

**NICK DAMETTO**

**Member for Hinchinbrook**

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Thousands back innovative hunting petition

QUEENSLAND'S sport shooting community have thrown their weight behind a conservation hunting E-Petition sponsored by Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto, attracting 6000 signatures in a matter of weeks.

The parliamentary E-Petition proposes a three year trial of conservation hunting in Queensland State Forests where feral species such as pigs, cats and deer would be targeted.

Mr Dametto said it was an easy decision to sponsor the ground-breaking petition after being approached by its creator Daniel Boniface in August.

"Hunting has long been a favourite pastime in North Queensland where feral pig populations have run rampant for years," he said.

"There is a strong sport shooting fraternity across the state and I am thrilled the E-Petition has gathered so much support in such a short space of time.

"I look forward to seeing it continue to grow with even more signatures in the coming months."

Mr Boniface said there were "very limited opportunities" for thousands of Queensland sport shooters to enjoy hunting as many do not have access to privately held rural land.

"I chose State Forests for this petition firstly because feral pests are a huge problem there but also because State Forests serve as an effective refuge and breeding ground for feral pests in a mixed matrix of land use," he said.

"Hunting on public land is a legitimate pursuit that is already in place in other eastern states. The scheme that I am proposing would ideally mirror that which has been safely in place in NSW for seven years.

"If sport shooters are allowed to undergo the appropriate accreditation and gain access to State Forests for hunting, these habitats will no longer be safe breeding grounds for feral pests and over a period of decades, the environment and ecology may be able to recover."

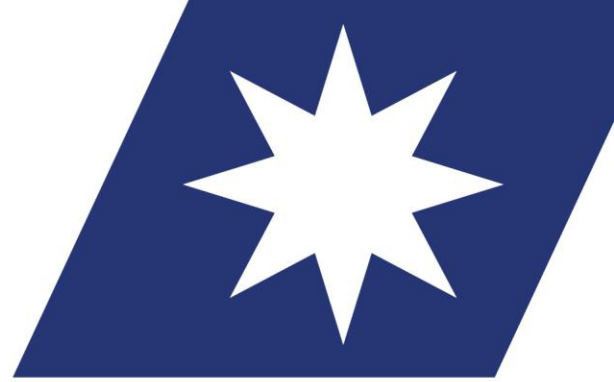
Mr Boniface said the prevalence of feral pests in State Forests caused a "perfect storm of environmental and economic issues" for the community.

"Feral pests cause damage to the environment when allowed to breed large populations unchecked. Foxes, feral dogs and cats prey prolifically on our iconic wildlife and herbivorous pest species like rabbits compete with native species for common resources," he said.

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“Large hard-hoofed animals like brumbies, feral cattle, buffalo and camels cause issues of land degradation, siltation and water pollution along with the raft of competitive exclusion issues. Feral pigs tear up dam banks, making it hazardous for cattle to access water to drink and the siltation in dams caused by pigs makes the water useless for irrigation.”

Mr Dametto said the E-Petition’s proposed conservation hunting trial made sense on a number of levels.

“The lock it up and leave it approach” to State Forests taken by government has allowed feral animals such as pigs and cats to explode in population, wreaking havoc on the environment and our native wildlife in State Forests,” he said.

“If the State Government refuses to properly maintain their forests and parks, then allowing recreational hunting is a good solution to keeping a check on feral species.”

Mr Dametto said feral pigs in particular were a major environmental concern in North Queensland as they are known for spreading diseases such as the deadly Panama Tropical Race 4 which has the potential to destroy banana plantations in the region.

A report commissioned by New South Wales’ Game Licensing Unit into the economic impact of recreational hunting in NSW found “recreational hunting by 19,000 game hunting licence holders accounted for \$119 million of Gross State Product and 860 jobs within the NSW economy”. The 207,000 non-game licence holders “accounted for between \$446 million and \$1.366 million of Gross State Product and between 3932 and 11,572 jobs”.

“I believe the economic and tourism benefits of recreational hunting offered by the NSW scheme could be replicated in Queensland, combined with an environmental benefit of helping to eradicate feral animals, such as pigs,” Mr Dametto said.

Once the E-Petition closes on February 24 next year, Mr Dametto will formally table it in parliament which will require the appropriate minister to issue a response.

Mr Dametto said he may also consider developing the E-Petition’s proposal into a Bill to be put before parliament.

To view the E-Petition, click [here](#).

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### **Media Enquiries**

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