

POLICY STATEMENT

Supporting sustainable hunting in the Northern Territory

Hunting is a fundamental part of the Territory lifestyle, it is a much-loved recreational pastime that the Country Liberal Party will always support. The Everingham CLP Government established the first and only dedicated hunting reserve in the Northern Territory at Howard Springs in 1984. Subsequent CLP Governments have opened up even more reserves to hunters including Lambells Lagoon in 1986 and Shoal Bay in 2000. The CLP has always supported the rights of hunters in the Territory.

These days feral pigs and waterfowl (seasonally) can be hunted in the Northern Territory in the following declared reserves:

- Howard Springs Hunting Reserve (waterfowl)
- Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve (pigs and waterfowl)
- Lambells Lagoon Conservation Reserve (waterfowl)
- Harrison Dam Conservation Area (pigs and waterfowl)
- Crown Land near Southport/Blackmore River (waterfowl)

In recent years, firearm licence numbers have increased from 700 in 1997 to 3400 today, with no tangible increase in hunting area, meaning there are more hunters in the same number of reserves. This puts hunter safety at risk. A Country Liberal Government, will help ease crowding in hunting reserves, and open new opportunities for hunters, by creating a new reserve with the site to be identified after extensive consultation with stakeholders and open in our first term.

To further protect and ensure the sustainability of flora and fauna within our reserves, a CLP Government will support wetland and hunting reserve conservation. Currently, hunting groups do great work in cleaning up wetlands and hunting reserves to free them of anthropogenic refuse, other pollutants and noxious weeds, such as gamba grass. It is in their interest to look after the flora and fauna in these hunting reserves and ensure the sustainability of their sport for future generations.

It is for this reason that a CLP Government will review the Magpie Goose Management Plan and ensure that it gives certainty to hunters and ensures the sustainability of hunting well into the future. It is imperative that counting surveys are conducted year-round, in the both the wet season and dry season to ensure reliability of data. The constant shifting of the season length and the bag limit up and down needs to stop to ensure annual data is consistent and comparable to give certainty to hunters. Reliable data will be achieved by

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keeping the variables fixed for five years; this will aid conservation, as well as keeping hunting viable in the Northern Territory. Since 2019, the season length has been four months with a bag limit of seven. This will be maintained until the end of the 2023 season to ensure five seasons of consistency, with the addition of an extra count each year to ensure reliability and stability of the data.

Crop protection is another role that hunters play in the Territory and currently there are limitations on what farmers can do to protect crops from birdlife. A CLP Government will move regulatory responsibility for crop protection from Parks and Wildlife to Primary Industries and Resources, to support our vitally important agricultural sector.

A CLP Government will support recreational hunters by:

- Creating a new hunting reserve in consultation with stakeholders
- Supporting wetland conservation and weed eradication activities in hunting reserves
- Reviewing the Magpie Goose Management Plan to ensure reliability of data and the sustainability of hunting well into the future
- Transferring regulatory responsibility for crop protection permits to the Department for Primary Industry & Resources