

Services to the NZ Game Animal Council and hunting sector celebrated

By Grant Dodson, Chair of the NZ Game Animal Council



Around one hundred people gathered in Parliament's Grand Hall on Thursday 1 August, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the NZ Game Animal Council (GAC).

Many thanks to our event host, Minister for Hunting and Fishing Hon Todd McClay. It was in the house of Parliament where 10 years ago, the Game Animal Council Act and the GAC was established so it seemed a very fitting location to host our birthday.

We welcomed attendees to celebrate not only the achievements of the GAC over the last 10 years, but most importantly the people who have contributed to these achievements and the strides that the hunting sector has taken during this time.

It was the Hon Peter Dunne as Leader of United Future and Associate Minister of Conservation who, along with support from other Members of Parliament such as the Hon Todd McClay, made the passage of the Game Animal Council Act possible.

In the early days, Don Hammond and the wider inaugural Council often undertook work on a voluntary basis. Despite the uncertainty and lack of funding, it was their judicious management during that period that set the GAC up for the future.

While the success of the GAC is the sum of many people's hard work, passion, dedication and commitment, there's one person who we believe requires significant recognition for their services to the Game Animal Council and the New Zealand hunting sector.

Garry Ottmann has spent decades working in largely voluntary roles on behalf of hunters, across many hunting sector organisations and as the Chair of the GAC Establishment Committee.

He was a tireless advocate for the establishment of the GAC, and it is the view of many people around at that time, that without him this organisation would probably never have been established. He was also a member of the GAC's Inaugural Council and acted as a part-time general manager.

Garry's passion for hunting and conservation in New Zealand requires acknowledgement which is why he was the recipient of the GAC's inaugural award for services to the Game Animal Council and New Zealand hunting sector. We thank Garry for his commitment to the GAC and the hunting sector in New Zealand. We wouldn't be where we are today without his efforts.

The GAC has an ambitious vision – the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, communities, commerce and conservation. While there remains a long and difficult journey ahead to achieve this vision, I believe we can be proud of the contribution of the GAC so far. This includes:

- Providing support to hunting sector organisations
- Developing a more progressive game animal management system in New Zealand
- Providing research, information and coordination for the hunting sector

- Developing the Herds of Special Interest concept which will see game animals managed for both hunting and conservation
- Facilitating hunter education and safety awareness through Better Hunting – our online learning programme for hunters.

These achievements reflect not only the GAC but a range of stakeholders pushing for more, for better, to achieve good results when it comes to game animal management, conservation and hunting in New Zealand.

Collaboration is critical for a small organisation like the GAC, and we highly value the relationships and contributions that those across the sector make to their communities, and what they achieve for conservation and hunting in New Zealand.

I trust over the last 10 years our small but effective organisation has fulfilled the expectations that Parliament placed on us back in 2013 and will continue to make strides in supporting quality game animal management, hunting and conservation in New Zealand.

The NZ Game Animal Council is a statutory organisation working towards the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, communities, commerce and conservation.

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Images and captions:



Celebrating 10 years of the NZ Game Animal Council



GAC Chair Grant Dodson (left) with Garry Ottmann, recipient of the GAC inaugural award for services to the Game Animal Council and New Zealand hunting sector, with Minister for Hunting and Fishing Todd McClay (right)