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MEDIA RELEASE

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**STRICT NEW SAFETY PROTOCOLS INTRODUCED FOR
LICENSED HUNTING IN STATE FORESTS**

Strict new safety requirements have been introduced as areas of State forest in NSW are re-declared for licensed recreational hunting, Acting Minister for Primary Industries Andrew Stoner today announced.

Mr Stoner said from 3 February, R-licensed recreational hunters will have access to some State forests, providing they adhere to the NSW Government's strict new safety requirements.

"The NSW Government has always committed to reintroducing recreational licensed hunting in State forests, but only if it could be confident that this activity could be undertaken in the safest manner possible," Mr Stoner said.

"Recreational licensed hunting has been allowed in State forests since 2006; however, following the independent Governance Review of the Game Council of NSW, the NSW Government suspended this activity in July 2013 until an updated risk assessment could be completed.

"Now that the Forestry Corporation of NSW has updated its risk assessment, which the NSW Government has considered, this activity may now recommence but R-licensed hunters must comply with important new safety protocols."

The Forestry Corporation of NSW completed the first risk assessment of hunting in State forests in 2005, and this has been reviewed and updated in 2009, 2010 and now 2013.

The new safety requirements include:

- hunters must carry a GPS-enabled device that contains hunting and exclusion map data provided by the Department of Primary Industries at all times when hunting;
- one full day must pass between the time a hunt is booked on the online system and the day of hunting (to allow the Forestry Corporation of NSW time to schedule/modify work);
- hunters must complete two online education modules before applying for written permission to hunt. The courses cover outdoor navigation and conditions of written permissions to hunt; and
- hunters must acknowledge and adhere to State forest signs.

Mr Stoner said declared State forests will be divided into five categories and R-licensed hunters will be able to make online bookings to hunt from Monday.

“In October 2013 the NSW Government gazetted its preliminary intention to re-declare the forests open to legal hunting, subject to the outcomes of the updated risk assessment, and today’s announcement follows through on that commitment,” Mr Stoner said.

“The exhaustive risk assessment review left no stone unturned and made several recommendations, which the NSW Government has implemented.

“Of the 358 State forests which have been re-declared, initially about 200 will be opened to R-licensed hunters. Once declared, State forests may be opened or closed on a case-by-case basis.”

For more information on licensed recreational hunting in State forests or to make a booking to hunt from Monday, visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.