

## **GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2012**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON**

(Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [1.33 p.m.]:

22 November 2012

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government understands the reasons the Shooters and Fishers Party introduced this bill in the other place. It appreciates also that the way native bird hunting on private land is regulated is one of interest and importance to many in rural and regional New South Wales. However, the bill, as it was introduced by the Shooters and Fishers Party, proposed significant amendments to the current regulatory arrangements. It removed many restrictions on native game bird hunting, with the policy development and administration of licences to be done by the Game Council, instead of the Office of Environment and Heritage. The Government successfully moved amendments in another place to modify the new native game bird licensing system so that it would only apply for sustainable agricultural management purposes, and also to ensure an ongoing role for the Office of Environment and Heritage.

The amended bill strikes a better balance between the important—but to some extent competing—public interests that arise in this area. The amended bill reflects the guiding principle that native bird hunting on private land must only be authorised for the purpose of sustainable agricultural management. The amended bill recognises that people already can hunt native game birds on private land in New South Wales for pest management purposes. Presently, quotas set by government and authorisations to cull native birds on private land are issued by the Office of Environment and Heritage. In fact, in 2009-10, when the former environment Minister and now Leader of the Opposition, John Robertson, was the responsible Minister, authorisation was given to cull 33,425 birds. The Shooters and Fisher's Party original bill proposed, however, that the Game Council—a New South Wales government agency—would assume responsibility for issuing a new licence to private landowners for native bird hunting and for setting quotas. Under the amended bill, native game bird hunting will be restricted to sustainable agricultural management purposes only.

The policy development, including the setting of quotas and compliance requirements, will also be undertaken by a new Native Game Bird Management Committee. That committee will be chaired by the Department of Primary Industries and comprise representatives of both the Game Council and the Office of Environment and Heritage. The committee will determine quotas on the best available science, as well as the periods and areas in which native game birds can be hunted. The administration of licences will continue to be undertaken by the Game Council, consistently with any compliance reporting requirements established by the committee. The amended bill provides a much better balance and, in the Government's view, makes significant improvements to the bill as it was originally introduced in the other place. The Government commends the bill to the House.