

Statement to Senate Committee

Senate Inquiry- Response to questions

Inquiry into the impact of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia- public hearing 14th October 2020

Author

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Response to questions

Thank you for the invitation to the Chair and Committee for inviting Greening Australia to present. Here we provide a response to Senator Urquhart's questions during the session.

Dr Elisa Raulings stated that investors would like to support native tree planting and revegetation in Tasmania but that deer are a barrier to investment because of the high associated mitigation costs and relatively poor effectiveness of these control methods. Dr Elisa Raulings presented on how Greening Australia had trialled four methods to reduce the impact of deer on revegetation, but that the costs associated with deer mitigation resulted in the cost of restoration exceeding the carbon price. Investors wishing to offset carbon emissions are investing in more cost-effective restoration locations and the consequence of this is that Tasmanian is missing out on the green economy, which is predicted to boom to \$750 million/annum by 2030.

Senator Anne Urquhart asked how many farmers will be impacted by the predicted diversion of carbon revenue away from Tasmania to 2030?

Greening Australia aims to restore 15,000 ha of land across Tasmania by 2030, which includes 10,000 ha of wildlife habitat and 5,000 ha of land restored to improve agricultural productivity¹. The majority of this work will be delivered on private land across Tasmania.

ABS data indicate that in 2017–18 there were 1,979 farms in Tasmania with an estimated value of agricultural operations of \$40,000 or more². Based on this number of farms, the average farm size and our restoration targets, we have set ourselves a goal of working with a minimum of 700 Tasmanian landholders (i.e. 1/3 of all Tasmania landholders with agricultural operations >\$40,000) by 2030 to achieve this target. Unless we can find a suitable strategy to mitigate the cost of deer in revegetation, these targeted 700 Tasmanian farmers will, in addition to being directly impacted by deer, will also lose out on diversified income streams through carbon offset funding and the productivity benefits associated with trees on farms.

¹ <https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/programs/tasmania-island-ark/>

² <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/aboutmyregion/tas#agricultural-sector>

Senator Anne Urquhart also asked how many jobs would be impacted by the predicted diversion of carbon revenue away from Tasmania to 2030?

High yielding carbon landscapes are already witnessing a rapid emergence of green economies, and integral to this economic recovery and subsequent growth is the development of a skilled workforce. A recent Ernst and Young³ study on the expected economic impacts from investment in conservation projects found:

- An average return of \$2.4 per \$1 spent
- Creation of approximately 10-16 jobs per \$1m spent
- Avoided welfare savings through job creation at a rate of return of c. \$155,000 per \$1 M spent; and
- Investments generated long term benefits for the local economy.

Greening Australia is seeking to plant 25 million trees by 2030 across Tasmania (i.e. average 1666 plants/hectare). If each plant ranges from on average, \$3-\$5 to collect seed, grow in nurseries, plant and maintain (i.e. not factoring in deer mitigation costs), we predict the funding driven to Tasmania would be \$75 - \$125 million by 2030.

Based on these numbers and the estimate of 10-16 jobs per \$1M spent, we conservatively estimate the number of jobs that could be supported through the emerging green economy in Tasmania is between 750- 2000 jobs by 2030.

³ Ernst and Young (2020). Delivering economic stimulus through conservation and land management. Economic Impact Assessment. Commissioned by Pew Charitable Foundation and other organisations.