



Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women,

Desley Boyle

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No more duck and quail hunting: Beattie

There will be no more duck and quail hunting in Queensland, Premier Peter Beattie told State parliament this morning.

"It's time to ban the recreational shooting of ducks and quail," he said.

"This is not an appropriate activity in contemporary life in the Smart State.

"For example in 1984 there more than 1800 licensed hunters and in 2004 there were just 376.

"Conversely the Environment Minister has received more than 700 representations this year on the issue with all but 15 seeking to have duck and quail hunting banned," he said.

"Community concern, combined with declining bird numbers, diminishing wetlands and the effects of the drought mean it's time to act - and act we will."

Environment Minister Desley Boyle also told Parliament that there had been consistent concern from many citizens.

"For instance one woman wrote: "The idea that you can kill an animal for 'sport, recreation or tradition' should be consigned to the dark ages".

Another urged: "Please be the Minister, the woman, who has the brains to end the slaughter and suffering of our wildlife".

Ms Boyle said that people also expressed concern that birds other than ducks and quail were routinely killed.

One person asked: "How can we be sure a hunter with a split second to decide in imperfect conditions ... is making a correct decision. Our native birds deserve more protection than this."

The Premier and Minister said that State Cabinet has agreed the Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail) Conservation Plan 1995 - which manages the hunting of ducks and quails - will not be remade when it expires in September.

Mr Beattie said that the RSPCA had suggested that as many as 90 per cent of ducks shot suffer a cruel slow death.

"The issue was referred to the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee which reports to the Primary Industries Minister.

"That Committee concluded that the likely rate of wounding, instead of direct kills, was unacceptable leading to unreasonable pain and suffering."

In the past three years, the EPA has cancelled two hunting seasons due to reduced populations from poor rainfall conditions.

Other forms of hunting, where animal welfare is not a concern, are still legal in Queensland - specifically the destruction of feral species, such as pigs and deer.

The removal of feral animals can help the environment and, as a stationary target, the likelihood of a direct kill and the ability to immediately retrieve the animal is higher.

Ms Boyle said that community attitudes have reached the stage where it really was time to ban duck and quail hunting.