

Australian Deer Association Submission to the Natural Resources Commission

**State-wide review of NSW pest animal
management**

2 December 2015



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“The Australian Deer Association (ADA) strongly supports the Natural Resources Commission and the Baird Government in conducting this review. We appreciate the opportunity to be involved in such an important initiative and seek to collaborate with Government and other interested parties to assist with pest animal management and deer control in national parks and other private/ public land.”

David Byrnes, NSW State President, Australian Deer Association

We believe the ADA is the right partner to assist NSW Government control the ever increasing wild deer population in NSW.

With a national membership of over 3,500 government accredited and highly experienced hunters and researchers we will work in harmony with the Government and other interested parties to achieve cost effective triple bottom line outcomes in deer and other pest animal management.

Understanding the problem – managing wild deer in NSW

The terms of reference refers to deer as a ‘pest species’ while in NSW deer are currently only recognised as game species. We believe the alteration of deer to “pest species” would create further issues in the law enforcement and animal welfare issues and would not produce the outcomes sought by the Commission.

Notwithstanding, we recognise unmanaged deer have the potential to damage the environment and social wellbeing of NSW Citizens and have a detrimental effect on the economy.

For example:

- ▶ Causing additional motor vehicle hazards
- ▶ Encroaching on privately owned crops
- ▶ Impacting environmentally sensitive areas in National Parks

We are committed to working collaboratively with government, land managers and land owners to successfully create sustainable deer management programs.

Profiling the Australian Deer Association

The ADA is a national organisation that was established in 1969. The ADA is the largest deer hunting and deer conservation organisation in Australia with approximately 3500 members nationally.

ADA's primary objective is the conservation and management of Australia's historical wild deer herds to provide sustainable hunting opportunities. We consider that the long term welfare of the deer comes before the short term interests of hunters.

The Association and its members are dedicated to the retention of habitat for deer and other wildlife and the preservation and extension of public access to Australian bushland.

In NSW, the ADA accepts that over population of wild deer is increasingly becoming a challenge in certain areas. We are a long trusted partner with NSW Government initiatives and programs. We have six branches covering the majority of the state. These include:

- ▶ Sydney – 401 members
- ▶ Hunter Valley – 101 members
- ▶ Riverina – 145 members
- ▶ Sapphire Coast – 173 members
- ▶ Central West – 71 members
- ▶ New England – 63 members

Working together to achieve the objectives of the Commission

Our dedicated NSW membership base are perfectly placed to be a safe, cost efficient and trusted partner to manage deer (and other species) on behalf of the NSW Government.

We will achieve this through:

- ▶ Assisting in the development and implementation of cost effective and outcomes focused deer management programs
- ▶ Conducting targeted research to further ascertain the threat of wild deer
- ▶ Undertaking deer management education and training programs under the DPI Leap program
- ▶ Supporting the implementation of recreational hunting in national parks

The following document seeks to profile our experience and capability relevant to state-wide pest animal management.

While we specifically focus on deer management we would also be pleased to assist with management strategies for non-deer species including wild cats, pigs, dogs and foxes. In addition, we could even assist in monitoring activities for invasive weeds in the areas we hunt in by actively providing the Department with regular data on sightings.

1. Assisting in the development and implementation of cost effective and outcomes focused deer management programs

The ADA has a long and successful involvement in a number of programs targeting the effective management of deer populations across Australia. Currently, the ADA works effectively with government on deer management programs (both monitoring and control) in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory.

Some examples include:

State	Activity
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Actuating the adoption of a deer management strategy by the Government ▶ Developing the PBGM for effective deer management and control ▶ Advancing the Memorandum of Cooperation with Parks Victoria as a framework for deer management within Parks including joint monitoring programs
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conserving the historical herds of fallow deer and implementing strategies for eradication of all other deer species ▶ Assisting with the implementation of NRM State deer strategy in conjunction with all stakeholders through representation on advisory bodies and provision of expertise

State	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Facilitating effective management of deer on private and public land to minimise impact on agricultural practices and the environment
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Using the Game Council module NRE coal mine Wonga Willi West Dapto. Highly supervised 400 Rusa deer taken on just 4 acres (2011-2013) ▶ Undertaking ongoing deer control for the University of Wollongong to protect rain forest land. Note: 600 Rusa deer taken (2007-2013) ▶ Undertaking ongoing rabbit control as required at Wollamba TAFE ▶ Various controls on fallow deer, pigs and starlings
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Inducing appropriate classification status for wild deer through legislative change o contribute to development of management plans for sustainable use of deer
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establishment of an Indigenous People’s Hunter Education Program on the Tiwi Islands. ADA is training the indigenous peoples to hunt buffalo and assisting in the establishment of a Tiwi Island abattoir to process the meat. Meat is then sold to the locals with the primary aim to increase the dietary nutrition of the Tiwi Islanders to combat kidney disease and provide employment on the island

NSW

In NSW, the ADA NSW Riverina Branch has partnered with Forestry NSW to successfully monitor the long-term impact of pest animals on fragile environmental features in State Forests east of Tumbarumba and Tumut. This partnership was established in 2012 and involves frequent monitoring by volunteers, both in the forest and using remote cameras involving placing trail cameras and servicing these on sensitive areas to monitor potential damage to the biodiversity by both feral and native species. Forestry NSW acknowledges that the partnership has made “a valuable contribution to the amount of data we’re able to collect and over the long term, will increase our knowledge on how pest animals use and impact these fragile areas.” For more information on our partnership please see Attachment 1.

2. Conducting targeted research to further ascertain the threat of wild deer

While anecdotal evidence suggests deer are increasing in area of distribution within NSW we believe that further scientific based and study needs to be conducted to determine the magnitude and intensity of any increasing distribution.

It is only then that properly managed and effective management programs can be successfully implemented.

The Australian Deer Research Foundation (ADRF) - owned by the ADA - is an independent non-profit company which was formed in 1987 to promote the status, conservation and sustainable management of wild deer in Australia. Its objectives include undertaking and encouraging research into the biology and

behavioural aspects of deer species and their relationships within the Australian environment.

We offer this research capability for use by the Commission. We believe this would provide a number of distinct advantages:

- ▶ Providing detailed data which assists in prioritisation and determining the most cost effective solution
- ▶ Supporting an outcomes based approach where evaluation and reporting can be performed with tangible data
- ▶ Assisting with accountability where all involved parties understand their roles and responsibilities and are held accountable for achieving results

We would be happy to provide more detailed information on our research capability upon request.

3. Undertaking deer management education and training programs under the DPI Leap program

All ADA branches within NSW are currently accredited as Approved Hunting Organisations (AHO's) by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002.

In addition, we are currently in the process of becoming an Accredited Hunter LEAP Provider through the Game Management Unit of the NSW DPI. This will see members from all branches accredited as LEAP Trainers and able to facilitate training courses on behalf of the NSW Government.

In the past we have worked with the Game Council and were accredited to deliver training on behalf of the NSW Game Council under the Outreach Program.

Our Branch Meetings often have an educational focus and this presents a structured opportunity to deliver any training and education to our members. We would be happy to work with Government to ensure that any education and training is appropriately rolled out through these forums. As well, the Sydney Branch currently runs an Annual Hunter Education Course that is based on the annual acclaimed Victorian Hunter Education Course.

4. Supporting the implementation of recreational hunting in national parks

Increasing recreational hunting will have a positive economic impact on New South Wales, particularly in regional areas.

This is evidenced in Victoria, where there has been a significant contribution to their social and economic well-being, not just the impact on the environment. Attached is a study published by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Victoria in March 2014 which estimates that the Licensed Game Hunters, injected a \$417 million revenue into the economy of Victoria.

Further, the study shows that there were an estimated 1,115 jobs (full-time equivalent) generated directly by hunting-related expenditure with a further 1,268 jobs stemming from flow-on employment, giving a total employment impact of 2,382 jobs.

Unfortunately, there is no such accurate and up to date data of the economic and other benefits of hunting provides to NSW. We suggest that the Natural Resources Commission implements a study to provide empirical data in this area. Again, this is something that could be supported by the ADRF.

Such research and evidence based data would show how implementing recreational hunting in National Park aligns to your “Guiding Principles” of Pest Management within NSW particularly in providing triple bottom line outcomes.

A change in philosophy of allowing appropriately skilled and licensed hunters to hunt within NSW National Parks would benefit all stakeholders, including the economy. Further work would be encouraged and assisted by ADA to benefit all stakeholders.

ADA have a long term and successful track record of constructing the guiding principles, documents and legislation to move this to successful completion for the benefit of all stakeholders across the triple bottom line.

Below we identify a high level process to move the implementation of recreational hunting in National Parks forward in NSW.

The way forward – implementing recreational hunting in National Parks

- A. Identify the problem
- B. Appoint a co-ordinating local body that involves the local government body and local stakeholders
- C. Prepare the risk management plan
- D. Put the approved control method into place and recruit the approved volunteer hunters
- E. Collect data to substantiate if progress is being made
- F. Be prepared to improve the process to increase returns
- G. Identify how the process could be streamlined and improved
- H. Prepare a report at the end of the control program. This would include a budget.

We would be happy to be involved at any level in the future activities undertaken by the Commission.

Future consultation

We appreciate the opportunity to be involved in such an important initiative for the people and wildlife of NSW.

Should you have any questions about our submission document or seek further information please contact:

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Attachments

1. Forestry Corporation Press Release: Partnership helps protect forest environment
2. The economic value of recreational hunting: Estimating the economic impact of hunting in Victoria in 2013
3. Certificate of Currency – Public Liability Insurance