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MEDIA RELEASE

Government 'shooting-in-parks' plan in disarray.

The NSW Government's plan to introduce shooting in NSW National Parks is in disarray, say members of the environmental lobby group Friends of Durras.

Friends of Durras spokesman John Perkins said that by announcing its intention to inject a whopping \$19 million dollars toward implementing the plan the NSW Government had committed yet another blunder and had clearly exposed the plan to be a dangerous and dodgy promise to the Shooters and Fishers Party in exchange for votes.

"In short, Barry O'Farrell is playing politics with the lives of people in NSW," he said. "This was never about proper feral animal control, never - this is now quite clear! We have:

- The NSW Government itself saying people are highly likely to be killed under the Premier's plan to allow recreational hunters into national parks;
- A major cost blow out of \$19 million dollars to implement a dangerous program, when all around NSW important services are being cut;
- Children as young as 12 being allowed to shoot;
- Rogue shooters already intimidating campers and killing native wildlife in camping grounds in front of families;
- Shooters themselves coming out against the plan; and
- A very concerned public who love national parks and the reasons why they exist, that is to protect and conserve Australia's flora and fauna and biodiversity and provide a place of peace and sanctity for the public."

Mr Perkins said "The Office of Environment and Heritage has already warned there is a high risk of serious injury or death if the Premier proceeds with his legislation to allow hunting in national parks". He pointed out that the draft risk assessment identifies ten main risk areas under the policy of hunting in national parks, including serious injury or death from bullets or arrows and animal welfare concerns due to 'less accurate use of firearms' and 'use of bows'.

Mr Perkins said reduced visitor numbers, likely to result from people being afraid to go into national parks because of the potential for accidents, would pave the way for the NSW Government to justify further watering down of national park protection.

"We will not be backing down on this. The NSW Government has to do the right thing and not implement this legislation - for the sake of the public and our national parks."

Feral animal control can be achieved by targeted programs that reduce feral animal populations in a short period. "It is likely that greater harm than good has resulted from recreational hunting, with most species having expanded in range and numbers despite hunting and, because in some cases because of hunting" said Mr Perkins.

The key purpose of our national parks is for the protection of nature and its appreciation by the public. Mr Perkins said "National Parks are used by a huge number of people, they're loved, they're valued, and people do not want to be looking over their shoulders when they visit a national park. There is a very real risk to life and limb. National parks are supposed to be quiet havens."

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