

Media Release

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Dangerous Hunting Bill must be scrapped, say coalition of opponents

With the clock ticking, a powerful coalition of national and NSW-based peak bodies and civil society organisations has today taken out a full-page open letter in *The Daily Telegraph* urging Premier Chris Minns to reject the *Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025* in its entirety.

The Bill has been widely condemned as the most regressive firearm legislation in Australia in more than 30 years. The open letter warns that it threatens public safety, risks poor animal welfare outcomes, undermines conservation efforts and erodes Australia's globally respected firearm laws. It would also increase the risk of domestic and family violence.

The open letter highlights:

- The Parliamentary Inquiry ignored overwhelming evidence and failed to make any recommendations on the Bill.
- The Bill would designate large areas of public land currently enjoyed by families, bushwalkers and nature lovers for hunting, and is home to native wildlife.
- Evidence shows it would do little to support conservation or animal management, while risking harm to native species and reducing safe outdoor recreation opportunities.
- It was developed with no public consultation and minimal transparency.

Respected voices have joined the call to reject the Bill. Former Prime Minister John Howard has condemned it as a dangerous weakening of existing protections. Walter Mikac, who lost his family in the Port Arthur tragedy, has also personally appealed to the Premier. More than 3,000 NSW residents have written to their MPs demanding the Bill be shelved.

The coalition welcomes Premier Minns' comments ruling out a 'Right to Hunt' but warns that the Bill goes much further and continues to put public safety and community trust at risk.

Quotes from coalition members:

"The Public Health Association of Australia opposes any watering down of gun safety laws anywhere in Australia. The shooting industry and gun lobby has consistently and aggressively sought to diminish the protections from guns that the community expects. An increase in gun related deaths and injury, accidental or otherwise, is foreseeable if we reduce gun control measures. Those can be prevented in New South Wales if the government resists the pressure to change the laws designed to protect us from gun related violence and harm."

Terry Slevin, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia



"Australians are rightly proud of our strong gun laws, and the vast majority of people from all political and social persuasions resolutely reject any weakening of those laws. NSW has been a leader in many areas of gun control and should remain the leader by listening to that majority and outright rejecting the regressive Hunting Bill. Putting hunters in charge of hunting, paid for by the taxpayer, gives shooters an authority above public safety. Do we want occasional shooters being given hunting access to walking trails and camping areas? Do we want police burdened with more firearm access in the community? The controls that surround shooting MUST be considering public safety first and as its highest priority."

Tim Quinn, President, Gun Control Australia

"The Conservation Hunting Bill would be a huge step backwards for gun control, regional economies and invasive species management. The proposed expansion of hunting is unlikely to bring economic benefit, while threatening existing activities such as bushwalking and camping."

Dr Alice Grundy, Research Manager, The Australia Institute

"A 'Conservation Hunting Authority' is a waste of taxpayers' money based on a problematic myth. It will get in the way of real conservation and restoration efforts and is a distraction to the fundamental land management, biodiversity conservation and biosecurity reforms this government has an opportunity to really get some traction on and make significant progress. This Bill is a Trojan horse for loosening hunting restrictions and funnelling public funds into recreational shooting, disguised as conservation. Despite clear evidence that passive hunting and ad hoc feral animal removal provide no long-term environmental benefit, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is promoting these changes under a misleading conservation narrative."

Ms Jacqui Mumford, CEO, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

"Extensive evidence shows that recreational hunting is not effective at reducing populations of the most problematic feral animals in NSW like feral pigs, deer, goats, foxes, cats or rabbits. This Bill would lock in a misguided approach to invasive species control, undermine and reduce the effectiveness of science-based programs, and threaten the state's biodiversity. NSW needs properly resourced, coordinated, professional, science-led invasive animal control programs—not an expansion of recreational hunting."

Ms Lis Ashby, Policy Lead, Biodiversity Council

"Injury Matters strongly supports measures that prioritise community safety. Strengthening firearm legislation through evidence-based reforms is essential to reducing harm and ensuring safer outcomes across the community. Every life lost or impacted by firearm-related harm leaves a lasting ripple through families, friends, and entire communities. At Injury Matters, we believe reforms prioritising safety and wellbeing are critical to protecting people and preventing avoidable harm."

Sandy Lukjanowski, CEO, Injury Matters

"Every child, family and community has the right to feel safe in our public spaces. This Bill undermines decades of progress in protecting Australians from gun violence and puts public safety at unacceptable risk."

Sarah Davies AM, CEO, Alannah & Madeline Foundation

"Bushwalking NSW Inc is deeply concerned if this Bill becomes law as it would infringe on our rights as bushwalkers and hikers to enjoy our public lands."

David Bell, President, Bushwalking NSW

"Our members expect all governments to focus on the safety of their constituents, not the demands of the shooting industry and gun lobby."

Stephen Bendle, Convenor, Australian Gun Safety Alliance



“From the outset we’ve shared our valid and legitimate concerns. We have generated just shy of 10,000 direct actions through our supporters who have written to MP’s and lodged submissions to the Inquiry. In spite of the best laid plans by the Shooters, Fisher and Farmers Party to do a back room deal with the minority Minns Labor Government, to push this Bill through the NSW Parliament, those plans have been scuttled in spectacular fashion because good people have come together.”

Lisa Ryan, Regional Campaigns Manager, Animal Liberation NSW

“There is strong evidence that increasing access to, and normalising the use of guns increases the risk of women and children experiencing domestic and family violence. This proposed Bill directly undermines the efforts being made to stop the domestic and family violence crisis in NSW.”

Phillip Ripper, CEO, No To Violence

The coalition’s message is clear: Premier Minns must put public safety before politics and reject the Bill outright.

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About the Alannah & Madeline Foundation

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation was founded 28 years ago by Walter Mikac AM, and a small group of volunteers in memory of Walter’s young daughters Alannah and Madeline, aged just six and three, who tragically lost their lives along with their mother and 32 others at Port Arthur in Tasmania on 28 April 1996. The Foundation was established with the belief that “all children and young people should be able to live a happy and safe life, free from violence and trauma.” Our mission continues today through our Care, Prevention and Advocacy programs – we fight for their right to be safe, so their future is strong. www.alannahandmadeline.org.au

About the Australian Gun Safety Alliance

The Australian Gun Safety Alliance is a broad coalition of voices representing the interests of the community to ensure we remain vigilant on gun safety. www.gunsafetyalliance.org.au

