

**Submission  
No 364**

**INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND IN  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Newcastle Bushwalking Club Limited

**Date received:** 30/08/2012

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## **Submission to Inquiry into Management of Public Land in New South Wales**

### **By Newcastle Bushwalking Club**

This submission by the Newcastle Bushwalking Club Limited (NBC) relates particularly to the use and management of National Parks as many of our hiking / bushwalking / canoeing activities occur in these parks.

The primary objective of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 is the conservation of nature. We believe that hunting in National Parks is incompatible with this as it will disrupt the peace and quiet and disturb the wildlife. A further objective of the Act is “fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature”. By its very nature, hunting must exclude others from the area while it is in progress which opposes this objective of the Act. We see the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2012 as a retrograde step.

If hunting cannot be excluded we would like to see it conducted as safely as possible and in a way that minimises the chances of any unexpected interaction between hunters and other users of the parks. Specifically:

- 1) NPWS needs a reliable mechanism for notifying other potential park users when hunting activities have been scheduled, when they are in progress and, equally importantly, when they are over.
- 2) Our planning of hiking activities typically occurs 3 months ahead of scheduled events. We can easily avoid areas where hunting is scheduled if we know about them at this time. However, it is more difficult if we arrive somewhere to start a walk and unexpectedly find hunting in progress, as we would then be unlikely to have the right maps or equipment to redirect the walk to somewhere else.

3) NPWS also needs a bomb-proof mechanism for preventing other park users from accidentally entering areas where hunting activities are occurring. This mechanism should recognise that:

- a. Bushwalkers often arrive (by road) in an area after dark (typically on a Friday evening);
- b. Bushwalkers may arrive (on foot) in an area from any direction and may well not be following any road or recognised track and
- c. Bushwalkers do not wear high visibility clothing.

Until such protection can be ensured, the Minister has a public safety obligation to prevent any area being declared available for hunting.

4) Internal management of hunting operations by hunting organisation is sensibly covered by the following document on the Game Council's website:

<http://www.gamecouncil.nsw.gov.au/docs/CHG-EOI-IllawarraStage1-2012.pdf>

5) As with any management plan, NPWS needs a programme to monitor compliance by hunters and other members of the public with the plan and a means of penalising transgression. For example, what happens when someone (accidentally) shoots a wombat or another person? Monitoring and enforcement should be done by NPWS not the Game Council as the latter has a potential conflict of interest.

6) As it is the hunters who will be putting others at potential risk by their choice of activities, we believe that they should be charged a fee that covers the cost of implementing the above.