place as farmed game, managed game, and wild game.

In the places where they are to be managed for conservation purposes only, they could be identified and retained under the current schedule as 'Wild Animals' and managed by DOC for those purposes. There may need to be some change to the Wild Animal Control Act with respect to the management of farmed and game estate deer and venison recovery.

This continuum of status is consistent with management at "place" by providing a flexibility of designation that reflects differing management objectives and caters for future changes in management direction.

For example, in Fiordland National Park there are both wapiti and red deer. Public planning processes (Fiordland National Park Plan) have determined that the Department of Conservation should actively control deer in two places. The Takahe Area of the Murchison Mountains is managed to keep deer at as close to zero density as practical, and on Secretary Island there is a programme for managing deer at zero density. Both of these programmes are supported by the public at large (including hunters) and it is appropriate at these places for deer to be designated as 'Wild Animals', and to be controlled for conservation purposes only.

Elsewhere in Fiordland, deer are effectively unmanaged and are subject to unco-ordinated recreational and commercial hunting, with conflicts between these two interests, for example over the shooting of mature stags. Wapiti are currently administered under a separate

Wild Animal Control Plan that restricts commercial hunting of wapiti and places the co-ordination of commercial and recreational hunting under the auspices of the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation. As part of this plan the Foundation provides control of red deer and wapiti in a defined area known as the Wapiti Area, even when commercial hunting is not viable. This results in funded animal control at no cost to the government, and helps protect conservation values. It also provides quality wapiti management for recreational hunting interests and co-ordinates recreational and commercial hunting. However, the mechanism is very convoluted and derived from legislation that did not anticipate such an arrangement. This results in an uncertain future even though the programme is a win for both conservation and recreational hunting.

It would therefore be more efficient to designate red deer and wapiti in Fiordland as 'Wild Game Animals' and for them to be managed by the Game Animal Council under game management plans that gave recreational and commercial hunting different priority at different places. The Wapiti Area could be managed for wapiti specifically, while deer in the Takahe Area and on Secretary Island would be designated as 'Wild Animals', and controlled by DOC for conservation purposes only.

Such a system also allows for changing objectives in the future if public processes identify further areas that may need to be managed for conservation purposes only. This is both flexible and adaptive.

4.0 Delivery

4.1 Organisational size

The Committee believes that initially the Council should set up a central or head office in Wellington, then in other areas as the Council as needs and resources dictate.

Head Office will initially require staff to fill six key roles:

- the Chief Executive Officer
- national game management
- general administration/accounting
- public relations
- policy/resource management, and
- customer service.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 Costs. Initially costs including salaries, offices and travel would be about \$650,000 per year. Servicing the costs of Councillors, including meetings, would add a further \$200,000.

Once-only and establishment costs including the costs of research and database development will increase the total cost during the first 3–5 years. The first priority for the Council will be to establish the funding stream.

4.2.2 Payment of Councillors. The Committee’s recommendation is that beyond reimbursement of expenses, there be no fees paid initially to councillors.

Honoraria should be established for the Chair only, the initial level to be set by the first Council.

4.2.3 Options for funding

How will the Game Animal Council be funded?

A number of opportunities for ‘user-pays’ funding are being explored including levies on exported trophies and retail sales of hunting equipment, and a registered hunter system. We’re still looking at the options and would like to hear your views.

We believe that a basic permit to hunt on public conservation land should continue to be available free of charge. However, we are interested in determining the degree to which hunters recognise that there is a cost for providing improved services. Allowing hunters to fund and own those services by way of a registered hunter programme is something the Committee believes should be explored. If the 50,000 hunters in NZ supported such a programme, an annual contribution of as little as \$20 each per year could provide a funding base to help protect their interests, enhance management and hunting opportunities, and provide strong advocacy and other useful services to enhance hunting. Some have suggested that a higher charge could result in greater benefits.

The government has recognised that some of its functions in regard to wild animal control and management will be contributed to by the GAC, and this will produce cost savings which may be made available to the GAC in recognition of the valuable contribution hunters make.

There are also indications that some funding could be earned by contracting to land owners or government agencies. A current example is the management of pig hunting by the Tokoroa Pig Hunting Club in production forests at Kinleith. However, it must be stressed that the GAC seeks no specific mandate over private land.

The Committee explored all options its members were able to suggest, and remains very open to further suggestions in this area.

The following are the main opportunities identified so far:

1. Export animals management fee. More than 3,000 trophies were exported in 2007–08. A sliding scale could be applied, depending on the international market value of the hunting opportunity (hundreds of dollars for some animals in NZ). This could provide a large and appropriate funding opportunity and would be straightforward to manage.

When trophies are exported there is a flat fee for CITES compliance procedures regardless of the number of trophies in a consignment; this could be made more ‘user-pays’ to leverage a larger income stream.

2. Sales levies. The Committee believes that a levy provides an appropriate and equitable funding opportunity, and notes that every year NZ Sporting Industry Association members sell millions of dollars’ worth of goods and services related to hunting. This proposal is very much user-based in that those that use the most equipment and services would contribute the most. This proposal is not without precedent, as a similar system is used overseas to fund management of game species but it would require the generation of significant goodwill among most stakeholders. There are some challenging statutory issues regarding management and review, and there would be restrictions on the use to which money from levies could be put. Notwithstanding, this has the potential to be the largest single source of income. Since the overall impact on prices would be very small the committee does not see any significant consumer resistance.

3. Concessions. Commercial operators on conservation land pay concession fees. Where fees are paid for the commercial use of game animals, it is logical that these funds could go to the Game Animal Council.

4. Government contribution. Currently the government via the Department of Conservation spends an unknown (estimated to be in excess of \$1 million) amount of money on administering hunting and farming of game animals. While the GAC is to be essentially self-funding, it will not be precluded from applying to the government for funding to assist with ‘public good’ functions.

5. Contributions for special management. At present hunters pay fees for access to specially managed wild animal herds such as Fiordland wapiti, and for balloted hunting areas. Generally these funds are allocated for specific purposes, and the sum involved is relatively small, but may have the potential to increase as more areas are managed.

6. Sponsorship (commercial). This is only a likely option for specific activities outside of the normal operating budget, but has significant potential.

7. Permit fees. The Committee considers that the challenging question of hunting charges needs to be at least considered. There is a long history of free access to game animals, founded in their early status as ‘pest’ or ‘noxious’ animals. There are two basic schools of thought on the idea of charging for use of the hunting resource:

- the idea is anathema and deeply contrary to the NZ tradition of free use of a public resource; and
- the idea could be considered as a means of funding good management and providing a justified sense of ownership of the resource.

Data shows that about 50,000 people hunt game each year, and ball-park budgetary projections suggesting with a nominal \$20 fee an overall budget of perhaps \$1M per year could be generated. There are current proposals by DOC to impose charges in some areas to cover the cost of running the present permit system.

The Committee feels that the basic permit to hunt on public conservation land should remain free. The Committee is proposing, however, that where the Game Animal Council provides services in addition to the basic permit, it should be able to charge a nominal fee for this. This would be done with a hunter registration system as an optional extra service when obtaining a basic hunting permit. However, for this option to find acceptability it would be vital that the GAC be empowered through legislative status and resources to greatly improve the present situation with game animal management. The Game Animal Council as a statutory body advocating for the interests of its stakeholders could deliver improvements such as greater hunting opportunities to both public conservation land and where negotiated, other public and private land, better-quality animals and high-quality information services.

Such a nominal fee would be widely accepted as an excellent investment if it conferred rights to useful information resources like maps and details of hunting conditions and who else was in the locality, or provided better hunting opportunities in defined well-managed hunting areas. Provision of services such as public liability insurance and rural fire insurance would be very cost effective over a large number of people. New information technology systems makes such benefits relatively easy and cost-effective to deliver, and the Committee believes the benefits certainly outweigh the costs.

8. Contracting to manage game animals. Contracting wild animal control to the Game Animal Council is another potential source of income. Although the Game Animal Council has no specific mandate over private land, there are opportunities for the Council to contract to land owners and government for specific programmes. A current example is the management of pig hunting by the Tokoroa Pig Hunting Club in production forests at Kinleith.

4.3 Ownership of game animals

The Committee considers that, apart from farmed and game-estate-managed animals, game animals and wild animals should remain the property of the Crown irrespective of land tenure.

4.4 Accountability

The Committee considers the Council should be fully accountable to government and its stakeholders, and this should be clearly enshrined in its foundational legislation.

- “Government” includes Ministers of the Crown with statutory roles/obligations in respect of game animals, i.e. the Ministers of Conservation, Tourism, Maori Affairs (Te Puni Kokiri), Agriculture, Biosecurity, Recreation & Sport, and Environment.

Three categories of stakeholder should be recognised:

- the public of New Zealand generally;

- key stakeholders: special-interest groups including but not limited to those with statutory representation on the Council; and
- unaffiliated hunters and game managers.

Operating plans and review processes should refer to performance indicators for councillors and Council staff alike. There should be a schedule of Key Performance Indicators for all Council staff, and procedures developed for management and resolution of certain disputes between stakeholders, and any and all disputes between stakeholders and the Council.

5.0 What could the NZ Game Animal Council mean to stakeholders?

To the Government and Ministers: A single statutory organisation encompassing the entire sector, accountable to government and its stakeholders for managing its own affairs, resolving its own conflicts and being essentially self-funded.

To statutory organisations: A single statutory organisation encompassing the entire sector, with professional staff able to deal with all game animal issues.

To conservationists: A continued force of skilled, motivated and coordinated recreational and commercial hunters to manage and assist with the control of game animals and generating greater conservation benefits than an unmanaged state.

To private landowners: A national game animal management organisation with the expertise to provide game management services to landowners and provide registered hunters that are well trained and skilled.

To hunters and game managers: One statutory national-level body that operates specifically in their interests and represents and advocates for everyone with an interest in hunting and in deer, chamois, tahr and wild pigs. Provide a high standard of game management, advocacy, coordination and conflict mitigation and resolution services for hunters and game managers. It will also seek to increase participation, success rates and satisfaction with the hunting experience. Commercial hunting opportunities will also be integrated into management planning for game species. The GAC will also provide advice and expertise to community groups to facilitate the management of game animals in local areas.

The public at large: A partnership between The Department of Conservation and the Game Animal Council to control game animals in priority areas specifically for conservation and to elsewhere manage game animals for recreation, commerce, tourism and conservation.

6.0 Questions for stakeholders to consider

The Committee welcomes comments and suggestions on the recommendations in this paper. Here are some questions on what we see as among the key issues:

1. The Committee acknowledges that its terms of reference state that the proposed council has a wider mandate than just hunting. It is therefore suggesting that the new Council be called the New Zealand Game Animal Council.
 - *Do you agree with the proposed name? If not what changes would you suggest?*
2. The Committee is recommending that DOC would continue to identify, via public processes, priority areas where deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs need to be actively controlled for conservation purposes. Outside of these areas the Game Animal Council could manage these species for hunting benefits.
 - *Do you agree with the proposed direction? If not, please suggest any amendments you would like to see.*
3. The Committee has recommended statements of purpose, objectives and both general and specific functions.
 - *What if any modifications would you suggest to these?*
4. The committee is recommending that the new council be a single national organisation as opposed to a regionally based organisation.
 - *Do you agree with this recommendation? If not, what alternative structure do you believe would better suit the functions suggested?*
5. Taking into account the diversity of interests in deer, tahr chamois and wild pigs, and lack of an identified constituency, a council of 17 members appointed by the Minister of Conservation following recommendations from organisations and sectors is recommended.
 - *Do you agree with the proposed range of stakeholder representation? If not, what changes would you suggest?*
6. The legislative designation of deer, tahr, chamois, and wild pigs needs to reflect different management aims and outcomes. The following designations are recommended:
 - Wild animals
 - Game animals (subdivided into wild game animals, estate managed game animals and farmed game animals)
 - *Do you agree with these categories? If not what would you suggest?*
7. A number of funding options are recommended by the Committee. We are recommending that permits to hunt on public land remain free of charge but are also suggesting a registered hunter scheme.
 - *What are your views on these recommendations? Do you support the concept of partially funding the GAC through a registered hunter programme and if so how much would you be prepared to pay annually?*

7.0 Further information

A range of further information can be found on the Game Animal Council Establishment Committee website, www.gameanimalcouncil.org.nz

Written submissions may be sent to The Secretary, Game Animal Council Establishment Committee, P O Box 12-099, Beckenham, Christchurch 8242, or emailed to secretary@gameanimalcouncil.org.nz