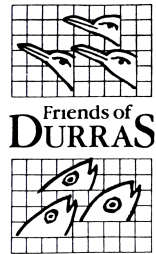


FRIENDS OF DURRAS INC.

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The Hon. Barry O'Farrell
Premier of NSW
office@premier.nsw.gov.au

Dear Premier O'Farrell

We write to express great concern about the risks of allowing recreational hunting in NSW National Parks.

The safety of people in national parks needs to be top priority, but there can be no assurance of avoiding accidental wounding and fatalities if your Government proceeds to open national parks to shooters in the manner allowed by the legislation.

For those of us who are regular walkers in Murramarang National Park, or other national parks, it is shocking to think that we would be at risk at any time from the bullets or arrows of 'recreational' shooters. Such thoughts are likely to deter visitors from going out to observe and enjoy nature in truly delightful national park surroundings. This is likely to be particularly keenly felt by families who worry about exposing children to the risks of stray bullets. NPWS rangers who spend significant time in national parks as part of their work are at even greater personal risk.

Fear for personal safety must be contrary to the way in which your Government would prefer the public and staff to feel about being in their national parks.

Although some may argue that killing feral animals helps in the management of national parks, the Invasive Species Council notes that genuine reductions in population can only be achieved by sustained and carefully planned professional programs that meet specific targets. Relatively random recreational hunting cannot be expected to control feral animal populations effectively. That is not its prime purpose, but rather an attempt to rationalise what gives such hunters pleasure.

In addition to our concerns about personal safety and the ineffectiveness of 'recreational' hunting in feral animal control, we are extremely concerned about the risks to native wildlife of being wounded or killed. National Parks should be genuine sanctuaries for native wildlife, and only the most professional well-trained shooters ought to be allowed to target feral animals there, under carefully controlled conditions. We are aware that some members of shooting clubs are also very concerned about the repercussions for the public, and for the reputations of their clubs, of allowing undisciplined hunters loose in national parks.

The population is increasing and it is important not to reduce access to reserves and parks where people may experience and appreciate nature, bringing balance to their lives. Reduction of access can occur obviously by excision of reserved areas, or less obviously by people losing confidence to access reserves and parks safely.

There is very strong and justifiable community opposition to this program and we hope that you will find a way to avoid allowing it to proceed.

With best wishes for wisdom and courage

Beth Heyde

(Dr) Elizabeth Heyde
Secretary
Friends of Durras.