

# Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)

*A fair go for responsible people.*



March 7, 2017

## SSAA Victoria celebrates inspiring women

This International Women's Day, the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) is celebrating the contribution women make to the shooting sports.

The organisation has seen a steady increase in female participation in recent years, with women now eager to get involved in target shooting and hunting.

Donna Smigielski is one of those members. The inspiring young woman is just 28 years old and already the owner of a successful beauty salon. She spends her working week administering the business and performing treatments on her loyal customers.



But on weekends Donna's life is a stark contrast. She regularly dons her camouflage, packs her rifle in her pink padded bag and heads out hunting with her dad.

"My dad has hunted ever since he was young and all the men in our family always go on hunting trips," she said. "They had a father and son trip about five or six years ago and because my dad only has two daughters, he went without me.

"I told him it wasn't fair that he went on his own just because he didn't have a son. So, the next time he invited me along."

Since that first trip with her father, Donna has continued to hunt regularly. She said one of the best things about her hobby was how different it was to her 'day job'.

"My work life in comparison to my home life is very different," she said. "At work I need to be all done up and have a big focus of professionalism, but when we are out hunting I can relax.

"Nothing compares to being outdoors away from phone reception and just being able to unwind. When I am hunting I wear camo and just let my hair down. Obviously I have to be very safe while handling firearms, but I have fun while doing it."

Donna is one of the many hunters who helps manage pest animals, which cost the country millions each year, on state-owned land and farms. Her main targets are feral goats, foxes and rabbits.

About 2.6 million feral goats reside in Australia, costing the livestock industry about \$25 million each year. The country's 200 million rabbits cost primary producers \$113 million per year in lost production and population control. The worst of the three is the fox, which costs the sheep industry \$100 million each year. The species kill up to 20 per cent of lambs born across the country.

SSAA Victoria encourages any women interested in the shooting sports to contact them about joining a club. For more information visit [ssaavic.com.au](http://ssaavic.com.au)

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