



TOTAL ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Premier must kill off Shooters' Party Bill say environment and animal welfare groups

Environment and animal welfare groups today united to call for the scrapping of legislation that would expand game shooting in NSW and are holding a series of public meetings across the State.

The organisations include the Invasive Species Council, WIRES, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, The Wilderness Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, National Parks Association of NSW and Total Environment Centre.

The groups have written to Premier Nathan Rees, calling on the NSW Government to stop wasting taxpayers' money propping up and expanding an ineffective Game Council and instead use it to finance effective and humane feral animal control programs consistent with Government standards.

The State Government is due to consider supporting a Bill introduced by the Shooter's Party – the Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill – when Parliament next sits in September. The groups have organised a number of public meetings throughout the State to show widespread opposition to the Bill.

National Parks Association Executive Officer Andrew Cox, said, "This Bill will expand the role of the discredited system of recreation shooting under the Game Council."

"If passed, the amended Act could see hunting of 26 native animal species, the establishment of private game parks, the release of more feral animals, and the state's national parks opened up for hunting," Mr Cox said.

"For conservation and welfare reasons, feral animal control is not a job for amateurs. At best, skilled recreational shooters can contribute to properly run programs to supplement other methods.

"Hunters are already responsible for some of Australia's worst feral animal problems, having introduced foxes and rabbits into Australia. These amendments would see even more feral animals introduced, putting the lie to claims that the Game Council's aim is to reduce feral animals," he said.

"The hunting bill before Parliament provides for the release of a number of exotic bird species into NSW, many of which have been assessed as a serious threat to agriculture or the environment.

"The Game Council claims that its hunting services are free. But it neglects to factor in the \$9.4 million of taxpayers' money granted to them since 2003," said Cate Faehrmann, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Executive Director.

"We are calling on the NSW Government to conduct a proper assessment of the performance of the current *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*, before considering any amendments to it," MS Faehrmann said.

The groups, along with local environment groups, are organising a series of public meetings to protest against the Game Amendment Bill at:

- Hazelhurst Regional Arts Gallery, 782 Kingsway, **Gymea** on **Thu 13 August at 7pm**
- Santa Maria Centre, 253 Gt. Western Hwy, **Lawson, Blue Mtns** on **Sat 15 August at 10am**
- Ku-ring-gai Town Hall, 1186 Pacific Hwy, **Pymble**, near the Station, on **Tue 25 August at 7pm**
- Red Dove Hall, cnr Keen & Woodlark Streets, **Lismore** on **Wed 26 August at 6pm**
- Theatrette, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, **Sydney City** on **Wed 9 September, 5.30-8pm**

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