



NATIONAL FERAL DEER ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP

The NFDAP working group has 12 members representing a range of national stakeholder groups:

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WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER

Feral deer (termed wild deer in Tasmania and Victoria) are spreading across Australia, leading many farmers, conservationists and rural communities to regard them as Australia's next potential rabbit. To shine a light on the issue, a National Feral Deer Coordinator program was funded by the Australian Government, through the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions.

Since recently starting in the new role of National Deer Management Coordinator (based in the SA Department for Primary Industries and Regions), I have been speaking with groups and organisations from across Australia to understand the feral deer distribution, impacts, successes of local feral deer control programs and how to best support the fight against feral deer population growth, and stop their spread.

Over recent months, a national Working Group has begun developing a National Feral Deer Action Plan. We anticipate a draft will be available soon for stakeholders to provide feedback. This Plan is focused on supporting farmers, communities, organisations and government agencies to stop the spread and growing impacts of feral deer.

I hope this series of newsletters helps celebrate our successes, highlight our challenges, and share ideas on solutions to managing impacts of feral deer. I look forward to sharing your stories across the country.

Annelise



R & D NEWS

The [deer aggregator](#) is a new tool being trialled to attract deer into one place so that targeted ground shooting can reliably occur in a chosen location.

The R & D project is funded through Centre for Invasive Species Solutions, led by Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA). The feed structure attracts deer to aggregate them which will facilitate targeted ground control.

This will be an affordable, user friendly tool to support control of feral deer, and which excludes non-target native animals. Field trials are underway around Australia.



DID YOU KNOW?

The [latest mapping](#) by NSW Department of Primary Industries found the distribution of feral deer (6 species) has increased by 35 per cent between 2016 and 2020. Feral deer now inhabit 22 per cent of NSW. Fallow deer are most widespread and their range has spread by 60 per cent since 2016.



NEIGHBOURS WORKING TOGETHER

The Limestone Coast (in SA) has about 25,000 feral deer that impact agricultural production, biodiversity areas and road safety. Feral deer also attract illegal hunters and damage infrastructure and fences. Over the last decade, the community, the Limestone Coast Landscape Board and National Parks and Wildlife have coordinated aerial and ground shooting to manage these impacts. The region is also trialling trapping and harvesting.

The Board organises aerial and ground shooting programs across approximately 150,000 ha of public and private land, removing about 2000 feral deer each year.

In 2019, several farmers engaged a commercial feral deer harvester to work across their properties as part of a grant funded project. Initially a State Deer Coordinator liaised with the harvester to facilitate farm access and biosecurity protocols. Once relationships, trust and communication systems were built, the harvester then liaised directly with the farmer group.

There is still much work to be done, and the Board is looking to increase the scale and intensity of feral deer control through aerial and professional ground shooting programs, together with landholders.

The partnership between the Board, state agencies and landholders to develop a control program that uses multiple control strategies has improved community cohesion and capacity to control the pest.

Around the country

SENATE ENQUIRY ON FERAL DEER, PIGS, GOATS

A new [senate enquiry report](#) recommends that spread and impacts of feral deer be tackled head on by:

- Improving data on the spread and impact of feral deer.
- Improving coordination of feral deer management.
- Listing feral deer as Key Threatening Process (EPBC Act)
- Removing feral deer in World Heritage Areas, areas of national significance and biodiversity hotspots.
- Supporting research to improve feral deer control.

MOMENTUM IN VICTORIA

The **Victorian Deer Control Network** was launched in May, with an aim to share information and collaborate on deer control, management and advocacy, and to reduce impacts of deer. If you wish to join the 60 members, [apply here](#)

IN THE MEDIA

[Feral deer in the headlines: Australia's 'slow-moving plague' is being noticed](#) The Guardian, 5 July 2021

[Deer seen running through inner Melbourne](#) ABC News, 6 June 2021

[RSPCA slams cruel archer who shot young deer with arrow](#), Jimboomba Times, 8 June 2021

[Feral animals under the chopper spotlight](#) About Regional, 18 March 2021

[Tasmanians urged to report sightings of feral deer](#) The Tasmanian Times, 11 March 2021

[Deer not a 'cute novelty' warn farmers](#) The Canberra Times, 1 March 2021

NSW Deer Masterclass for Local Land Services (LLS)

The LLS staff who attended a NSW-DPI deer control course in Tamworth, in May, learnt practical and theoretical ways to monitor and control feral deer, as well as biology and identification. Deer courses are being planned in other states - stay tuned.

NEW DEER PLANS

The [Victorian Deer Control Strategy](#) was released in late 2020 to reduce damage done by growing numbers of deer.

Do you live in the NSW Tweed area? Check out the [Northern Rivers Feral Deer Plan](#) to stop deer establishing.

The [Tasmanian Deer Management Plan](#) is being reviewed.

Not new, but worth highlighting - The long standing, collaborative [Illawarra Wild Deer Management Program](#) (NSW) has kicked some great goals and paves the way for other urban peri-deer control programs.

