

FOGL Values for this Inquiry

- Transparent
- Unbiased
- Emphasis on scientific evidence

Key Questions

- Does this person or group have a vested interest?
- What is the scientific evidence?

Duty of Care to the Environment and Biodiversity

- Ahead of agriculture, tourism, businesses and recreation
- Remove protection of deer as 'game'

Duty of Care: Animal Welfare

- Only most humane methods
- Evidence-based

Species databases not current

- Audit of current invasive species
- Analysis of previous approaches
- Audit of threats
- Prioritized according to harm of natural assets and biodiversity (not agriculture)

Victorian Auditor General

- Database must be updated
- Management must be improved
- Database made public
- Trial Deer Program did *not* meet EMF criteria
- Need much more detail
- Transparency
- Funding

Public funds should not be used to protect private or commercial assets

- Cost of protecting sheep – wild dogs
- Fences
- Maremma sheepdogs

Tourism is *never* an acceptable reason to allow invasive species

- Overwhelming evidence of harm
 - Flora
 - Fauna
 - Biodiversity
- Less damaging means of attracting tourists

Financial gain

Recreational pursuits

Totally unacceptable reasons

Commercial harvesting and hunting should not be promoted or accepted uncritically

Substantial scientific evidence indicates

- Both create incentives for *spreading* invasive species
- Recreational hunting *not* an effective means of invasive animal control

Recreational Hunting

- Ineffective - removes too few animals
- Ineffective – emphasis on ‘trophy’
- Bag limits protect hunting resources
- Illegal translocations for hunting
- Dispersed by hunting

- Not humane
- Incentives for increasing opportunities for hunting by spreading invasives
- Interfere with professional control
 - Altering behaviour
 - Encouraging dispersal

Recreational hunting has no scientific support as an effective means of invasive animal control

The Most effective invasive animal programs

- Intensive
- Large numbers of invasives
- Shortest time

Where shooting is deemed most humane method

ALL scientific studies indicate the shooting must be done by trained, highly skilled *professional* shooters.

No studies have found recreational hunting effective

Parks Victoria

- “. . . Ad hoc take of pest species by recreational hunting does NOT constitute effective control”.
- J. Hakel, Parks Vic, Comment #629. Discussion of non-native animal control by legal deer hunters. Webpage, Parks Victoria, 2010.

Strategic Points

- Ecological, integrated approach
- Not species-specific
- Emphasis on effective protection of biodiversity
- ‘Control’ does not automatically = positive biodiversity outcomes

Creation, exacerbation or perpetuation of invasive animal problems

- Strong, comprehensive legislation
- Commitment to prosecution

Independent Auditor

- Strong environmental credentials
- No conflicts of interest – economics, agriculture, recreation, tourism
- Funded generously

Protocols

- Evidence-based
- Involve Precautionary Principle
- Transparent in process
- Define clear goals and outcomes
- Operationalized and measurable
- Adequate funding and resources

- Carefully monitored and evaluated
- Independent Auditor
- Focus on long-term strategies
- Aim for large reductions over shortest time
- Most humane methods

Community Education Program

- Replace ignorance with understanding
- Scientific data on harm caused by invasive species
- Scientific data on limitations of control approaches
- Emphasize positive biodiversity outcomes

FOGL calls on Government to
act to protect our National Parks
and public land for their natural
values and biodiversity

Need an Invasive Species Strategy

- Protects and enhances biodiversity
- Values public natural assets above commercial interests and recreational pursuits
- Based on the best-available scientific evidence
- Adequately funded
- Overseen by Independent Auditor with strong environmental credentials