



Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$19M FUNDING BOOST FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PEST CONTROL IN NATIONAL PARKS

The NSW Government today announced a new five year \$19.1 million funding package - including funding to bolster strict safety measures - to ensure the Supplementary Pest Control Program is properly resourced.

Environment Minister Robyn Parker said an additional \$19.1 million has been allocated to the program over five years, part of which will fund 14 new regional National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) co-ordinators, safety and regulatory signs, staff training and participant education programs.

“The package will also fund other compliance and education staff positions and includes additional resources for monitoring and review to ensure the program has a positive impact on feral animal populations in our protected areas,” Ms Parker said.

“Feral pests and animals do great harm to our national parks by destroying habitats, flora and fauna and cause more than \$600 million damage every year to agricultural land across Australia.

“For this reason, the NPWS has maintained a vigorous Pest Control Program in NSW and the rollout of the supplementary program will further bolster that program.”

Over 40,000 feral animals were culled through pest management programs from the national parks system in 2010/2011. More than 50,000 were culled in 2011/2012, including 15,000 pigs, 34,000 goats, over a thousand wild dogs, 2,700 foxes, 240 cats and 670 deer.

“Next year, with Supplementary Pest Control measures, we aim to better those numbers which will help the health of our parks, our threatened species and our natural ecosystems,” Ms Parker said.

“In line with good operational practice, the NPWS has been working through a risk assessment process to develop the best controls and conditions for the supplementary pest management program.

“Workshops with NPWS staff and experts in pest management, safety, environmental protection and risk management, are identifying the possible risks to be managed and the appropriate controls.

“The risk assessment will allow the NPWS to tailor strict controls to suit circumstances in each park. Risk assessment is a long standing practice for NPWS operations and in line with international and national risk assessment standards.”

The risk assessment and specific controls will be finalised before the program starts.

The NPWS has been working closely with the Game Council, pest and safety experts, staff and unions and consulted with the National Parks and Wildlife advisory bodies towards adopting a safe, sensible model tailored specifically to each park. Similar programs currently in operation in Victoria and South Australia have also been reviewed.

“Safety will always be paramount in managing the program,” Ms Parker said.

Some controls have already been agreed: there will be no shooting at night in national parks, no harming of native fauna, no shooting without written permission from NPWS, no shooting accompanied by dogs, no target practice, no shooting from or across public access roads, tracks or trails and no shooting from vehicles in any of the declared national parks or reserves.

“Further details of the program will be finalised after the risk assessment process has been completed. I will also seek a peer review of the program before finalising the regime of controls and commencing the 30-day notification process to declare parks available for Supplementary Pest Control,” Ms Parker said.

“Whilst I had anticipated being able to announce details of the regime of controls on 1 March 2013, I will not be doing so until after completion of the risk assessment process and subsequent peer review.

“I do not anticipate the program will start until 30 April at the earliest and I don’t make any apologies for taking the necessary time to ensure that a thorough risk assessment process is completed in respect of each park.”

As is already the case, people who kill native animals in parks will be subject to severe penalties with fines of up to \$3,300 for each offence and up to \$220,000 for killing a threatened species.

“Managed properly, Supplementary Pest Control can assist in dealing with the economic and ecological scourge of wild feral animals,” Ms Parker said.

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