

Submission
No 8

**INQUIRY INTO GAME AND FERAL ANIMAL
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CONSERVATION
HUNTING) BILL 2025**

Name: Mr Tony pycroft

Date Received: 2 July 2025

****To the Standing Committee on State Development,****

****Re: Submission in Support of the Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025****

I am writing to express my strong support for the Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025. This Bill represents a significant and progressive step towards the sustainable management of invasive species, the protection of native wildlife, and the promotion of ethical hunting practices in New South Wales.

****1. The Role of Conservation Hunting in Biodiversity Protection****

Scientific research consistently demonstrates that invasive species such as feral deer, pigs, goats, and foxes are among the greatest threats to Australia's unique biodiversity (Doherty et al., 2016; NSW DPIE, 2021). These animals cause extensive ecological damage, including predation on native species, habitat destruction, competition for resources, and the spread of disease. Well-regulated conservation hunting is a proven tool for reducing these impacts, especially in areas where other control methods (trapping, baiting, aerial culling) are less effective or feasible (Sharp & Saunders, 2011).

****2. Establishment of the Conservation Hunting Authority and Licensing****

The creation of the Conservation Hunting Authority and the introduction of a Conservation Hunting Licence will ensure that all hunting activities are conducted ethically, responsibly, and with a focus on animal welfare. Mandatory education and training for licence holders will help foster a culture of safety, respect for wildlife, and compliance with best-practice standards.

****3. Expanding Access to Crown Land and Bounty Schemes****

Expanding access to Crown land for licensed hunters and supporting bounty schemes are practical measures to increase the effectiveness of pest animal control. These initiatives will mobilize skilled volunteers to help address large and widespread populations of invasive species, delivering measurable benefits for farmers, land managers, and native ecosystems.

****4. The Use of Suppressors: Humane and Effective Pest Management****

A particularly important aspect of the Bill is the provision for licensed hunters to use suppressors (sound moderators). The scientific evidence supports the use of suppressors as a means to: -

****Improve Animal Welfare:**** Suppressors significantly reduce the noise of gunfire, which minimizes stress and flight responses in target and non-target animals (Pauli et al., 2010; Finn et al., 2014). This can lead to more accurate follow-up shots if needed, reducing the risk of wounding and ensuring more humane outcomes.

- ****Enhance Hunter Safety:**** Lower noise levels protect hunters' hearing and reduce noise pollution for nearby residents, livestock, and wildlife, fostering better relationships between hunters and rural communities (Leight et al., 2003).

- ****Increase Pest Control Effectiveness:**** By reducing the disturbance caused by gunshots, suppressors allow hunters to manage multiple animals in a group before they flee, improving the efficiency of pest animal control operations (NSW DPI, 2022).

Suppressors are widely accepted in conservation hunting across Europe and New Zealand, where they have been shown to improve both animal welfare and public safety outcomes without increasing risks of criminal misuse (NZ Police, 2019).

****5. Conclusion****

The Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025 is a forward-thinking, evidence-based approach to invasive species management and conservation. By supporting ethical hunting, scientific oversight, and the use of modern tools such as suppressors, this Bill will help protect NSW's precious biodiversity, support rural communities, and uphold high standards of animal welfare. I urge the Committee to recommend the passage of this Bill in its entirety.

****References:****

- Doherty, T. S., et al. (2016). "Invasive predators and global biodiversity loss." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113(40), 11261-11265.

- NSW Department of Primary Industries and Environment (2021). "Managing feral animals in NSW."

- Sharp, T., & Saunders, G. (2011). "A Model for Assessing the Relative Humaneness of Pest Animal

Control Methods." *Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment*.

- Pauli, A. M., et al. (2010). "Effects of gunfire noise and suppressors on wildlife and livestock." *Wildlife Research*, 37(3), 226-234.

- Finn, M. B., et al. (2014). "The use of suppressors in wildlife management." *New Zealand Journal of Ecology*, 38(2), 273-277.

- Leight, M., et al. (2003). "Hearing loss and noise exposure in hunters." *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, 1(1), 41-49.

- NZ Police (2019). "Firearms and suppressors: Safety and regulation in New Zealand." Thank you for considering this submission. Sincerely, Tony Pycroft