

Environment and Communications References Committee

Answers to questions on notice

Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Committee: Environment and Communications References Committee
Inquiry: Impact of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia
Question No: 1
Hearing Date: 22 July 2020
Division/Agency: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Topic: Impact of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia - funding and programs run in World Heritage areas
Hansard Page: 25
Question Date: 22 July 2020
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

CHAIR: What specific programs are there and could you give us the amount of funding put aside for dealing with invasive species, particularly deer but also others, in World Heritage areas?

Mr Thompson: World Heritage areas have some funding directly tied to them, but they're also areas of particular attention under Regional Land Partnerships program of the National Landcare Program. I don't have the exact number with me to give you on how much money is being spent on World Heritage.

CHAIR: Are you able to take that on notice?

Mr Thompson: We're certainly able to get an estimate on notice, but there has been a focus in a number of the World Heritage areas. Quite a number of projects in the past have focused on the damage done by pigs, because they particularly hit wetlands, rain forests, and threatened and endangered species, which are part of the World Heritage values. They have been a significant part of that.

CHAIR: So that it's very clear, could we have on notice a list of programs and initiatives being run in World Heritage areas—where they are and, notionally, the level of funding? That would be helpful.

Mr Thompson: Yes. We'll take that on notice.

Answer:

The primary responsibility for the management of feral animals in Australian World Heritage areas is with the state government land management agencies that manage these properties.

This excludes the World Heritage properties managed by the Australian Government agency, Parks Australia. These properties are Kakadu National Park and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

Feral pigs, deer or goats do not occur in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

Feral pigs occur in Kakadu National Park. There are no feral deer or goats.

- Kakadu has a dedicated Integrated Feral Team to control invasive weeds and feral animals, including pigs. District rangers also conduct invasive species control as part of their day-to-day works program. Details of recent expenditure are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Kakadu National Park - recent expenditure on invasive species

Financial year	Kakadu Integrated Feral Team (Staff and expenses combined)	Annual KNP Feral Cull Project for feral buffalo, horse, cattle, donkey and pig
2019-20	\$613,000 (actual expenditure)	\$115,964.86 (actual expenditure)
2020-21	\$500,000 (budgeted expenditure)	

The Australian Government provides management funds (via a National Partnership Project Agreement) to the Wet Tropics of Australia World Heritage Area and Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority has advised that these funds are not being used for any program or initiative relating to feral deer, goats or pigs within the Wet Tropics of Australia World Heritage Area.

The Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) has advised that funds delivered via the National Partnership Project Agreement are involved in relevant projects (see Table2) in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA).

Table 2 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area – relevant projects receiving Australian Government funding

Project	Lead	Funding
ARC Linkage project LP170100301 'Protecting the Tasmanian Wilderness from an Expanding Deer population'	University of Tasmania (DPIPWE is a partner)	\$401,629
Landscape-scale assessment of target wildlife and threats in the TWWHA	DPIPWE	\$257,493
TWWHA Biosecurity Strategy	DPIPWE	\$150,678
Tasmania Wild Fallow Deer Census (includes part of the TWWHA)	DPIPWE	\$330,000

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Committee: Environment and Communications References Committee
Inquiry: Impact of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia
Question No: 2
Hearing Date: 22 July 2020
Division/Agency: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Topic: Impact of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia - general response to Graeme Samuels' interim report
Hansard Page: 25-26
Question Date: 22 July 2020
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

CHAIR: Jumping back, could you also take on notice a general response to Graeme Samuels' interim report, beyond the general comments you've made. That would be helpful as well.

Mr Thompson: I'll take that on notice, but a substantive response may have to wait until the government's actually made a response to the report.

CHAIR: I understand. See what you can do for us.

Mr Thompson: Okay

Answer:

The Interim Report on the Review of the EPBC Act has acknowledged the significant pressures on the environment including feral animal and invasive plant species. Specifically it proposes that regional plans provide for coordinated management of threats and strategic national plans may provide specific opportunities including high-level and cross-border threats, such as biosecurity or feral animals.

The independent reviewer, Professor Graeme Samuel AC, will provide his Final Report to Government in October 2020.

The Government will provide a response to the final report and its contents in due course.

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Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Committee: Environment and Communications References Committee
Inquiry: Impact of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia
Question No: 3
Hearing Date: 22 July 2020
Division/Agency: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Topic: Impact of feral deer, pigs and goats in Australia - expected time frame for finalising the model code of practice for feral deer
Hansard Page: 28
Question Date: 22 July 2020
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: Okay. In relation to the model code of practice for deer—this is in relation to a response to questions on notice that the New South Wales government was updating the model code of practice and standard operating procedures—can you tell me what the expected time frame for finalising the model code of practice for feral deer is?

Mr Thompson: I'd have to take that on notice. I know that New South Wales are finalising one for their state. Then, to generalise it or apply it in other states, it will have to be looked at in terms of other state legislation and in terms of whether there are differences in the way these things might be approached. I'll take on notice the timing for that.

Senator URQUHART: It would be great if you could take it on notice. That's all I have. Thanks, Chair.

Answer:

New South Wales has advised that its Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures for managing deer are expected to be published in early to mid 2021.

Once available, the inter-governmental Environment and Invasives Committee may be asked to consider these documents for voluntary adoption by each jurisdiction. Existing Codes of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures have been agreed by governments as guides and do not replace or override state or territory legislation. Any new Codes of Practice or Standard Operating Procedures would require the same qualifications on their endorsement.