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Petition to House: Hunting Vital for Communities and Conservation

A large petition tabled in Federal Parliament this week highlights the importance of hunting in conservation strategies, as well as its role in supporting country communities and economies. Over 1800 signatures of support were collected in less than two days, at just one location in Sydney, New South Wales.

One of the organisers, International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH) Chair Dr Samara McPhedran, said "People in regional, rural, and remote communities are suffering through drought and hardship, and the Parliament would do well to endorse their right to maintain and grow the alternative income stream gained through welcoming hunters into the community."

It is acknowledged that hunters contribute at least \$40 million per year to the economy in one Australian state (Victoria) alone.

The petition also calls upon the Parliament to recognise the vital role hunting plays in the conservation of species, habitat, and ecosystems for future generations.

"The World Conservation Union (IUCN) promotes hunting as a powerful conservation tool, but Australia has lagged behind the rest of the world in accepting this wisdom. It is time Australia caught up with the international, best practice approach to conservation," said Dr McPhedran.

WiSH thanked Federal Member for Wannon, the Honourable David Hawker MP, for tabling the petition. "Mr Hawker has worked for country Australians for three decades. We urge the Parliament to heed his knowledge of life on the land, and recognise the benefits hunting generates for communities and ecosystems."

Related fact sheet:

<http://www.ic-wish.org/WiSH%20Fact%20Sheet%20Hunting%20Conservation%20Economy.pdf>

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WOMEN ON TARGET FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Hunting, Conservation, and the Economy: 10 Australian Facts

- Hunters contribute at least \$40 million per year to the economy in one Australian state (Victoria) alone, which represents a major boost for regional communities¹.
- Since March 2006, hunters licensed through the Game Council (a Statutory Authority of the New South Wales Government) have removed more than 11 000 invasive animals from public land².
- In the Northern Territory, hunting is widely acknowledged as a way of ensuring the long term sustainability of waterbird populations³.
- In South Australia, hunters have worked with pastoralists and government to remove over 25 000 feral goats from the Flinders Ranges, as part of 'Operation Bounceback'⁴.
- In June 1998, the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee Inquiry into Commercial Utilisation of Australian Native Wildlife concluded that: "Hunting has considerable potential to assist with conservation objectives particularly for areas of land which are perceived to have little other economic value (such as swamps and wetlands). It also has the potential to contribute wealth...to local communities which may have little other opportunity to derive income from their land and wildlife."⁵
- Collaboration between governments and hunting associations is increasingly recognised as a vital aspect of successful conservation strategies⁶.
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources, endorses sustainable wildlife use enacted through practices such as waterfowl harvesting⁷. Australia is a Contracting Party to the Convention, and has 65 Ramsar listed sites⁸.
- Fee-paying hunting opportunities on Aboriginal managed land provide a means for Aboriginal Australians to utilise natural resources for economic advancement, as well as providing an incentive for wildlife conservation in those areas⁹.
- Hunting represents a key opportunity for 'biodiversity business' – the application of market-based principles to the sustainable use of wildlife, for the ultimate purpose of biodiversity conservation⁶.
- Australiawide, it is estimated that hunters generate over \$1 billion annually for the economy¹⁰.

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