



Australian Deer Association Inc.  
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11/11/2025

## **Enabling the Processing of Recreationally Harvested Wild Venison**

Submitted by: Australian Deer Association

Funding Request: \$250,000

Responsible Department: Agriculture Victoria

Date: November 2025

### **Executive Summary**

The Australian Deer Association requests a budget allocation of \$250,000 to Agriculture Victoria to undertake the necessary policy and regulatory development enabling the processing of recreationally harvested wild venison in Victoria.

This work will build upon existing commitments within the Sustainable Hunting Action Plan (SHAP) and draw upon successful international models, particularly New Zealand's established system, which safely allows for the processing and distribution of wild venison sourced from recreational hunters.

This initiative supports the Victorian Government's goals of sustainable wildlife management, responsible hunting, regional economic development, and waste minimisation.

### **Background**

Recreational deer hunting is an integral part of Victoria's culture, economy, and wildlife management strategy. Each year, Victorian hunters harvest over 100,000 wild deer, providing significant environmental and social benefits through population control and outdoor recreation.

Despite the scale and potential of this activity, current regulations prohibit the processing or commercial use of venison from recreationally harvested deer. This restriction can result in large volumes of high-quality meat being wasted and prevents the development of regional micro-industries that could add value to this resource.

New Zealand's proven model demonstrates that safe, regulated systems for the use of recreationally harvested venison are possible and practical. Adapting this framework for Victoria would enable the full utilisation of harvested deer while maintaining food safety and compliance standards.

### **Rationale**

This proposal advances the Government's objectives under the Sustainable Hunting Action Plan, particularly commitments to:

- Support ethical and sustainable hunting practices
- Maximise the benefits of hunting for the community and the environment
- Improve public understanding of responsible hunting

A policy enabling the processing of recreationally harvested wild venison would:

- Reduce waste by ensuring full utilisation of harvested animals
- Enhance population management outcomes by incentivising ethical harvest
- Create regional economic opportunities through small-scale processing and food businesses
- Support public health and food security with access to a sustainable protein source
- Demonstrate environmental responsibility and government leadership in sustainable use of natural resources

### Objectives

The proposed funding will allow Agriculture Victoria to:

1. Conduct a regulatory and legislative review to identify required amendments and best-practice models.
2. Engage stakeholders, including hunters, processors, food safety authorities, and public health experts.
3. Develop policy options and risk assessments to ensure safe and practical implementation.
4. Prepare an implementation roadmap including pilot program design, training requirements, and public communication materials.

This will result in a comprehensive, evidence-based framework ready for Government consideration and rollout.

### Expected Outcomes

Agriculture Victoria will deliver:

- A detailed policy framework for the safe processing of recreationally harvested wild venison
- Recommendations for any legislative or regulatory amendments required
- Stakeholder-supported implementation plan ready for Cabinet consideration
- Strengthened alignment with the Sustainable Hunting Action Plan and other government sustainability policies

These outcomes will support a more efficient, ethical, and community-beneficial approach to wild deer management in Victoria.



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### Alignment with Government Priorities

This initiative supports key Victorian Government policy objectives, including:

- Sustainable Hunting Action Plan – promoting responsible hunting and ethical use of harvested game.
- Agriculture Victoria's Strategic Plan – advancing innovation and sustainability in food production.
- Regional Development Priorities – fostering small business opportunities and community resilience.
- Circular Economy and Waste Reduction Goals – ensuring harvested animals are fully utilised.
- Public Health and Food Safety Objectives – ensuring safe, traceable systems for wild game meat.

### Conclusion

The processing of recreationally harvested wild venison represents a practical, science-based opportunity to strengthen Victoria's sustainable hunting framework. With an allocation of \$250,000, Agriculture Victoria can deliver the policy foundations needed to unlock environmental, social, and economic benefits while maintaining the highest standards of food safety and animal management.

This initiative reflects Victoria's reputation as a leader in evidence-based, responsible, and forward-looking natural resource management.

Sincerely,

### Sean Kilkenny

Advocacy & Deer Management  
Australian Deer Association