

Submission
No 42

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 11 July 2025

Partially
Confidential

Statement of interest

I am a long-term resident of New South Wales who regularly uses state forests, national parks, and other public reserves for walking, photography and quiet recreation with my family. I have no commercial or organisational affiliation in relation to firearms or hunting. My interest in this Bill stems from its direct impact on community safety, animal welfare and the long-term ecological health of the public lands that belong to all of us.

Position on the Bill

I oppose the Bill in its current form and respectfully urge the Committee to recommend that it not proceed. If the Bill is not withdrawn outright, it should be fundamentally redrafted to remove the provisions outlined below.

Key concerns

Issue Why this matters

Public safety Converting 50 000 ha of shared public space into hunting grounds places hikers, campers and other non-hunters at unacceptable risk.

Expanding access to currently prohibited firearms compounds that danger.

Animal welfare Allowing large-scale recreational shooting inevitably increases wounding rates, prolonged animal suffering and the disturbance of non-target native fauna.

Environmental impact Most state forests already struggle with weeds, feral animals and illegal dumping; introducing roaming shooters will add lead contamination, vehicle tracks and noise, undermining conservation goals.

Governance and accountability Re-creating a taxpayer-funded body modelled on the former Game Council (abolished in 2013 after damning reviews) risks repeating a history of inadequate oversight and conflicts of interest.

Local-government burden Forcing councils to consult hunting organisations diverts limited resources away from core civic services and exposes councils to liability should an incident occur on their land.

Ministerial overreach Establishing a dedicated "Minister for Hunting and Fishing" elevates a special-interest pastime above whole-of-community responsibilities and fragments portfolio accountability.

5 . Legal and policy context New South Wales already provides hunters with access to more than two million hectares of public land under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002. The current Bill would tip the balance away from shared, multiple-use stewardship toward an exclusive model that privileges one activity over all others, contrary to the objects of the Forestry Act 2012 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

6 . Recommendations

Reject the Bill. The existing framework for pest-animal control and licensed recreational hunting is adequate and can be improved administratively without new primary legislation.

If the Committee prefers amendments over rejection:

Delete clauses expanding hunting zones and access to prohibited weapons.

Remove any requirement on local councils to consult hunting bodies.

Abandon plans for a stand-alone Minister for Hunting and Fishing; responsibilities should remain within existing environment and primary-industry portfolios.

Ensure any oversight body is genuinely independent, evidence-based, and subject to rigorous audit by the Auditor-General.

Commission an independent safety and biodiversity risk assessment before any further expansion of recreational shooting on public land.

7 . Conclusion

This Bill would prioritise the desires of a narrow interest group over the broader community's right to enjoy safe, peaceful and ecologically intact public spaces. It creates new risks without demonstrable public benefit and resurrects governance structures that have previously failed. I therefore ask the Committee to recommend that the Bill not proceed.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry.

Yours faithfully,