

Submission
No 239

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

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Hunting Bill

I strongly oppose this bill.

1. Australia is not the United States

We do not want or need the expansion of gun culture here. Enshrining a so-called “right to hunt” paves the way for more firearms in our communities, more killing, and the gradual normalisation of recreational violence against wildlife.

This is not just about hunting. It’s about opening the door to American-style gun culture, where the presence of firearms becomes routine, and killing is framed as a right rather than a responsibility.

Australia has made great strides in gun control, and this bill threatens to undermine that progress. Promoting hunting as a right sends a dangerous message; that we are entitled to take life for sport, and that more weapons in our society are acceptable.

2. I strongly dispute the introduction of a so-called “right to hunt” in legislation

Australia should uphold rights that promote safety, equality, and compassion, not entrench violence or expand access to guns. A “right to hunt” undermines the real rights we should be protecting;

- The right to live free from discrimination
- The right to feel safe in our homes and communities
- The right of children to grow up without being desensitised to violence

Framing hunting as a *right* elevates killing wildlife to the same status as fundamental human rights. That is a dangerous precedent. It sends the message that taking life for recreation is not just permitted, but something to be defended and promoted.

We must ask; who benefits from this? Certainly not the public, who risk increased exposure to firearms and gun-related incidents. Not rural communities, who already live with the trauma and distress caused by commercial shooting operations near their homes. And certainly not the wildlife, who face ever increasing pressure from habitat destruction, climate change, and now the push to make killing them a “right”.

This bill is out of step with Australian values and community expectations. We should be enshrining rights that protect life and wellbeing, not normalising harm and violence.

3. There is no such things as “conservation hunting”

The term is a contradiction and amounts to greenwashing – an attempt to rebrand killing wildlife as a form of environmental stewardship. But killing animals does not conserve them. Conservation requires protection, habitat restoration and coexistence – not gunfire.

Introducing so-called “conservation hunting licences” misleads the public and risks undermining existing protections for native animals. Once hunting is framed as a conservation tool, it becomes easier to weaken safeguards, expand access to firearms, and justify killing even threatened or declining species under the guise of management.

We must be clear; conservation and hunting are fundamentally different goals. Conservation aims to preserve life; hunting takes it. Allowing the two to be conflated is dangerous – for wildlife, for the integrity of environmental law, and public trust.

4. Where are the boundaries?

If land no longer needs to be formally reviewed and declared as hunting-permitted, then hunting can occur everywhere and anywhere – including areas that have never been intended or assed for such activity.

Removing these basic safeguards opens up public and Crown land to unchecked hunting. It erodes public oversight, undermines community expectations, and puts both wildlife and people at greater risk.

The existing regulations – flawed as they are – at least provide some accountability. Stripping away even those limited protections under the guise of “cutting red tape” is not reform; it’s a rollback of already inadequate standards.

Public land belongs to all of us, not just to those who want to kill. Weakening the rules around Crown land management removes essential checks and balances and accelerates the spread of gun-based recreation into places where it does not belong.

5. Who will monitor this? Who will respond to cruelty, illegality, or danger?

If even the currently permitted hunting zones are poorly regulated – as we’ve seen with commercial kangaroo shooting and duck hunting – what hope is there of oversight when even more land is opened up to hunters?

There are already widespread reports of non-compliance, cruelty, and illegal activity under the existing system. Wildlife is maimed and left to die. Joeys are bludgeoned or abandoned. Protected species are mistakenly or deliberately shot. And there are simply not enough compliance officers, rangers or police to respond – especially in remote or rural areas. Is the government prepared to employ hundreds of thousands of new compliance officers, rangers, police? Because you would need such numbers not just a few hundred more. Australia is a vast land.

If no one is there to monitor and no one can respond to harm as it happens, then these changes will turn out country into an unregulated slaughterhouse. This is not conservation. It is chaos - and it will come at the cost of both animal welfare and community safety.

Expanding hunting access without real-time enforcement is reckless. Gunfire will become more common across our public lands, near homes, in conservation areas, and in places families once felt safe.

6. Public land belongs to all of us – not just hunters

This bill elevates the interests of a small, vocal minority above the rights and values of the wider community. It effectively says that those who wish to kill have more say over public land than those

who wish to protect, enjoy, or simply coexist with wildlife. This is land for us all not just hunters. This bill puts hunters above all other people in this land.

By granting a “right to hunt” and removing safeguards, this legislation priorities shooters above conservationists, families, First Nations peoples, landholders, bushwalkers, photographers, and wildlife carers. It ignores the majority of Australians who want our native animals protected – not gunned down.

Our public lands should reflect shared values of safety, respect, and care for nature – not be handed over to recreational killing culture under the false banner of tradition or conservation.