

Submission
No 47

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

Dear Committee Members,

I am deeply worried that the proposed Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025 would move NSW backwards on gun safety. International experience shows that when governments loosen permitting or carrying rules, violent crime goes up rather than down. A broad RAND review of U.S. "shall-issue" concealed-carry laws concludes they are "associated with higher homicide rates."

Johns Hopkins researchers found firearm-assault rates rose 9.5 percent in the decade after 34 states relaxed concealed-carry restrictions. One concrete example comes from Missouri: repealing its permit-to-purchase requirement in 2007 led to an extra 49–68 gun deaths every single year. Studies of stand-your-ground statutes point the same way, linking them to higher violent-crime totals.

Our own National Firearms Agreement famously prevented such outcomes here, driving steep declines in firearm homicides and suicides after 1996. Weakening the NSW licensing framework would invite the very harms Australia has worked for decades to avoid. Relaxation also raises the toll of accidental shootings. U.S. hunter-education records list hundreds of unintentional firearm deaths in the field, despite far lower participation rates than a statewide programme like the one proposed for NSW.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control report that a child unintentionally shoots themselves or someone else almost every day; easier access to loaded guns is a key driver. Allowing more firearms in public forests and peri-urban reserves will inevitably place hikers, campers and curious teenagers in the line of fire.

Proponents argue the Bill is about conservation, yet our Department of Primary Industries already issues strict R-Licences that limit who may hunt, where and under what safety conditions. The Invasive Species Council warns the new "conservation hunting" model would actually undermine effective feral-animal control by diverting resources toward a politically appointed hunting board rather than proven professional culling, baiting and aerial shooting programmes. Peer-reviewed studies further note that recreational hunting often fails to reduce invasive populations sustainably and can even disperse animals, making the problem worse.

In short, this Bill risks more guns in more hands, more violence, more tragic accidents and no guaranteed environmental benefit. My family, our neighbours and the many visitors who cherish NSW's parks would all be put at needless risk so a small lobby can hunt with fewer checks and balances. I respectfully urge the Committee to reject the legislation and instead strengthen science-based, professionally managed pest-control strategies that keep both people and wildlife safe.

Thank you for considering my concerns.