

The Hon Robyn Parker MP
Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage
Level 32 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister Parker

I write on behalf of the NSW Wildlife Council (NWC) concerning the Government's decision to allow amateur shooters to hunt in various national parks and reserves.

The NWC represents over 4500 licensed wildlife rehabilitators from 25 volunteer wildlife groups and independent licensees operating across NSW. Additionally, supporters of these groups number in their thousands, with the primary aim of native animal conservation, rehabilitation and release back to the wild.

Your active support for this amendment to the relevant Acts is causing grave concern to many thousands of citizens who do not understand how such core values upheld for generations with respect to the establishment of our national parks could simply be ignored.

There is overwhelming fear for the fate of native fauna if amateur shooters are allowed this concession.

The NSW Game Council has so few staff to monitor their activities across all 79 parks and reserves given that around 15,000 shooters may take up this offer. As a consequence, there is no faith that the 'strict conditions' you have imposed will be adhered to, nor will be, nor can be adequately policed.

In a letter to one of our representative members the Premier Mr Barry O'Farrell states, "Last year, NPWS removed over 54,000 feral animals...from our national parks and reserves... undertaken by NPWS rangers with the assistance of contracted shooters."(27 February 2013)

Minister Parker, can you guarantee that shooters, under the new amendment, should it proceed, will receive the same expert guidance from NPWS rangers, one-to-one monitoring and contract conditions as those previously contracted with NPWS to which the Premier refers?

As it is already stated that the Game Council will have this responsibility with a mere handful of operatives designated for this task it is unlikely that you would be able to provide such guarantees.

Representative groups of the NWC daily face multiple threats and attacks upon our native fauna from all manner of society and wilful destruction of habitat.

It is unacceptable that a Government tasked to actively protect and conserve native species should now legislate to put fauna at risk of death and injury in so-called protected environments such as our national parks and reserves.

I therefore have no hesitation in endorsing the resolution of the New South Wales Wildlife Council at our recent meeting:

The NWC expresses dissatisfaction with the administration of the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Robyn Parker, should you NOT repeal amendments to the Game and Feral Animal Control Act, 2002 which allow shooting in national parks and reserves; repeal amendments to the Game and Feral Animal Control Act and the National Parks and Wildlife Act that transfers the responsibility for hunting native ducks to the NSW Game Council.

Yours sincerely

Audrey Koosmen
Chair
New South Wales Wildlife Council Inc

6 April 2013