

22 November 2024

Prime Minister
Right Honourable Christopher Luxon



By email: C.Luxon@ministers.govt.nz

Dear Rt. Hon. Prime Minister

RE: THANK YOU FROM NZDA | SIKA SHOW & HUNTS FUNDING

It was great to see you and speak with you at the Sika Show in Hamilton recently.

Your attendance did not go unnoticed by the wider hunting and conservation sector, and we appreciate your sincere engagement and stopping by NZDA's stand.

The many hunting and conservation groups, represented at the Sika Show work collaboratively with each other to fulfil important functions within our communities. The NZDA is committed to these partnerships, and we will continue to work alongside like-minded groups now and into the future.

The NZDA has 49 Branches nationwide and 12,000 members, many of whom volunteer their time and expertise to community-based education and conservation programmes.

The Hunter National Training Scheme (HUNTS) is one such programme which we view as NZDA's flagship programme. The programme is based on an established curriculum that focuses on hunting ethics and regulations, firearms, and hunter safety. Access to local hunting areas and community-based shooting ranges is critical to the delivery of HUNTS. The benefits of HUNTS courses to communities are significant in terms of promoting community awareness and public safety. The programme supports New Zealand's conservation efforts and biodiversity outcomes.

In 2021, NZDA secured funding through the Department of Conservation's 'Jobs for Nature' (JFN) programme. The funding was distributed over a three-year period and enabled NZDA to employ dedicated staff to grow the HUNTS programme - this funding ended on 31 August 2024. NZDA achieved the project's targets, which resulted in the number of Branches delivering courses growing from 19 to 30, the number of course graduates increasing from 100 to 430 annually, and the pool of volunteer Instructors expanding from 38 to 84. Collectively, instructors gave, in the final year of the project, over 11,000 volunteer hours to the delivery of HUNTS.

The JFN funding ended in August this year, and despite significant effort, we failed to find alternative sustainable funding to maintain the growth and momentum of the programme. We did apply for Lotteries Grant Funding in 2022 and 2023 through the HUNTS Charitable

Trust but were declined on both occasions¹. Like water safety and search and rescue, we see the NZDA HUNTS programme as a frontline service that delivers substantial and effective practical training by volunteers to the public that contributes hugely to minimising hunting and firearm-related deaths within our communities, so it was disappointing that HUNTS was not recognised by the Lotteries Grant Board as a legitimate, successful and worthwhile outdoor safety programme.

We humbly request you speak to your cabinet colleagues, including the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, Minister of Conservation, DIA Minister, and Associate Justice Minister (Arms), and consider extending funding to support HUNTS in 2025 and beyond.

I know your job never stops, but as we near the holiday period, I hope you get the chance to relax and enjoy some quality time with friends and family.

Keep up the good work and the excellent progress your government has made for New Zealand under your leadership.

In the New Year, we hope you may consider elevating and tabling on the House's order paper the private member bill '*Conservation (Membership of New Zealand Conservation Authority) Amendment Bill*²'. The outcome of this bill aligns with National's "Recreation, Culture and Food Policy for Hunting and Fishing"³ and is a step in the right direction for New Zealand in reflecting all conservation and recreation stakeholders.

Yours Faithfully,



Callum Sheridan,

NZDA National President

E: callum.sheridan@deerstalkers.org.nz

¹ Lottery Outdoor Safety grants in 2022/23 totalled \$10,800,930 and in 2023/24 \$10,770,930 allocated to 5 frontline service organisations who do critical work to ensure people return home safely: New Zealand Land Search and Rescue Incorporated, NZ Mountain Safety Council Incorporated, Royal New Zealand Coastguard Incorporated, Surf Life Saving New Zealand Incorporated, and Water Safety New Zealand.

² Member's Bill Sponsor: Cameron Luxton.

³ Your policy states, page 4, "National will [...] strengthen game management in New Zealand by: giving hunters and fishers a voice through permanent seats for hunting and fishing on the Conservation Authority and Conservation Boards.