



WHY IS PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Pest animals impose a number of negative impacts on the NSW environment, economy and community. Their impact on primary production and our natural environment can be severe, creating biosecurity risks through spreading weeds and disease, preying on native animals and livestock, land erosion and waterway degradation.

Pest animal control is just one aspect of an integrated approach to managing primary production and protecting natural resource systems.

NSW GOVERNMENT RESPONSE: STATE-WIDE REVIEW OF PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

Natural Resources Commission

OVERVIEW

The NSW Government recognises the importance of protecting our economy, environment and the community from the risks posed by pest animals, and is committed to delivering effective pest animal management in NSW into the future.

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) conducted an independent, state-wide review of the management of pest animals in NSW. In 2016, it provided a comprehensive report to Government identifying key focus areas and 33 recommendations for opportunities to improve pest animal management across all land tenures.

The NSW Government is developing an extensive reform package with a regional planning focus that is designed to foster community participation in safeguarding the State from biosecurity risk, including the threats posed by pest animals.

Commencement of the new *Biosecurity Act 2015* (NSW) and supporting regulation in 2017 will provide a robust risk-based categorisation of non-indigenous terrestrial vertebrates.

These legislative, governance and operational reforms are outlined in the Government's response to the NRC review and reflect the Government's commitment to delivering improved biosecurity outcomes, and strategic and coordinated pest animal management.

To enable effective delivery of pest animal management in NSW and to complement implementation of the biosecurity reform package, the Government is employing a range of actions and measures across a number of key action areas:

- » Strengthened governance and regional planning approach
- » Improved information management
- » Engaged regions, land managers and communities
- » Responsive, innovative and targeted pest animal management

KEY ACTION AREAS

1. Strengthened governance and regional planning approach

The new NSW biosecurity framework presents an opportunity to strengthen governance of pest management at the state level, as well as allowing DPI to take the lead and support pest management actions at the regional level. Commencement of the new Biosecurity Act and supporting regulation in 2017 will also provide for a robust risk-based categorisation of non-indigenous terrestrial vertebrates.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Local Land Services (LLS) will continue to work together to coordinate and deliver pest animal management across NSW. DPI has primary responsibility for administering invasive species and biosecurity legislation, policy, training, research and education. LLS will lead on the delivery of regional pest animal management plans and assist land managers with on-ground detection and control of pests.

- » Establish the State Pest Animal Committee to complement the State Weeds Committee, and revitalise State oversight of pest management (*Recommendation 2*)

- » Develop 11 regional pest animal management plans that are adapted and targeted to each region's needs, in consultation with biosecurity stakeholders (*Recommendation 4*)
- » Develop a NSW Deer Management Strategy and other supporting documentation to provide guidance to stakeholders on the impacts of wild deer and management techniques (*Recommendation 16*)



2. Improved surveillance and information management

To help manage the risks from pest animals, NSW seeks to improve identification, diagnostic, surveillance, reporting and tracing systems, as well as strengthening biosecurity science and research capabilities.

- » Improve pest animal surveillance, by using infra-red technologies, to identify and monitor pest species activity and abundance (*Recommendation 6*)
- » Incorporate LLS pest animal data into the NSW Biosecurity Information System (*Recommendation 7*)
- » Collaborate with the Australian Government and other states and territories through the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (*Recommendation 28*)
- » Update state-level pest animal distribution and density maps and make these publicly available (*Recommendation 28*)

3. Engaged regions, engaged land managers, and engaged communities

The NSW Government will help industries and the community manage biosecurity risks by building awareness about biosecurity. It will lead and coordinate prevention, preparedness, response and recovery programs for outbreaks of significant emergency pests.

- » Deliver the new regional planning approach and regional pest animal management plans for each LLS region and promote community engagement (*Recommendation 4*)
- » Develop training materials for public/private land managers and the broader community to enable effective discharge of the general biosecurity duty (*Recommendation 9, 11 and 12*)
- » Develop community engagement materials that build on information already available to raise awareness about pest animal risks and best practice management on NSW Government and PestSmart Connect websites (*Recommendation 11*)

4. Responsive, innovative and targeted pest animal management

Under the general biosecurity duty, any person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised.

- » Suspend clauses in the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* that limit the methods of controlling deer in areas where regional pest animal plans identify impacts to productive land, the environment, and the community (*Recommendation 16*)
- » Promote responsible cat ownership and minimise increases in the feral cat population by investing in the online NSW Pet Registry; stop breeders selling cats without micro-chips to pet shops; provide grants for councils to target micro-chipping, registration and de-sexing; and support the development of education materials (*Recommendation 21*)
- » Finalisation and release of the next iteration of the NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy (*Recommendation 23*)
- » Maintain core funding of approximately \$700,000 per annum for the DPI Vertebrate Pest Research Unit, which also helps leverage significant external funding (*Recommendation 28*)
- » Actively collaborate with the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS), including supporting research on detection and prevention strategies, and the expansion of PestSmart portal and FeralScan (*Recommendation 28*)
- » Continue to be closely involved in national initiatives to assess the methods of pest animal control (*Recommendation 28*)
- » Promote national consistency in techniques and standard operating procedures, to provide simplified compliance requirements for industry and to enable contractors to work across jurisdictional boundaries (*Recommendation 28*)
- » Re-purpose or replace the Special Purpose Pest Insect Rate with a new or revised rate that allows for the continuation of current state-wide pest locust management and for new investment in pest management activities, while not increasing the current rate amount (*Recommendation 32*)



WILD DEER MANAGEMENT

The NRC review made recommendations for managing wild deer as a pest animal (*Recommendation 16*). Under NSW's new risk-based biosecurity framework, pest animal species will not be specifically listed as pests under legislation. Instead, in areas where deer are having adverse impacts, they will be identified and managed as pests in regional pest animal management plans.

DPI will proactively work with local stakeholders in wild deer hotspots to develop deer management plans that identify appropriate control methods. This will include assisting landholders to manage the impacts of wild deer by suspending requirements to abide by certain game licence conditions.

A NSW Deer Management Strategy will be developed in consultation with Government and non-Government stakeholders to provide guidance on the impacts of wild deer, identify knowledge gaps and outline best practice management techniques.

Updated materials to support the re-developed NSW Ecological Deer Management (EDM) program will provide specific advice on available management tools and hunting regulations.

Wild deer will be retained in Schedule 3 Part 1 of the NSW *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*. Hunters will continue to require a licence to hunt wild deer on private land, with DPI and the NSW Police Force continuing to oversee compliance.

DID YOU KNOW?

- » Landholders, members of their household and employees of a property will continue to be exempt from game hunting licence requirements for hunting deer on their own property.
- » There are 9 LGAs where game hunting licence restrictions have already been suspended, including Port Macquarie/Hastings, Tenterfield, Glen Innes/Severn, Upper Hunter, Liverpool Plains, Snowy Valleys, Bega Valley, Snowy Monaro and Wollongong.
- » Individuals or groups outside those 9 LGAs can apply for a suspension of game licence hunting restrictions to make deer control easier by allowing: changes to the hunting seasons for several species; use of spotlights or electronic devices; hunting of game fleeing fire or smoke; use of aircraft, watercraft or motor vehicles; use of baits, lures or decoys; and hunting at night.
- » DPI Game Licensing Unit can assist landholders develop deer management plans and with the suspension of deer hunting restrictions for licensed hunters.
- » Visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting for more information.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

- » NSW INVASIVE SPECIES PLAN
- » BIOSECURITY REGULATION - Mandatory Measures
- » EXISTING NSW REGIONAL WILD DEER MANAGEMENT PLANS [eg Port Macquarie and Illawarra]
- » ECOLOGICAL DEER MANAGEMENT [EDM] PROGRAM

- EDM Policy
- Primefact EDM concept

PRIVATE/NON-DECLARED PUBLIC LANDS

- Management plan template
- Primefacts: Suspension of regulations, Managing deer on private land
- Procedures: Suspension of regulations
- EDM Manual

DECLARED PUBLIC LAND

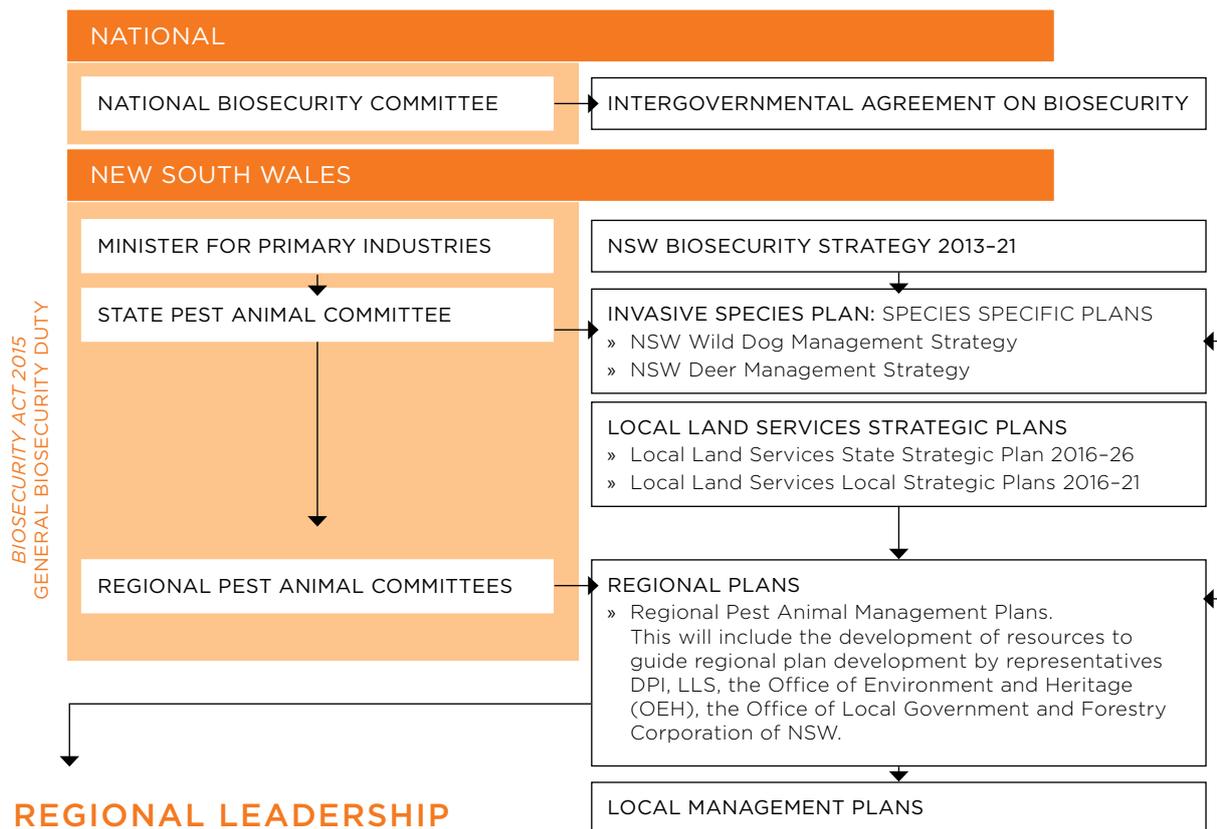
- Primefacts and Procedures on access and conditions

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

- » Centre for Invasive Species Solutions [formerly Invasive Animals CRC]
- Research program informed by rational wild deer research and innovation priorities identified at the National Wild Deer Management Workshop
- PestSmart Connect toolkit [Best Practice deer management guide]
- FeralScan for deer [under development]



COMPREHENSIVE PEST MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL DELIVERY

Under the new biosecurity framework, management of established pest animals is most effectively prioritised at the regional level. Regional pest animal management planning will be led by LLS.

Development of the regional pest animal management plans will begin in 2017 with the establishment of the State Pest Animal Committee (replacing the Pest Animal Council) and Regional Pest Animal Committees in each LLS region.

The State Pest Animal Committee will provide advice on best practice terrestrial and freshwater pest animal management as well as oversee the regional pest animal management planning process. The Regional Pest Animal Committees will coordinate the development of regional-specific plans.

In response to the NRC review recommendation 4, a regional plan template will be collaboratively developed by relevant agencies, informed by the regional weed management planning process, to ensure a consistent approach.

Regional pest animal management plans will:

- » guide investment decisions for existing government, industry and individual landholder resources that can be dedicated to co-ordinated pest animal management;
- » have an integrated management approach and consider all control options available to target the risks identified in each region
- » be developed in consultation with community stakeholders and respond to the risks present in each LLS region; ensure that pest animal management tools, actions, and investments are catered to the needs and impacts experienced in each region, and ensure that investment is targeted and efficient;
- » provide guidance on how both public and private land managers can meet their general biosecurity duty;
- » identify the key commitments for pest animal management over the period of the plans;
- » operate with regional strategic weed management plans, to deliver comprehensive invasive species planning for each of the LLS regions across the State.





FURTHER INFORMATION:

The full NSW Government response to the NRC review is available on the DPI website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity.

For more information on deer hunting regulations and game licensing, visit the DPI Game Licensing Unit web page at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting or phone 02 6391 3750.

For general inquiries on vertebrate pests in NSW, you can phone the DPI Invasive Plants and Animals inquiry line on 1800 680 244.

