Submission No 45

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

Name: Mrs Jolene Blalock Rapino

Date Received: 11 July 2025

To the Honourable Members of the Parliament of New South Wales,

There are places in this country where silence is the truest music. Not the hush of a gunshot muffled by a suppressor, but the breeze through ironbarks, the punctuation of a bird call, the scuffle of a goanna near a waterhole. These are the notes in Australia's oldest poem—our bush.

And now you propose to rewrite it.

The Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025 is written in the clipped dialect of administration, but behind its clauses is something old and loud—an appetite dressed up as policy.

A Conservation Hunting Authority to advise on "game management" is like giving the fox a key to the henhouse and calling it efficiency. We've been here before. Bounties and bloodlines. The thylacine rendered myth because we couldn't leave well enough alone.

This bill seeks to enshrine a "right to hunt", as though we are gods bestowing dominion. But the land is older than us, and rights are not ours to declare over its creatures. If anything, we owe them reverence, not rifles.

You propose to open more Crown and forestry land to licensed hunters. But these are public places—unfenced cathedrals of biodiversity—meant for reflection, not recreation by bullet. I feel these landscapes. We tread their magic in our souls! We don't "manage" the wild with gunpowder and expect harmony.

And the sound suppressors? That's the part that stings the most. We shouldn't be making violence quieter. We should be making ourselves louder—louder in our care, in our stewardship, in our poetry of preservation.

Even the bounty schemes, dressed in economics, ring like a cheap rhyme. Wildlife management must be science-led, not prize-led. We are not children paid to swat flies. We are custodians of a civil order.

Let me remind you, gently and seriously: New South Wales has long been a lantern to the world on matters of ecology and culture. Do not douse that light with the smoke of shotguns and spin.

This bill does not respect the land. It instrumentalizes it. It takes a prayer and turns it into a checklist.

I urge you—on behalf of the lyrebird, the wombat, the grevillea, and the old quiet wisdom of this country—withdraw this legislation. Let the hush of the bush remain sacred. Let the rifle remain an exception, not a sanctioned rhythm.

Sincerely,

Jolene Blalock Rapino