

Is hunting the end of family picnics?

EDITORIAL

By **PATRICK MAINEY**
and **HUGH LANNEN**

LEGISLATION that was passed last year to allow amateur, recreational hunting to occur in NSW national parks needs to be stopped before it begins in practice.

This bill allows adults and children as young as 12 to use guns and bows in our national parks.

The idea of hunters with guns and children with bows and arrows together in national parks is an accident waiting to happen.

The risk of injury or death by bullets or arrows is a major concern, with even one accident being one too many.

If this bill is aimed to reduce the population of any pest animal species, there is no research or scientific evidence that backs this up as a successful initiative used in other places.

There are already established programs for licensed professionals to manage pests in a humane, controlled way.

Many animals may only be maimed and not killed, and without ensuring the animals are killed humanely, many animals may suffer painful injuries and slow deaths.

Animals other than those designated may also be hurt or killed.

Families that use national parks for bushwalking, picnics and camping, will stop pursuing these wonderful outdoor activities for fear of themselves or loved ones being hurt or finding dead animals lying around.

What if a child is playing in a tree in a national park, will a hunter see them or mistake them for an animal?

What if they are running through the brush, will their movements be mistaken for an animal?

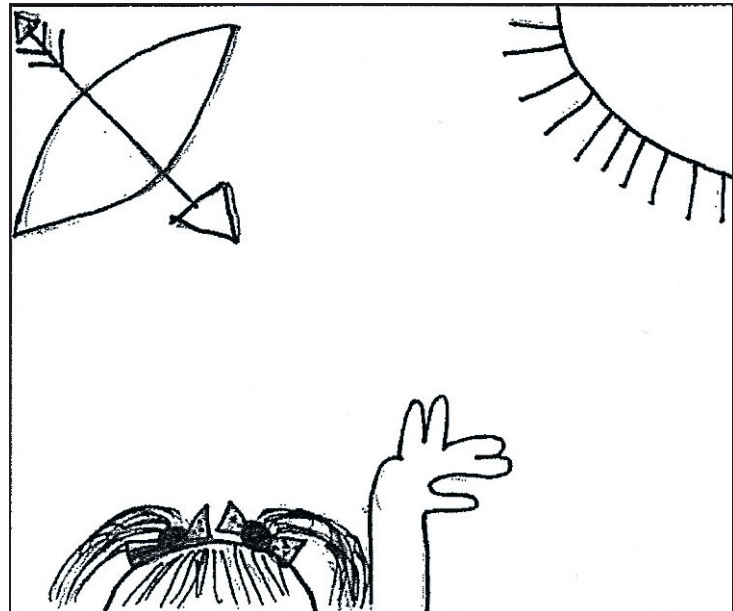
Although the bill states that exclusions zones will apply, a licence will be required, there will be on-ground signage and a list of rules will be established, who is going to police the national parks and ensure the strict guidelines are adhered to?

People won't be willing to take the chance, even if 99 per cent of hunters adhere to the rules.

School teacher Rosemary Ives was killed in a New Zealand national park in 2010 by a shooter who mistook her for a deer. We don't want this happening here.

A national park should be a safe and peaceful place for all visitors, and the animals which live there.

They should be kept as places where children can visit with their families, where they can learn to care and respect nature and animals.



Cartoon: *Holly Schafferius*



CHAMPION:
Mr
Schafferius
competing
in Ironman
Australia.
Picture:
Holly
Schafferius

Ironman with a big soft spot

By **HOLLY SCHAFFERIUS**

THE small historic town of Largs has its own ironman in Chris Schafferius.

Mr Schafferius competes in triathlons, marathons and charity races all over eastern Australia and would like to do the Hawaiian Ironman one day – a race where the ironman tradition started and where the world championship is each year.

In 2011 Mr Schafferius completed his tenth ironman event at Ironman Australia and became a member of the legends club.

He recently competed in the Ironman Australia event in Port Macquarie along with 1600 others.

The triathlon starts with a 3.8-kilometre swim followed by an

18-kilometre ride and finishes with a 42-kilometre run. Competitors have 17 hours to complete the race and receive a finisher's medal.

Mr Schafferius also likes to support charity events like Relay for Life, where he runs solo to raise money.

Training for these events is important and Mr Schafferius says he enjoys the bike riding best and the swimming the least.

Diet is also important and he recommends eating lots of fruit and vegetables to help the body recover from training and races.

Asked why he does it, Mr Schafferius says he enjoys the hard work in training, the fun of racing and most importantly, getting a kiss from his family when he finishes.

Elderly still love life at Largs home

By **LARA JUKES**

WITHIN the town of Largs, on top of a small hill, is a village called The Whiddon Group Largs. It is a retirement home that provides aged care services and a leisure and lifestyle program tailored for the elderly.

Residents live in small units and do things people normally do, but with a little help from staff. Those who need more help have a private room where everything can be done for them.

Care and support is provided to the 42 residents through 24-hour care, an on-site cafe and a hairdressing salon.

Mrs Meehan, a resident for 3½ years, said that she loves everything about the place.

"I enjoy all the activities, especially bowling, and I love it when my family visit."

There are bus outings and shopping trips, an intergenerational program with local schools, and visitors are always welcome.

There are grassy spots for games and picnics, and an entertainment room to play balloon tennis, bingo, play the piano, or watch a movie.

Staff member Jodie Andrews said: "The Whiddon Group Largs is a great place where everyone has a life story."

Another resident, Mrs Smythe, praised the staff:

"The staff are all lovely, they work hard, and make life easy and fun for us."

Massive Sri Lankan jungle spider named

By **PATRICK MAINEY**

A NEW breed of tarantula, first discovered in Sri Lanka in 2009 by a local villager, has officially been named by the Sri Lankan Biodiversity Education and Research organisation.

The spider, *Poecilotheria rajaei*, was named after Michael Rajakumar Purajah, a local policeman who guided the research team through the dangerous jungle in order to find and identify more of the spiders.

This very large spider

has unique yellow and grey markings on its 20-centimetre legs and a distinctive pink band around its body.

It prefers to live in well-established old trees and is considered rare due to the large amount of deforestation.

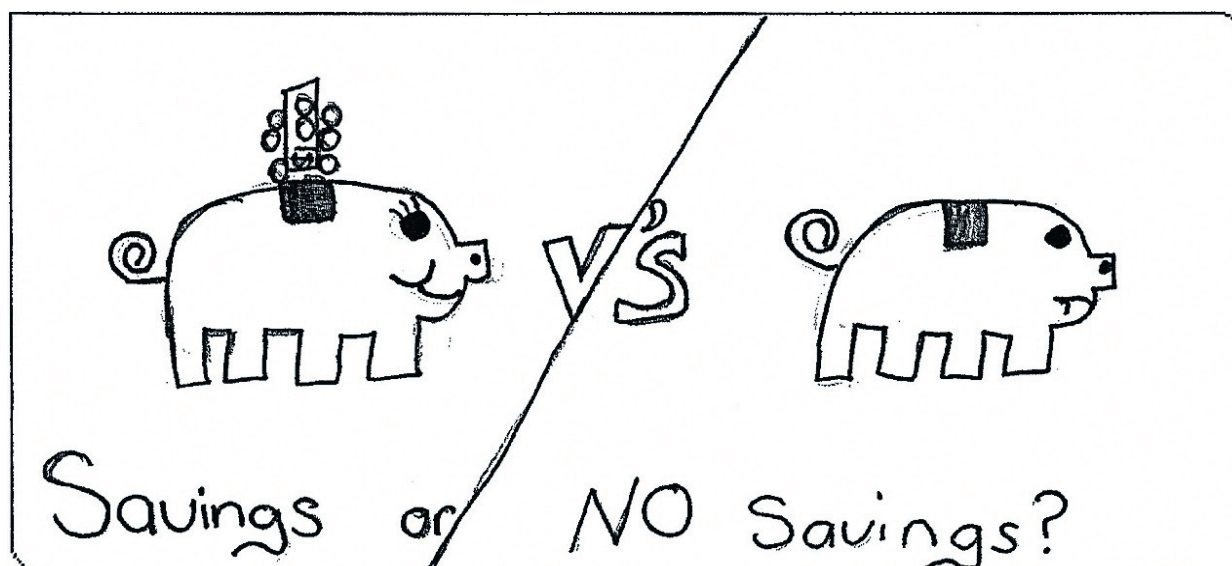
The spider's venom is not strong enough to be fatal to a human but is strong enough to kill small rodents, snakes, lizards and also birds.

Thankfully these spiders are only native to Sri Lanka and India.



CREEPY-CRAWLY: The *Poecilotheria rajaei* is roughly the size of a dinner plate.

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