**Game managers and hunters welcome Tasmania’s bold and progressive new deer plan**

Australia’s peak wild deer management and hunting organisation have welcomed Tasmania’s new [wild fallow deer management plan](https://cog-live.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/n/1446/2022/Mar/03/Tasmanian%20Wild%20Fallow%20Deer%20Management%20Plan%202022-27.pdf), praising it as a “practical, pragmatic framework” which overwhelmingly “gets the balance right”.

The *Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Management Plan 2022-27* sets contemporary objectives for managing wild fallow deer in Tasmania over the next five years.

The Australian Deer Association (ADA) Tasmanian Coordinator, Scott Freeman, thanked Premier Gutwein and Minister Barnett, saying that the leaders had

*“Put their faith in Tasmania’s hunting community to play a key role in maintaining deer numbers at a sustainable level where it is desired to do so and in helping to dramatically decrease abundance in areas where wild deer pose a problem”.*

**Key Points:**

The new plan gets balance right and sets a pragmatic, workable framework

Hunters excited about renewed opportunities to partner with landholders and government to deliver triple-bottom-line benefits for Tasmania

The hyped rhetoric of the Invasive Species Council and the Bob Brown Foundation was dismissed in favour of practical solutions that will work for Tasmanians on the ground

Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud made a bizarre, misguided and misinformed contribution to the discussion

The Plan aims to minimise the wild fallow deer population in areas with significant natural values and peri-urban areas, to address the economic, environmental and public safety impacts associated with the growth and increased distribution of deer populations in Tasmania and to recognise that deer are an important recreational hunting resource

The Plan has been developed through a staged approach, which included extensive stakeholder and community consultation.

Targeted stakeholder consultation – key stakeholders, including the Tasmanian Game Council, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, hunting groups, conservationists, foresters and the general community, provided input into the Draft Plan.

Public forums – over 200 people attended public forums at Bothwell, Longford, Ulverstone, Brighton and St Marys.

Release of the Draft Plan for comment – community members and groups from across the state had the opportunity to provide input through written submissions, community forums and one-on-one conversations. Feedback was also sought on potential actions and priorities to inform the Implementation Strategy development.

Release of the Final Plan – more than 300 submissions were received during the public consultation period, helping to inform the development of the final Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Management Plan.

Release of the Implementation Strategy – the Department will prepare an Implementation Strategy outlining the specific timelines, priorities, actions, resourcing requirements, and evaluation/reporting processes to deliver the five-year plan. The Implementation Strategy will be released within the next six months.

The ADA is looking forward to continuing to work with the Tasmanian Government and other stakeholders on the implementation of the plan, including

Close involvement with the project manager to ensure the success of the plan

Close collaboration with private and public land managers to reach the goals set within each of the plan’s zones

Extending ADA’s National [Deer Management Initiative](https://cog-live.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/n/1446/2020/Apr/19/n6qxKsxAVkv4sxozXyOV.pdf) into Tasmania to enhance the value of recreational deer hunters to the community

Supporting the Tasmanian Deer Farmers Council and farmed venison industry to support its growth and development of local processing to support a safe, consistent, truly Tasmanian quality venison product

**Invasive Species Council leans on ideology**

Predictably, but disappointingly, the plan's release has not pleased everyone. Too often, when arrangements strike a reasonable balance, some groups cling to ideology rather than moving forward pragmatically. The Invasive Species Council (ISC) is a small, inner urban-based political lobby group that shares an office with the Australian Greens. Late last year, the ISC partnered with the Bob Brown Foundation in a failed attempt to impose an unrealistic, ideologically driven, factually flawed and error-riddled [‘alternative’ deer plan](https://www.austdeer.com.au/2021/08/11/1383631/bob-browns-deer-report-an-absurd-and-alarmist-attempt-to-bully-the-government) on Tasmania. Speaking from his base in Victoria, the ISC’s ‘project officer’ Peter Jacobs used the release of the plan to take another swing at both the Tasmanian Government and recreational hunters

*“This plan needs to be stronger and include a significant commitment to ongoing funding for professional pest control and community-led programs, not simply appeasements to the hunting lobby”.*

The ADA’s Scott Freeman slammed the Invasive Species Council for sowing division and failing to understand the appreciate the realities of the close relationships between Tasmania’s hunters and landholders.

*“They (the ISC) seem more intent on making headlines and scoring political hits than they are on actually aiding practical management on the ground,” Mr Freeman said.*

*“Recreational hunting is not the sole solution to issues with wild deer, but there is a long and successful history of collaboration through property-based game management programs that have delivered real triple-bottom-line benefits for Tasmania. Simply ignoring that reality or, worse still, painting it as somehow untoward and self-interested is just needlessly divisive. There is an opportunity for the Invasive Species Council to use whatever skills they have to work with all stakeholders for better outcomes. We hope that they take that opportunity up rather than sitting over on the mainland chasing some ideological purity and taking potshots at people in Tasmania who are doing things”.*

**Littleproud falls short on the details**

Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud also made an unwelcome and misinformed contribution to the discussion during a visit to Tasmania this week. At a doorstop interview

Minister Littleproud displayed an evident lack of knowledge about the new deer plan and an even more apparent lack of understanding of the fundamentals of wildlife management. He did, however, display a clear willingness to offer his opinion to anyone with a microphone.

Minister Littleproud has made a name for himself as the darling of the [Invasive Species Council](https://www.austdeer.com.au/2021/05/28/1383327/credibility-counts-in-management-debate) (ISC), who, themselves, made a [failed attempt late last year](https://www.austdeer.com.au/2021/08/11/1383631/bob-browns-deer-report-an-absurd-and-alarmist-attempt-to-bully-the-government), in partnership with the Greens and the Bob Brown Foundation to impose their ideology on Tasmanian game management. The Minister throws money at the ISC’s pet projects that typically involve new ways to talk about problems rather than new ways to act on them. He was regurgitating their talking points when he said:

*“We announced twenty million dollars, ah, for feral pests (sic) and I’m sick of plans, I actually want to see, ah, you know, pla (sic), animals eradicated, whether that be with lead or any other means”.*

We could examine at length the Minister's apparent lack of a fundamental understanding of the realities of wildlife management, but that would be to give his words and his ongoing influence far too much credit and more of our time than they deserve.

Of equal concern to the Minister’s ignorance were his contemptuous comments about recreational deer hunters and the deep history of collaborative management in Tasmania:

*“The recreational shooters can be part of the solution as well, ah, in terms of eradication, I’m sure we’ll find something else for them to aim at once we’ve eradicated deer”.*

Minister Littleproud’s loose words might be somewhat forgivable if he practised what he preached. The reality is that he does not.

In his first budget as Agriculture Minister, he swelled the already bloated bureaucracy of the ‘pest industry’, spending $7.6 million creating yet another department in Canberra and a staggering $36.5 million on ‘analytics’.

His subsequent work as Minister regarding wildlife management has been heavy on rhetoric and spending on bureaucracies and very light on any practical actions. No wonder the Invasive Species Council loves him.

**Continuing to drive Tasmanian deer management forward**

The ADA has also identified several matters not directly mentioned in the new plan that the organisation will pursue with the Tasmanian Government over the coming weeks, months and years. This includes

The establishment of a working group and monitoring for the implementation of the plan (what gets measured gets done).

The implementation of an ‘E-Tag’ electronic tagging system for recording deer harvest in Tasmania – enabling real-time, accurate data.

The development of ADA Hunter Education Workshops across Tasmania.

Making available access for recreational hunters to areas in Zone 1 that have been reclassified as World Heritage Area. We note that the ISC has made a nonsensical statement on the management of wild deer in the World Heritage Area that again betrays their ideological hatred of recreational hunters – *“We are concerned that despite a commitment to eradicate deer within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, a large portion of the property will continue to provide for deer hunting”* – effectively they want the deer removed from the World Heritage Area…but they don’t want hunters to kill them.

Reclassify suitable Crown Land Reserves as State Game Reserves.

Introduce a New South Wales ‘R’ licence style licencing and booking system for public land deer hunting on Crown Land Reserves and State Game Reserves that are not currently available for deer hunting.

Reclassify land managed by Sustainable Timber Tasmania for recreational hunting use.

We stand committed to working with Minister Barnett, the TDAC, the Game Council, the TFGA, environment groups and all Tasmanians to deliver tangible benefits for the Tasmanian environment, economy and community.