



The Australian Deer Association's

Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development Inquiry into the Game and Feral Animal Control (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025.

The Australian Deer Association (ADA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. The ADA is a national, non-profit, member-based organisation that has advocated for the sustainable management of wild deer and the protection and expansion of public access to recreational deer hunting since its establishment in 1969.

Our Association is dedicated to the welfare of Australia's wild deer herds, the habitats they occupy, and the future of responsible, sustainable hunting. With a steadily growing membership of over 7,000 individuals across every state and territory in Australia, the ADA is the national voice for deer hunters and a leader in wild deer management.

The ADA has long invested in hunter education nationwide. We have developed a widely recognised volunteer accreditation framework and actively support deer management programs across a variety of tenures — including private land in New South Wales, state forests and national parks in Western Australia, World Heritage Areas in Tasmania, and national parks in Victoria.

Notably, the ADA was a prime mover in the creation of the Back Country Hunting Program in the Northern Territory, which has been recognised as a successful model of hunter-led conservation that balances access, environmental outcomes, and cultural values. These real-world contributions show that hunting, done responsibly, is part of sustainable land use.

The ADA supports the Bill's emphasis on education, research, liaison, and advocacy, including the promotion of science-based policy. Too often, public discourse around game and "feral" animal control is clouded by misinformation or misrepresentation. A dedicated body must be tasked with ensuring informed, accurate, and balanced policy development in this space.

The ADA generally supports the objectives (section 3) of the *Game and Feral Animal Control (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025*. The establishment of a Conservation Hunting Authority has the potential, with appropriate governance, to be a landmark step forward in recognising the role of responsible, licensed hunters as key contributors to sustainable wildlife management, land stewardship, and regional economies.



The ADA has a long, proud, and successful history of opening national parks for recreational deer hunting. The Victorian government announced in July 2025 that it would update the Victorian *National Parks Act 1975* to allow for recreational deer hunting in the Errinundra and Snowy River National Parks because of the ADA's committed advocacy work on the issue. This serves as an example of over 40 years of recreational deer hunting occurring in national parks harmoniously alongside all other forms of park use. It is recommended that New South Wales national parks not be excluded from recreational hunting in the *Game and Feral Animal Control (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025*.

The ADA encourages an evidence-based approach to the regulated use of suppressors or moderators on firearms used in licensed, regulated hunting. Notably, the United Kingdom announced in June 2025 that, following community consultation, it will enable suppressors to be readily available to licensed firearm owners. This follows on from New Zealand, which already allows suppressors and is widely used by recreational hunters.

Importantly, this legislation also reflects the broader economic significance of hunting. As recognised in state and federal studies, hunting contributes vast sums of money annually to the Australian economy, much of it in regional and rural areas like those across New South Wales. This is a substantial and largely self-funded sector that deserves a coherent and modern legislative framework to underpin its contribution and to grow it.

In conclusion, noting the points as mentioned earlier, the Australian Deer Association supports the *Game and Feral Animal Control (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025*. We believe it has the potential to provide a sound, evidence-based approach to the sustainable and humane management of game and “feral” animals, acknowledges the real contribution of hunters, and supports environmental, social, and economic outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

Sincerely,

Sean Kilkenny

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