



The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

22 DEC 2008

C08/27484

Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 29 October 2008 seeking my response to a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding hunting as a conservation tool.

The petition claims that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (World Conservation Union or IUCN) promotes hunting as a powerful conservation tool. The IUCN is a global environmental network made up of government and non-government organisations. Although not all member organisations would be supportive of promoting hunting, the IUCN recognises that, where appropriate and adequately regulated, hunting can be a useful conservation tool. The IUCN has passed resolutions that state that hunting can be compatible with conservation and can provide an economic incentive for the conservation of natural areas.

The state and territory governments have primary responsibility for managing wildlife including waterfowl harvesting. Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have banned duck hunting. The Australian Government becomes involved when the specimen is being exported, the activity occurs on Commonwealth land, or where there is a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance. In the case of waterfowl harvesting, the relevant matters of national environmental significance include: declared Ramsar wetlands, listed threatened species and communities and listed migratory species.

The Australian Government supports sustainable use of wildlife where the activity is adequately regulated to ensure that the harvest is ecologically sustainable, does not have a detrimental impact either on the harvested species or their ecosystems, is conducted in a humane manner and is compatible with other management objectives for the relevant area.

The Australian Government does not permit hunting or shooting by members of the public within Commonwealth reserves.

I am unable to comment on the economic value of hunting to the rural community. However, I appreciate that some rural and Indigenous communities benefit from the commercial harvesting of species such as kangaroos and crocodiles. Some Indigenous communities also benefit from traditional hunting of native species for consumption by their own community.

Yours sincerely

Peter Garrett