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Shadow Minister for the Environment



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LEAKED DOCUMENT REVEALS: HIGH RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH DUE TO HUNTING IN NATIONAL PARKS

A leaked internal document from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage reveals the risk of a bullet or arrow causing death or serious injury is considered 'high' under the O'Farrell Government's legislation to allow hunting in National Parks.

The '*Supplementary Pest Control in Parks - Draft Risk Assessment*' dated December 10, 2012 identifies 10 main risk areas under the policy of hunting in National Parks including:

- Serious injury or death from bullets or arrows
- Animal welfare concerns due to 'less accurate use of firearms' and 'use of bows'
- Reduced visitor numbers
- Environmental damage including carcasses impacting on water quality
- Confrontations between hunters and park visitors or staff

Shadow Minister for the Environment, Luke Foley said the findings couldn't be ignored.

"Barry O'Farrell's own department has advised there is a high risk of serious injury or death if the Premier proceeds with his legislation to allow hunting in National Parks," said Mr Foley.

"There is a high to medium risk that hunters will end up in confrontations with park staff or visitors and high risk of environmental damage to our pristine National Parks.

"In the face of this risk assessment, the O'Farrell Government must immediately abandon its plans to allow amateur shooters to hunt in National Parks.

"The first responsibility of any Government is to protect the safety of its citizens. For the Government to proceed with hunting in National Parks in the face of this dire warning would be an abrogation of that responsibility.

"If a tragic incident occurs nobody in the O'Farrell Government can say they weren't warned about the risks."

The document also reveals the Government considered, but then ruled out, direct supervision of amateur hunters in National Parks and the establishment of exclusion zones – including walking trails and roads.

"It's clear the Shooters and Fishers Party are calling the shots – with the interests of hunters considered a higher priority in the O'Farrell Government than public safety," said Mr Foley.

"The NSW Labor Opposition has been warning of the risks of hunting in National Parks for months.

"With only days until these laws are due to take affect, the O'Farrell Government should heed the warnings from its own Office of Environment and ban hunting in National Parks immediately."

The legislative amendments to the Game and Feral Animal Control Act to allow hunting in National Parks are due to take effect from December 27, 2012.

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