

Dear Premier, Ministers and Members

The Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS) wishes to reiterate its concerns about certain aspects of the proposed NSW Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2009 and requests that the NSW Government oppose the Bill in its present form.

The society makes the following points in relation to the Bill:

### **1. Recreational shooting in national parks.**

The AWMS does not believe uncoordinated and ad hoc shooting by recreational hunters contributes to cost effective or cost efficient wildlife management or pest animal management.

There is general agreement within the society that shooting is a valuable management tool if used in a structured, strategic and integrated way whether it is on private or public land. However, it should be recognized that it may only be useful in certain circumstances and for certain species where particular population densities or sex ratios are required, rather than in every situation. Public land management agencies such as the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service could utilize recreational hunters in a structured, strategic and integrated way through the NSW Game Council to manage animal populations on some national parks. Such a practice however, should always be bound by strict protocols with the National Parks and Wildlife Service having the final say because it is ultimately responsible for the management of the land and the safety of people who use the land. When shooters are utilized as described above the society does not consider the practice to be recreational shooting because the hunter is unlikely to be able to shoot what, where and when as they would like.

### **2. Establishment of Game Reserves and the release of Exotic Game**

The society strongly opposes the establishment of game reserves where exotic species will be released which have the potential to add to the already significant pest animal problem in New South Wales and Australia. The Bill proposes to approve the introduction and release of game birds which are considered by the Australian Vertebrate Pest Committee to be either serious or extreme threats to the environment or agriculture. This is considered to be irresponsible in the extreme and aligns with the practice of acclimatization societies 150 years ago when society was ignorant of the implications of such introductions.

### **3. Listing of Native Species as Game Animals**

It is noted that the Bill lists a number of native species as game animals. The society considers that there are insufficient population data including breeding and recruitment rates available for sustainable harvest levels to be calculated for a significant number of the listed species. When this is coupled with the fact that population densities and distributions of the listed species varies through space and time it would be irresponsible to list any native species as a game animal unless such data were available.

The Australasian Wildlife Management Society urges the government to oppose the NSW Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2009 unless the above issues are addressed.

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