

Submission  
No 483

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date received:** 3/09/2012

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Partially Confidential

I have just become aware of the Standing Committees inquiry into public land management. I realise that submissions closed last Friday but I would like to take the opportunity to forward correspondence that I sent to my local member some time ago which is relevant to the inquiry. I believe that there is a lack of scientific rigour in the way public lands are beginning to be managed and that good land management is being compromised by political vote buying and decimation of a skilled public service.

I am a strong believer in the community, natural services and environmental values of public land and strongly support increased resourcing to manage this finite resource.

Regards

Partially Confidential

6/06/2012 11:08 am >>>  
Mr A.R.G. Fraser M.P.  
Member for Coffs Harbour

Dear Mr Fraser,

I am writing to express my dismay that the Premier has broken his promise, and is going to allow hunting in our National Parks. I am strongly opposed to recreational hunting in any National Parks, Nature Reserves and State Conservation Areas.

The iconic NSW National Park system is too important to compromise for the sake of expediting electricity privatisation.

Recreational hunters represent a safety risk to park staff and visitors to our National Parks, State Conservation Areas and Nature Reserves, and are no part of a conservation management solution.

I am concerned that not all amateur hunters will be trained or skilled enough to ensure that feral animals are humanely culled.

Reducing feral animals in our parks must be carried out by professionals in a systematic and evidence based way.

I do not believe there is sufficient credible evidence that recreational shooting is safe for the public, will control animal populations and will not compromise animal welfare. There is evidence that recreational hunting is not cost effective and will actually undermine the existing professional feral animal control programs. Even our government codes of practice specify that ground shooting is ineffective to control most feral animals.

I am concerned that permits will be issued by the Game Council of NSW, a hunter dominated body representing recreational interests. This body was not established to deliver credible and evidence-based control programs.

Recreational hunting has no role to play in our National Parks and I implore you not to proceed with this threat to our natural heritage.

Yours sincerely,

Partially Confidential

----- Original Message -----

From: "ElectorateOffice CoffsHarbour"

Sent: Friday, 22 June, 2012 9:43:58 AM GMT +10:00 Canberra / Melbourne / Sydney

Subject: Re: Stop Hunting in our National Parks

Thank you for email regarding the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002.

I have read your email with interest and note your comments in relation to the NSW Government's decision to amend the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*.

Feral pests and animals do great harm to our national parks by destroying habitats, flora and fauna. Feral animals compete with our precious native fauna for habitat and food, prey on many species of our native animals and kill or injure livestock on adjoining properties, costing approximately \$70 million a year.

Over 24,000 feral animals including pigs, dogs, cats and goats were removed through pest management programs from the national parks estate in the last year alone. The NSW Government is extending existing feral animal eradication programs to reduce the overall numbers of these pests.

The assistance of volunteers will only be permitted with the appropriate compliance and controls in place. This will importantly include appropriate safety measures and only persons who are appropriately qualified and licenced will be permitted to help remove feral animals from our national parks.

The new arrangements do not commence immediately, and will not take effect until six months following the agreement to amend the relevant legislation. There are 79 parks and reserves that have been identified for assessment to permit volunteer pest control. This is subject to the development of appropriate management and access requirements, to be approved by the Minister for the Environment.

Under no circumstances will this program operate in any metropolitan area, wilderness or World Heritage area, such as the Blue Mountains National Park or the Dorrigo National Park.

The protection of native animals will continue with fines of up to \$220,000 for harming a threatened species.

For further information, [visit the Office of Environment and Heritage web site at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/pestanimals.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/pestanimals.htm)

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about this matter.

Yours sincerely

**ANDREW FRASER MP**

Member for Coffs Harbour

Assistant Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Dear Mr Fraser

I fully support integrated pest species control on both public and private land that is carried out by professionals in a coordinated manner. This may include the use of professional hunters in some programs. However, allowing no professional hunters into NPWS is not appropriate for the following reasons.

### **Equity**

Visitation to NSW Parks was estimated at around 38 million visits in 2010 when there was no hunting allowed. In the same period only 21,354 written permissions were granted to hunt on public land. The interests of the people who form the 38 *million* visits are being disregarded for the sake of the 21,354 hunter visits. Seems pretty inequitable, particularly when hunters have already effectively excluded the rest of the population from a large number of State Forests.

### **What makes better business sense?**

In 2007-2008, the government received over \$34.8 million in revenue from park entry passes, camping fees, licence fees, lease rentals, caravan parks, residences and cabins.

In 2010-11 the Game Council cost the people of NSW \$2.5million

Hunting in National Parks puts our tourism industry at great risk.

### **Safety**

According to a report commissioned for the Game Council, there were 4 shooting-related deaths in NSW between 2000 and 2010; there were also a number of injuries. There is greater use of National Parks by the public than State Forest, so we can expect a greater number of people shot dead over the next 10 years.

### **Cost of control of feral animals**

In 2010-2011, the Game Council received \$2.5 million in grants from the NSW government. In 2010-2011, according to the Game Council's annual report, only 14,161 animals were shot in state forests. Of these 6621 were rabbits and 520 hares. So over half the animals shot were rabbits or hares. On an average cost per animal the NSW tax payer is paying the Game Council \$177 for each rabbit or hare removed. This cost is even high for pigs with NPWS coordinated profession baiting and shooting programs costing less than \$80 per pig.

### **Effectiveness of control technique**

Of the 14,161 animals shot in 2010-11, 78% were of species (rabbits/hares, foxes, pigs, cats and dogs) for which ground shooting has been identified as being ineffective or having very limited effectiveness in controlling populations. A further 19% were feral goats, for which ground shooting is only effective for smaller populations or if used in conjunction with other control methods such as mustering or trapping.

While armature hunting can remove some feral animals from our public land, there is no evidence that it is effective when undertaken in isolation of an appropriate integrated control program and the Game Councils own report shows that it is not cost effective.

Please be honest about this, it is a sport, please keep it in the club or on private land and let the rest of us enjoy our public State Forests and National Parks without fear and without having to subsidise this recreational activity.