



**EXTRACT FROM
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

HANSARD



***Ms BATH
Eastern Victoria***

ADJOURNMENT

Deer Hunting Land Access Guidelines

Thursday, 20 February 2020

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (19:09):

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Agriculture, the Honourable Jaclyn Symes, and it relates to changes to Crown land access for recreational deer hunters in eastern Victoria.

The action that I seek is for the minister to consult with the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria and devise clear guidelines in relation to hunting on licensed land.

Deer hunting is certainly a popular recreational pursuit in Victoria with approximately 27 000 licence-holders. The state's economy benefits from the recreational pastime with a contribution of in excess of \$57 million toward the state's economy.

Deer populations on the other hand are estimated to be in the vicinity of 1 million in Victoria alone. It is estimated that these numbers are naturally going to grow; therefore our hunters play an important role in limiting their spread.

There are, however, concerns that from 1 March this year hunters will no longer need permission to hunt from grazing licensees in order to shoot in the eastern part of Victoria's forests. Although the decision has been very much positively received by recreational shooting and hunting groups, there have been concerns among the bush user groups in relation to safety and guidelines.

Members of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association have recently contacted my office and me via email and conversation to say that they feel they have not been adequately consulted on the pending changes. When cattle-grazing operations are in full swing the grazing licence-holders are worried that the revised permission or lack thereof required may jeopardise the safety of their cattle and indeed the musters out on land.

Recognising that the majority of the recreational hunters are certainly law-abiding folk that often are engaged with or belong to a group or sporting association, some are unfortunately not aware of rules and guidelines. While the Game Management Authority have provided very clear deer-hunting maps for eastern Victoria, it is felt that the absence of clear guidelines in relation to this new ruling provides a sense of what might happen.

Comparatively, in New South Wales a hunter must have permission from the owner or manager of the land they wish to hunt on before entering onto that land. With priorities of animal welfare and safety for the public, the mountain cattlemen certainly have a fair case, so it is important to find a resolution. I ask that the minister consult with the mountain cattlemen in revision of the guidelines in order that there be maximum safety for all.