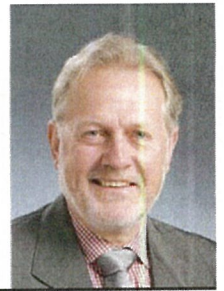




# The Hon. Robert Borsak MLC

Parliament of New South Wales  
Legislative Council  
Shooters and Fishers Party



4 August 2014

The Hon. Greg Hunt MP  
Minister for the Environment  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

## Re: Banning the Importation of Hunting Trophies

Thank you for your reply to my recent letter (MC14-014025). Regrettably however it appears to be a standard response to placate aggrieved hunters who have written to you on this important matter. With respect, it also reveals a lack of knowledge of the issues surrounding conservation, in particular rhino and lion conservation. A CITES conference of the parties not only *allowed* but *recommend* that "...trade in hunting trophies of animals of the species listed in Appendix I be permitted only in accordance with Article III, i.e. accompanied by import and export permits". Under CITES both the white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*) and black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) as well as the African lion (*Panthera leo*) are permitted to be legally exported as hunting trophies, upon declaration by the Scientific Authority of the exporting country that exportation of the hunting trophy is not detrimental to the survival of the species.

Your announcement on 2nd July 2014 of stricter, punitive measures reveals a contempt of hunting culture and hunters, typical of that highlighted in the paper 'Hunting and Environmentalism: Conflict or Misrepresentations' by Knezevic (2009)<sup>1</sup>.

***"Hunting itself, whether commercial, subsistence, or recreational, has been regulated by rules (e.g. season, area restrictions), limitations on animals harvested ("bag limits"), and regulations concerning allowable guns and ammunition. In this context hunters, the vast majority of whom practice ethical hunting, are still demonised."*** and

***"To critique hunting without comprehensively critiquing the larger context within which hunting exist (sic) is to gloss over more pressing social and environmental issues by picking an easy scapegoat issue."***

For an informed understanding of the problems and the only solution to the illegal trade in African rhino horn, could I recommend the article by Duane Biggs and colleagues from the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions<sup>2</sup>. Dr Biggs notes that attempts to suppress the supply of rhino horns through trade bans, such as you are proposing for non-commercial hunting trophies, have demonstrably failed.

I believe the introduction of measures to prevent the importation of new rhino hunting trophies or moves to ban the legal importation of CITES certified trophies into Australia would be counter-

<sup>1</sup> Knezevic I. (2009). Hunting and Environmentalism: Conflict or Misrepresentations. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 14:12-20. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10871200802562372>

<sup>2</sup> Biggs D., Courchamp F., Martin R., Possingham H. (2013). Legal trade of Africa's Rhino Horns. *Science* Vol 339, 1038-1039. <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/339/6123/1038>

productive and have a detrimental effect on conservation outcomes for those species.

This is the same uninformed reaction by a previous Labor government which banned the importation of all elephant hunting trophies and products into Australia.

As a policy it has totally failed to help conserve the species and African elephants are being poached at an ever increasing rate in the very areas that are participating in hunting based conservation programs. The Australian ban has only served to exacerbate the international ban on legalised trade in ivory and has done nothing to arrest the illegal trade. As Biggs *et al.* (2009) stated higher levels of enforcement of trade bans simply drive black market prices even higher thus increasing the incentive for poachers.

The federal coalition Government's pandering to propaganda from animal rights extremists has a demonstrable record of failure. The extirpation of animals in Kenya is a poignant example of this policy's utter failure. Australia should not be complicit in this deplorable situation.

Even a cursory investigation would show that South African game laws outlaw canned hunts, and, that the trophy hunting program's patronised by Australian and other overseas hunters comply with both South African law and CITES regulations. Any punitive legislative response the coalition Government imposes on hunting-based conservation programs could only be inspired by political, not wildlife conservation motives.

Minister, the Shooters and Fishers Party believes that not only will the proposed changes fail to achieve any conservation goals, but will also unfairly restrict law abiding Australian hunters whom we have represented for more than 20 years.

As I understand it the government has so far received input on this issue only from anti-hunting organisations. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to promote the fact that there are programs in place that are delivering real conservation results. Could I suggest that Mr Ray Hammond from Safari Club International also attend this meeting to offer the benefit of his years of experience on wildlife conservation?

I look forward to discussing this important matter with you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



The Hon. Robert Borsak MLC

Attach.

**Knezevic I. (2009).** Hunting and Environmentalism: Conflict or Misrepresentations. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 14:12-20.

**Biggs D., Courchamp F., Martin R., Possingham H. (2013).** Legal trade of Africa's Rhino Horns. *Science* Vol 339, 1038-1039.