

New Zealand Game Animal Council

Submission on the Crown Pastoral Land Reform Bill

1.0 About the New Zealand Game Animal Council

The New Zealand Game Animal Council (GAC), established under the Game Animal Council Act 2013, is a statutory agency with responsibilities for, *inter alia*, raising awareness of game animal hunters, and advising on and managing aspects of game animal hunting. Game animals are feral pigs, chamois, tahr, and all species of deer.

2.0 Background

Deer, tahr, chamois and feral pigs have had a long association with Crown Pastoral Land (CPL). For example, prior to the tenure review process approximately 38% of the Himalayan tahr population was located on CPL/private land at the time the Himalayan Tahr Control Plan came into force. Game animals have undergone a transformation from unwanted animals to be culled to a valuable asset that are now farmed and hunted as significant income earners for some CPL lessees.

This increase in the value of deer, tahr and chamois has influenced attitudes of CPL lessees to allowing access for recreational hunting. Free access for recreational hunters has reduced over time as the development of the guided hunting industry has enabled CPL lessees to charge fees for hunting (with the appropriate consents/permissions).

3.0 Ending Tenure Review

Leaseholders of CPL have exclusive possession of the land within their lease providing them with the ability to deny public access (like any private landowner) and to trespass persons who cross their land without permission.

On one hand, the previous tenure review process provided benefits for hunters by turning leasehold land into public conservation land which resulted in better access for hunting purposes and created access ways through CPL to new and existing public conservation land.

On the other hand, hunting interests were poorly represented in this process and this meant that some of the accessways created were unusable by hunters due to the carriage of firearms being excluded from access provisions. Correcting this now is proving problematic.

The cessation of tenure review would put an end to more land coming back into public conservation land and being made available for hunting purposes. It is important therefore, that whatever shape the final management regime for CPL takes, hunting access to public conservation land be established in a form suitable for hunters carrying firearms and accompanied by dogs (where dogs are permitted on the land the access is provided for).

Access provisions should be made certain and enduring through the use of legal instruments such as easements. Where access is provided it should be Crown responsibility to manage any negative impacts that the access has on farming operations. The cost of creating and maintaining access should be borne by the Crown.

The proposed Bill removes the facility for tenure review (which facilitated more land being available for hunting), and also removes the facility to deal with access issues to public land. The proposed Bill needs to deal with these two issues separately.

The appropriate place for this would be in the process for granting recreational hunting permits, and in this case, consultation should take place with the GAC.

The GAC submits that if the Bill is passed there will need to be provisions put in place to address access issues to public land.

Part 2 – Amendments to Land Act 1948

Clause 21 which relates to Section 66A amended (recreation permit)

One of the GAC's statutory functions in relation to game animals is:

- to liaise with hunters, hunting organisations, representatives of tangata whenua, local authorities, landowners, the New Zealand Conservation Authority, conservation boards, and the Department of Conservation to improve hunting opportunities.

With regard to **clause 21 (11)** where it is proposed that before granting a recreation permit for pastoral land, the Commissioners must consult the Director General of Conservation, it is recommended that this clause should also include the Game Animal Council. This addition would allow for the provision of an avenue to address any current or future access issues to public land.

The GAC seeks the following amendment:

(11)(4) Before taking any steps mentioned in subsection (3), the Commissioner must consult the Director-General of Conservation and the Game Animal Council.

If you have any queries relating to this submission, please contact me on 021688531 or at tim.gale@nzgac.org.nz.

Yours sincerely



Tim Gale
General Manager
New Zealand Game Animal Council