

# Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)

*A fair go for responsible people.*



October 12, 2016

## Retiring to the shooting sports

Carl and Jacqui Wesley have been shooting all their lives. Now in their 70s they are proof that there is no retirement age for the shooting sports. The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) members, who live near Broadford, are interested in both competitive and recreational shooting.

The pair - who have been married half a century - shoot pistol, rifle and shotgun, have a target range on their property, regularly control pests on their property and are always prepared to hunt while on holidays.

Carl's introduction to shooting occurred at his home town of Birmingham, England, when he was a young boy. "I think I was 10 when my father used to take me to the range and he would allow me to have a go after everybody finished shooting," he said.

As a school boy Carl met his best friend's sister. Jacqui grew up in England and also learnt to shoot while young.

The pair relocated to Australia in 1968, with plans of a successful career in agriculture. But when the 1970s downturn in agriculture came Carl lost his job and the Wesleys, now married, moved to Melbourne.

"I joined a security company and I was required to carry a firearm for personal protection," he said. "I later became a prison guard and I always believed you should know how to use the tools of your trade, so I used to go along and practice."

The couple soon entered into pistol shooting and both were natural competitors. Alongside shooting at the range, the Wesleys were busy controlling pests at home. "We once had a plague of rabbits," Carl said. "We had an extensive vegetable garden and they would gravitate towards that. We had chickens and we'd get rats that we had to cull. We also got foxes out there."

Over the years the Carl and Jacqui have donated their time to help control birds at Yarra Valley wineries, control goats at the You Yangs near Geelong and assist with several other SSAA Victoria programs.

The Wesleys have travelled across the country in since retiring. While their main aim is to explore their surroundings, they also enjoy harvesting their own meat along the way. "I always have a firearm secured stored in the vehicle just in case we get the opportunity," Carl said. "Jacqui always brings the meat grinder with her in case we get something.

"The best meat we've gotten on the road was camel. I got a camel in Western Australia when we were doing an Outback trip. There might have been 15 kg of meat and that lasted us four weeks. So Jacqui cubed it for casserole, curries, and we even made sausages in the field."

Jacqui said it was "very satisfying to sit down to a meal which you've either cultivated or grown yourself".

Sharing a love of the outdoors, shooting, hunting and camping has brought the couple together, especially since their retirement 20 years ago. In Carl's words, "couples who hunt together, stay together".

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