

MEDIA RELEASE

Protected Area Workers Association of NSW



Monday 4th June, 2012

NATIONAL PARKS PAY FOR YOUR ELECTRICITY

The Protected Area Workers Association of NSW (PAWA) strongly objects to recreational hunting in national parks.

Chairperson for the PAWA Mr Duncan Scott-Lawson said that recreational hunting has never proved to be an effective way to manage feral animal populations.

National parks in NSW will be opened up to recreational hunters as part of a deal between the Shooters and Fishers Party and the government to ensure passage of its electricity privatisation bill. The deal to pass legislation in the upper house will mean funds will be used to pay for roads; none of the funds will go to implementing the recreational shooting program in reserves that include Barrington Tops, Myall Lakes and Kosciuszko.

“We are very concerned that more parks will be opened up for hunting as a result of future deals between the government and the Shooters and Fishers party. Mr Scott Lawson said

“PAWA is calling for its members and those who are concerned about the amendment to lobby the Premier, Environment Minister, other ministers and all members of parliament” he said.

Mr Scott-Lawson stated that the Bill has passed we can't change that, but we can lobby.

PAWA is very concerned about the real risk to the general public and national park workers. Since 2010, two park visitors have been accidentally killed in New Zealand by recreational hunters.

“It doesn't stop at public lands, Premier Barry O'Farrell has also promised the Shooters and Christian Democrats that he will investigate lifting their electoral funding and promised he will consider allowing shooters to kill more game birds on private property.

“Using the NSW Game Council's own reported figures, hunters on average take less than one feral animal per hunting trip and most of these are rabbits, not the larger pest species such as pigs, goats and dogs. Dogs make up less than 1% of feral animals shot by hunters.

Some facts and figures:

In 2010 - 2011 –

- Of the 12,025 Restricted Licences issued **only 68.5% of these are NSW residents**
- **23% given to Victorians** to hunt in NSW
- harvest counts (kills) 14,161 game and feral animals taken (that is **less than 0.9 of an animal per hunting trip** taken)
 - 46% of take were Rabbits
 - 19% Goats
 - 16% Pigs
 - 0.5% wild dogs

And the figures don't change much from the previous years.

“In 2007 - 2008, recreational hunters killed on average 350 deer a year in NSW state forests. This is only a few more than the 300 rusa deer that need to be killed annually in the Royal National Park to achieve slight population reductions (0.4 per cent).

“Aerial shooting by a skilled professional can be much more effective than ground shooting by recreational hunters. In South Australia, for example, one helicopter marksman shot more than four times as many deer in four hours as 65 recreational hunters did in four days in a conservation reserve.

“Not to mention the impact on tourism. In 2009 \$14.6 million was spent in the nature based experience market, 64% were visiting national parks. Not sure they will be so willing now.

“Put all this together and we are robbing Peter to pay Paul” said Mr Scott-Lawson.

“In one operation the red tape will be extensive and include park closures, staff supervision, signage and public notices and all for ...10 rabbits? This will mean less feral animals removed from our parks than we currently do and at a much higher price.

“The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) already has staff and licensed hunters who undertake feral animal control in our national parks. If the government was serious about this they would pump more money in to NPWS so they could increase their targeted feral animal control programs.

“Compare this to NPWS that eliminates thousands of pigs and feral animals with a fraction of the effort using efficient and effective methods ensuring the most animals removed at the least cost. Aerial shooting of pigs by trained NPWS marksmen can eliminate as many pigs in a week as the total number of hunters can in NSW in a year.

“The Invasive Species Council has described the contribution of hunters to the reduction in the country’s feral animal population as “trivial”.

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If you would like to know more about PAWA or become a member of PAWA you can find more information at www.pawansw.org.

