



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL**



NSW Wildlife Council



Reply to: NPA, PO Box 337, Newtown NSW 2042

The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MP
Minister for Climate Change & the Environment
By fax and email: dp.office@tebbutt.minister.nsw.gov.au

The Hon. Ian Macdonald, MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
By fax and email: macdonald.office@macdonald.minister.nsw.gov.au

19 June 2009

Dear Ministers

Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2009

The nine groups listed below strongly urge your Government to reject the *Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2009*.

This legislation will alienate not only conservationists and animal welfare groups, but also the wider community. There has been little time for the legislation to become known and opposed, but you should not underestimate the opposition that it will engender in the long-term. Your environmental reputation will be sullied and this legislation will over-ride any positive perceptions engendered by environmentally beneficial initiatives.

The Bill will not assist in the control of feral animals in national parks, and is likely to foster the spread of existing feral animals and the establishment of new feral bird species. It undermines existing animal welfare legislation and policy and will have adverse conservation outcomes. Many of the provisions represent a radical change in the ethos of national park management and biodiversity conservation. They should not be imposed for the benefit of a few thousand hunters without widespread public consultation.

Extending hunting to national parks and native species

While all groups listed below support the need to control feral animals, this cannot be achieved by the ad hoc efforts of recreational hunters in state forests and national parks. As State Government codes of practice state, feral animal control requires programs with defined targets that will achieve the identified environmental goals and are monitored for effectiveness. Ground shooting is usually ineffective unless as a supplement to other methods.

The proposal to allow hunting in national parks for feral animal control also provides an incentive for hunters to release feral animals to improve hunting opportunities, as has occurred with feral deer and pigs.

The provisions undermine the NSW government's own codes of practice and standard operating procedures for humane vertebrate pest control in numerous ways.

The provisions to allow recreational hunting of native animals on public and private land also represents a major backward step and is abhorrent to most members of the community.

Release of exotic birds

By permitting the release of exotic birds into private game reserves the Bill will foster the establishment of new feral animals in NSW. Some of these species have been assessed as having a high risk of establishment and represent a very serious threat to the environment and/or agriculture. Escape of these birds from private game reserves is inevitable, as is recognised by the Bill's exemption of responsibility for their escape. By permitting hunting of these species on public and private lands, the Bill would provide an incentive for their release into these areas. The provision undermines the NSW government's commitment to preventing new feral animal

Private game reserves

The threat of invasive species will be exacerbated by the establishment of private game reserves. Escape of feral animals is inevitable, as has occurred very commonly with deer from deer farms for example. Such reserves will provide a strong commercial incentive to increase populations of feral animals. The game reserves are opposed to community and existing government standards for animal welfare.

We urge you to reject the Bill in its entirety. We also request an urgent meeting to discuss our concerns. Please contact Andrew Cox on 02 9299 000 or 0438 588 040 to arrange this.

Yours sincerely



Michael Kennedy
Director
Humane Society International

Tim King
NSW Campaign Manger
The Wilderness Society

Andrew Cox
Executive Officer
National Parks Association of NSW

Audrey Koosmen
Chair
NSW Wildlife Council

Keith Muir
Director
Colong Foundation for Wilderness

Cate Faehrmann
Director
Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Jeff Angel
Director
Total Environment Centre

Carol Booth
Policy Officer
Invasive Species Council

Stan Wood
Chair
WIRES