26 November 2026

The Hon. Gavin Pearce MP
Tasmanian Government

Subject: Wild Fallow Deer Management Reform

Dear Minister Pearce,

We write collectively as key stakeholders with an interest in the future management of wild fallow deer in Tasmania.

We acknowledge that Tasmania's growing deer population presents challenges for landholders, agricultural producers and the environment. We recognise that changes to the current management framework are necessary to ensure deer populations can be managed effectively, while preserving the significant recreational, economic and cultural value of deer hunting in Tasmania.

As stakeholders representing a range of interests, we believe there is an opportunity to achieve meaningful reform through a balanced and practical approach.

Our collective position is that wild fallow deer should retain their classification as partly protected wildlife, while removing the existing restrictions relating to hunting seasons, geographic zones and tagging requirements. This is to be reviewed after 5 years.

We believe this approach would deliver a more flexible and effective management framework without requiring the complete removal of the species' protected status.

We support the following reforms:

1. Retaining Partly Protected Status

Maintaining the existing classification of wild fallow deer under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*, recognising deer as an established and valued hunting resource while providing a framework for their ongoing management.

2. Removing Current Prescribed Hunting Seasons

Introduce a 12-month open season, allowing **all** deer to be harvested throughout the year, providing greater opportunities for recreational hunters and landholders to respond to population pressures and agricultural impacts as they arise.

This should include the year-round harvesting of immature male deer, without additional permits or restrictions, including on public land. Historically, restrictions on harvesting spikes have limited opportunities for effective deer management. Removing these restrictions would increase harvesting opportunities and assist in controlling deer populations.

3. Minimum Calibre Requirements

We also propose reviewing the current minimum calibre requirement from .243 (6mm) to .224 (5.56mm) for does/antlerless deer with an appropriate 55 grain projectile, to provide greater flexibility for authorised hunters undertaking deer management alongside other agricultural wildlife control activities, subject to appropriate animal welfare and safety standards.

4. Removing Geographic Hunting Zones

Eliminating unnecessary geographic restrictions to provide greater consistency and flexibility in deer management across Tasmania, subject to appropriate land access and safety requirements.

5. Removing Tagging Requirements

Abolishing the current tagging system to reduce administrative burdens on hunters and government agencies and encourage greater participation in deer management activities.

6. Single Spotlighting Permit for Primary Producers and Landowners

Introducing a single, ongoing permit allowing primary producers and landowners to undertake or authorise spotlighting for deer management on private property.

We propose a simplified system whereby landowners can download the relevant permit from the NRE Tasmania website and issue authorisation to approved hunters undertaking deer management on their behalf.

Importantly, we **do not support** extending night hunting to public land, given the associated public safety risks.

7. Strengthening Wildlife and Rural Crime Enforcement

We recognise that expanded hunting opportunities must be accompanied by appropriate enforcement to protect rural communities, landowners and legitimate hunters.

We propose that revenue collected through recreational wildlife licensing, including deer licences, be directed towards strengthening wildlife and rural crime enforcement.

This should include establishing a dedicated Rural Crime Database to improve reporting and intelligence gathering relating to wildlife offences, trespassing, stock theft, illegal timber removal and other rural crimes.

We also support increasing enforcement resources to enable proactive patrols, improved monitoring and effective investigation of offences, particularly in areas identified through rural crime reporting.

We believe these reforms represent a reasonable compromise between the interests of landholders, hunters, conservation stakeholders and the broader Tasmanian community.

Importantly, retaining partly protected status would ensure deer continue to be recognised as a managed wildlife resource, rather than simply being treated as a pest species.

We are concerned that removing the partly protected classification entirely could have unintended consequences for the future of private landowner rights, recreational hunting, responsible wildlife management and the economic activity associated with deer hunting in regional Tasmania.

At the same time, we recognise that maintaining the status quo is not a sustainable response to growing deer numbers and the concerns being raised by agricultural producers.

We encourage the Government to consider this collective position as part of its current review and to work collaboratively with stakeholders before making any final determination regarding the future classification of wild fallow deer.

We stand ready to engage constructively with the Government to develop a practical, balanced and enduring approach to deer management in Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories

Representatives of Tasmanian hunting, agricultural and stakeholder organisations

Signatories

Wayne Turale
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