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# Shots fired into front yards in deer-hunting 'problem areas' of north-east Victoria

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**PHOTO:** A sambar stag, shot by a hunter. (Audience submitted: Louis Brown)

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**Shots have been fired into the front yards of homes neighbouring deer habitats in Victoria, the state's hunting regulator has revealed.**

Parts of the High Country, in state's north-east, have been labelled "problem areas" for illegal deer hunting, with "problem people" acting irresponsibly near homes and communities.

Game Management Authority director Simon Toop said the reputation of the 37,000 licensed deer hunters in Victoria was suffering due to the illegal behaviour of rogue groups.

"Illegal spotlighting can be a problem, particularly in built-up areas," he said.

"We do often get complaints from residents in country areas.

"We've had incidents of deer being shot in people's front yards, on roads in front of their houses and also in more remote bushland areas, which is still of concern.

"People will shoot deer under spotlight off roads which is highly dangerous to other users of the road.

"They also can't tell what's beyond the light, so you don't know if people are camping in the bush etcetera.

**"It's unethical, it can be dangerous, it gives hunters a poor reputation, and it does create those public safety risks."**

"We want to make sure we're working with the community to address illegal spotlighting."

## Deer hunters suspected in hit-and-run death

Victoria Police have linked the November hit-run death of Bryce Airs near Jamieson in the Victorian High Country to illegal deer hunters.



**PHOTO:** Bryce Airs told a passer-by he thought he had been struck by lightning. (Facebook: Bryce Airs)

The Major Collision Investigation Unit is still seeking information from the public which might help solve the case.

In unrelated incidents, five men faced Myrtleford Magistrates Court in recent weeks after being found in possession of firearms, ammunition and high-powered torches in recognised deer habitats near Tolmie and Cheshunt last August.

The charges were the result of targeted operations conducted by police, the GMA and Parks Victoria.

"We're running operations all the time focusing on where our problem areas are, and problem people, but also where there's a lot of deer hunting activity," Mr Toop said.

"Much of the hunting occurs in the eastern part of the state for deer, particularly sambar, and fallow deer in the west.

"It's a very popular recreational activity."

Mr Toop said deer hunters are sometimes used by property owners and land management groups for strategic population control.

He said responsible hunters should actively report illegal behaviour to help clean up the reputation of the pursuit.

"It's very important to maintain community confidence that hunting can be done lawfully and safely," he said.

**"Hunters need to make sure that they're aware of the law."**

**For more information visit [gma.vic.gov.au](http://gma.vic.gov.au).**

**To report dangerous or illegal activity, call 000 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.**

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