

**Submission
No 66**

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

Organisation: Northern Zone Hunting Club (Inc)

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It appears to us that the NPWS generally has a current ethos and even some endemic internal prejudice against Game Council of NSW 'R' volunteer licenced hunting of feral animals on "their" managed but State-owned land.

For example it has come to our notice as a hunting club (federated to the NSW Federation of Hunting Clubs for 10 years now) that the Northern Region management of NPWS (via Johnson/Wellman) has very recently called for tenders for shooting of pests/invasive species controls with the general public on NPWS managed land.

We feel it would be far easier on the public purse if our experienced and trained feral animal hunters were allowed access to these national parks and reserves to do this job gratis, rather than pay contractors considerable sums of money to do the same job.

The NPWS in their PoMs in every new national park piously state ad nauseam that 'they will control feral animals'. Recently, I understand, the NPWS NR have been allocated more State funds for these promised action, but it appears that this money has simply gone into their total budget and has not flowed to the officers needing this money for feral animal control.

But we want to make it very clear that we approve of and get on well with the local NPWS pest liaison officers and generally all staff over the major feral invasive species problem we have in the FNC Region.

Repeatedly it appears to us, due to Union pressure over "job protection" (hardly warranted) and NPWS staff-memberships of various extreme 'green' groups, that our co-operation and joint-task offers are spurned and even mischeivously misunderstood and misrepresented.

The use of uniformed NPWS officers in the recent political protests against Premier O-Farrell's decision on feral hunting in some restricted National Parks proves this point exactly, especially so - as no disciplinary action has ever been taken [to our knowledge] by management against the well-known local officers involved.

The chief problem appears to us [and I concur personally, after having 2yrs tenure on the NRRAC and resigning exactly on this same issue] that these NPWS advisory bodies are stacked with people with minority, extreme and intractible/seff-serving attitudes, with their specialist sectional interests not mirroring the general reality of the situation - nor general public opinion either. Thus the R/M and staff have to be very wary and play-off each group against each other and offer "special concessions" to keep them "on side"- as apparently they are apparently forced to do under the NPWS regulations. In this situation the prejudice and reaction against any new measures to control the burgeoning feral animal problem is extremely negative and any offers of assistance are non-negotiable. [I was officially excluded from the recent workshop on invasive species held by NPWS- as I was not considered 'a stakeholder', even if I was on NRRAC for that very purpose! I went anyway; but every positive suggestion on using volunteer "R" hunters from the 6 consultative groups was excluded from the final plan anyway! Typically this shows the in-built prejudice of this organisation that feels it 'knows it all' and needs no assistance.]

As a Club we believe this current situation is not in the best interest of the State, our native fauna and flora, nor for the taxpaying people of NSW.

We feel the current waste of taxpayer-funded resources must be stopped and also the NPWS with these Advisory Committees must reflect more general public opinion, rather than often long-serving, special interest "stake-holder" sectional interests. To obtain a proper balance may involve active recruitment, rather than simply relying on applications from 'activist' members, as is done at present.

We would welcome any refreshing new approach on the management of all public land as regards feral and native animal control and hope the Committee shares this view.

If we fail on this proposed co-operation under a unified control plan, the feral animal problem can very quickly only get far worse.