

# Joint Statement: An Urgent Call for Action on Victoria's Feral Deer Crisis

TO PREMIER ALLAN and MINISTER DIMOPOULOS,

We call for the Victorian Government to urgently fund coordinated professional control of feral deer across the state. With the feral deer population now estimated at up to one million, Victoria is facing an invasive species emergency that requires immediate intervention.

Current policies have failed to contain the spread, leading to escalating consequences for all Victorians:

- **Threats to agriculture:** Feral deer pose a severe biosecurity risk to the agricultural sector, including the potential for spreading devastating diseases such as foot and mouth disease, while actively destroying vital farming infrastructure.
- **Impacts on nature:** Fragile ecosystems are being decimated as deer drive species decline and degrade critical natural habitats.
- **Risks to road users and residents:** Feral deer cause thousands of road accidents every year, threaten community safety and impact residents by polluting vital water catchments.

The Victorian Government should reverse recent cuts to biosecurity staff and Parks Victoria positions. We need leadership that treats invasive species control as an essential service priority.

To address this crisis, we seek commitment to the following three priorities:

1. **Full funding and implementation:** Provide the necessary resources to fully implement the Victorian Deer Control Strategy.
2. **Removal of regulatory barriers:** Modernise the Wildlife Act to remove the "protected" status of feral deer, ensuring legislation no longer contradicts expert advice.
3. **Targeted eradication:** Provide dedicated funding for the full eradication of deer within the region covered by the West Victorian Deer Control Plan.

