



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

ABN 38 686 119 087

PO Box 29 Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

Phone: 0490 419 779

E-Mail: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au Web Site: www.bluemountains.org.au

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC
Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and
Minister for Heritage
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister Sharpe

Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (the Society) is a community-based volunteer organization with over 900 members. Its mission is to help conserve the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains, and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general.

The Society is writing to you in relation to the private members Bill - *Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025* (the Bill). The Society understands the Bill proposes to amend the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*

- to establish the Conservation Hunting Authority;
- to recognise the role of hunting in the preservation of native species, the natural environment and cultural heritage;
- to recognise the right of citizens to hunt for cultural and recreational reasons including requiring public land managers to consider any impacts on recreational shooting before undertaking land management decisions including nature conservation activities such as invasive species management; and
- proposes to amend the Crown Land Management Act 2016 to establish mechanisms by which certain Crown land may be made available for hunting.

The Bill was introduced to the Legislative Council in May 2025 by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, and then referred to an Upper House committee for an inquiry and a report.

The Society is totally opposed to this Bill.

The Society supports the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC); the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) and the Invasive Species Council who also strongly

condemn this Bill introduced. The Society does not support the Bill for the following reasons.

Recreational hunting does not lead to improved conservation outcomes

Recreational hunting is not an effective pest control strategy and does not lead to improved conservation outcomes. The evidence from the research is clear and unambiguous that professional, science-based pest management programs deliver vastly better outcomes than uncoordinated ad hoc recreational shooting. Recreational hunting rarely delivers environmental benefits, and in many cases actively obstructs professional control programs. Hunters are known to release pest species such as deer and pigs in areas to seed new populations. There is a real risk that the Bill will result in increasing the role of recreational hunters in terms of the management of state forests and other crown land to stop effective feral animal control strategies so pest species numbers can stay high to support recreational hunting opportunities.

Recreational hunting is currently permissible through licensing on over 200 State Forests, and recreational hunting is also permitted on private lands (with the landowner's permission). The Bill would however allow recreational hunting on Crown land with important conservation areas such as:

- Flora Reserves, which are protected under international standards (IUCN Category 1b) and often managed by National Parks and Wildlife Service. Opening them to hunting undermines decades of conservation work.
- Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs), which are narrow corridors of remnant native vegetation that are vital for biodiversity, particularly in heavily cleared regions. Hunting in such linear sites poses serious risks to safety and conservation

Public safety is at risk

Any hunting on private land puts public safety at risk. There are numerous examples from both within Australia and overseas where innocent bystanders have been shot by recreational hunters on public land.

The Bill introduces legal language around a “right to hunt” that could have far-reaching consequences. There is a real risk the ‘Right to hunt’ provisions in the Bill risk will override public safety considerations. Alarming, The Bill also seeks to weaken firearm laws by making it easier for recreational shooters to access silencers - dangerous weapons currently restricted due to serious public safety concerns and typically reserved for professional use only.

Handing over the management of public land to vested hunting interests

The Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill would effectively resurrect the former NSW Game Council – an agency abolished in 2013 after an [independent review](#) found serious governance failures and a lack of accountability. To see a similar body re-established after such an abject failure is unacceptable and a real failure of good government.

The former NSW Game Council of New South Wales was established under the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*. The Act allowed hunters licenced by the Game Council access to more than 2 million hectares of state forests. In 2013, the NSW Government commissioned a review of the Game Council by a retired public servant after the acting chief executive of the Game Council engaged in illegal hunting in a Game Council vehicle. The review led to the abolition of the Game Council and led the establishment of an advisory body, the NSW Game Board, with licensing responsibilities taken over by the Department of Primary Industries. The 2013 Review criticised the Council for trying to 'reinvent its statutory objects with a focus on the use of the term conservation hunting'. The review also found that the Game Council had severe governance deficiencies, lacked accountability and that if the Game Council continued the risks for government were unacceptable.

We ask that the Labor government opposes the Bill in its entirety

As the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and as the Minister for the Environment we ask that you take a stand and ensure that this Bill, which compromises conservation outcomes and public safety, does not proceed to the Legislative Assembly. When the Coalition announced a proposal in 2012 to allow hunting in national parks, the Society actively campaigned against the proposal resulting in one of the biggest public protest rallies in the Blue Mountains. The Society sees this Bill as one small step away from again seeing our national parks at risk of becoming hunting playgrounds, rather than secure conservation reserves for our native flora and fauna.

We have also written to our local member, Ms Trish Doyle, Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage expressing our concerns and asking her to oppose this disastrous Bill.

If you have any queries regarding this letter please contact me at president@bluemountains.org.au

Yours sincerely

Annette Cam
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society



president@bluemountains.org.au