



## **NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LTD**

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### **NRAA Electronic Targets Committee –Report on Progress**

#### **Article One - TO ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES – September 2011**

The whole area of Electronic targets, their use, the advantages and pitfalls and the affects on our shooting is far too large to be dealt with in one article.

Therefore I have broken up the whole thing into a number of documents and propose to do the following:-

1. Publish all the articles on the NRAA web Site for download by anyone.
2. Send Electronic copies to all States and Territories and ask them to both publish them on their Web Sites and forward them on by email to their members.
3. Publish the articles one by one in the Magazine.

A number of further documents will eventually be disseminated by various parts of the Electronic Targets Committee. The plan is to consult with all S & T's and members, before their final adoption as policy by the NRAA

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The Committee held its first 2 day Workshop at Belmont on 22 – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2011. It was held with the contribution and cooperation of all bodies.

- (a) States paid the airfares where necessary.
- (b) The QRA supplied free bunkhouse accommodation when needed.
- (c) The NRAA paid for meals.

Each State and Territory nominated a member and we had representation from each S & T.

Bob Pedersen – Chairman

Rod Jarvis – Tasmania

James Corbett – Victoria

Rob Alman – West Aust.

Graeme Mincham – S.A.

Peter Hulett – Victoria

Bob Dyer – NTRA

Eric Christie – NQRA

Len Brown – NSW

David McIntosh – ACT.

John Caske – QRA

If States, Districts, Clubs or shooters have any suggestions or matters they wish to bring up, please contact Bob Pedersen or the Committee Members directly.

The whole business of Electronic Targets and their adoption throughout Australia has so many facets, implications, pitfalls and potential. Given the huge initial costs of Electronic Targets, it would be wise to try and get it right the first time, and understand all the implications before organisations commit to electronic targets.

As well as these articles, the Electronic Target Committee will be publishing and disseminating various documents as widely as possible, in order to consult with all of Australia before submitting them to the NRAA to be adopted as policy.

During the Workshop, the Committee identified three (3) major areas to address and three sub-committees have been formed to work on each of these.

The Committee is aware that the NRAA cannot mandate what Clubs and Associations must do. However, there will be some essential requirements mandating some procedures, especially safety. The only direct control the NRAA may have will be in mandatory requirements and standards when competitions are under the control of the NRAA. (Such as the NRAA Queens, Interstate Teams Matches and International Matches.)

#### Major Areas Being Addressed by three Sub-Committees

1. Users Requirements Document – This is a document describing in considerable detail, the requirements necessary for electronic targets. This will range from a setup for a basic system for a Club through to a major system for Interstate, National and International Competition. A draft of this document is almost ready and will be circulated widely around Australia for consultation, comment, improvement and input.
2. SSR's – We envisage a separate Chapter for SSR's when shooting on Electronic targets, along with various Appendices outlining desirable features and procedures.
3. Potential Suppliers – Establish, increase and improve relationships with potential suppliers, including International Suppliers. Make them aware of features and procedures, both mandatory and desirable with Electronic Target systems. Consult with them to find out what is and is not possible. Invite Suppliers to register with the NRAA and establish an Information Register to be available to shooting organisations.

#### Miscellaneous

1. The Committee envisages meeting together again early in the New Year.
2. Electronic Target systems will evolve rapidly over the next two to three years and the NRAA needs to be ready to cope with this. I have asked the committee to be prepared to stay on for a number of years. We may well go into recession at times but may need to reconvene to deal with changing circumstances. The committee already has a great deal of expertise and enthusiasm, and it would be unwise to discard it.
3. The committee proposes to advertise widely and consult when major documents or procedures are being contemplated. This will be through the offices of the NRAA.

#### ASSUMPTIONS

1. Our shooter population is aging and finding people to mark targets is becoming more and more difficult. We assume the introduction of Electronic Targets will solve this.
2. We assume that Electronic Target systems will be better than our present manual marking systems.
3. We assume that installing ET's will give us an *“accurate, reliable, simple to use system”*. Simply put the target and monitors up and shoot, and put them away at the end of the day.
4. We assume that eventually the software will be so good that all we will need to do to is identify each shooter with something like a Smartcard to the system when shooting and all the results for a competition (e.g. a Queens Prize Meeting) will be recorded automatically and a computer printout will tell us the results.
5. We assume without thinking too deeply, that ET's will cover all our shooting needs.
6. We assume that all target and computer systems are registering and recording accurately and correctly on all occasions.

#### REALITY

1. Finding reliable, accurate, efficient and cost effective manual markers is becoming more and more difficult. Perhaps however, we should look at the economics more carefully. A single target setup will cost in the vicinity of \$10,000 (or more) to put in place. A Marker being paid \$80 per day could

mark for 125 days at that price. Assuming they may be wanted 40 times per year, this would give approx. 3 years of marking. Half day pay for markers would extend that considerably. Buying electronic target systems in bulk may reduce the capital outlay and improve the economics.

2. Evidence is beginning to emerge that the “accurate, reliable, simple to use system” may well not be the case.

(a) E-Targets can break down, have sensors or cables shot out and fail to register shots, especially at longer ranges.

(b) In order to minimise errors and problems, a rigorous, and well documented maintenance program needs to be carried out on targets otherwise errors and problems begin to occur.

(c) People need to be trained in maintenance, and an array of spare parts needs to be carried. Even lightning storms have put systems out of action needing parts to be flown in from Europe. Training of local club members in simple diagnosis and repair of electronic systems is necessary.

(d) It would be unreasonable for example in Tasmania or Darwin or Dubbo to expect a Vendor to have someone on the ground available at a days’ notice. That is not economically viable for Vendors.

(e) I include a comment from the Geelong Club, who have used ET’s probably more than most clubs in Australia.

*QUOTE :-The main thing to understand about electronic targets is that they rarely give you any warning that something is amiss. They just stop working. Your shot records need to be kept up to date and regular maintenance needs to be done before problems arise. Nevertheless, our targets are not 100% suitable for our type of shooting (they still bear the remnants of their ISSF origins) and the software supplied with them needs considerable upgrading. Electronic targets are certainly not the answer to trouble-free shooting.*

3. Australia has some very harsh climactic conditions, especially heat and dust at times.

(a) A CPU in a Home Computer will shut down or begin making errors when its temperature reaches approx. 50 degrees C. Electronic Targets use similar components. The temperatures inside the hollow shell of a target in the sun will quickly exceed that. We saw that happening at the Delhi Games.

(b) We will want to demand utter reliability from our ET systems. To achieve this, components in the system would need to be built to “military specifications”. This means high quality components, connectors, cables, CPU’s, capacitors etc. This in turn means higher and higher prices. The Australian characteristic of expecting Rolls Royce performance at Bargain Basement prices will not work here.

4. Australian Clubs which run Match Rifle Competitions will possibly have to run a dual target system of Electronic Targets and Paper Targets, until ET’s are developed that reliably work at 1200yds.

5. At the moment we have no real idea how accurate the registering of shots is on an electronic system, especially on longer ranges.

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**NEXT ARTICLE – Number 2**

Article 2 deals with “Preliminary Advice to Clubs, States and Organisations concerning Electronic Targets”. This will be published soon on the NRAA Web Site and also sent to all States and Territories. Hopefully they will forward it by email to their registered members.

Also (hopefully), Article 2 will be published in the next issue of our National Magazine.

Bob Pedersen

Rules Director - NRAA