



Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 4 July 2013

PEST CONTROL RULES TO BE STRICTEST IN AUSTRALIA

Environment Minister Robyn Parker today announced a strict regime of controls for the introduction of the supplementary pest control program in the state's national parks following a rigorous risk assessment process and expert advice.

Ms Parker also announced that the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will regulate and manage the program.

"New measures announced today will ensure volunteer participants are held to an equivalent high standard that currently applies to NPWS staff and contractors," Ms Parker said.

"The program will be similar to our hazard reduction operations, which use volunteers with a high level of training and competency, which is equivalent to that held by professional staff.

"Strict controls coupled with planning and direction by NPWS staff will enable more effective management of pest animals in national parks, with safety paramount in the design of the program.

"The pest control program will continue the environmentally effective scheme currently operating throughout the state under the direction of experienced NPWS staff.

"We already cull feral animals in national parks using trapping, baiting and shooting. This program will give NPWS additional volunteer resources to ensure we are doing all we can to remove pest animals from our landscape.

"In 2012, NPWS removed over 54,000 pest animals including feral pigs, dogs, cats, foxes and goats from our national parks and reserves.

"Using skilled volunteers under the direction of NPWS is one more tool in our efforts to protect native animals and plants.

"Feral pests do great harm to our national parks, impacting about 40 per cent of all threatened species.

"No volunteer can be in a national park unless they are participating in a planned pest control program, scheduled and managed by NPWS.

“The program may be made available in up to 75 – less than 10 per cent - of the state’s national parks or reserves. The majority of these parks are in the state’s west, and the program will not occur in any wilderness, world heritage or metropolitan area.

“Initially only 12 parks or reserves will be part of the program. There will be a review and report back to Cabinet before any further roll-out of the program.

“NPWS management will be able to call upon the services of licensed and experienced volunteers to assist them in carrying out pest animal control.

“No person under 18 will be allowed to participate in the program and only firearms that are currently used in NPWS operations will be permitted. This excludes the use of bows and black powder muskets.

“As with existing pest control operations, these activities will be planned and announced at least four weeks in advance.

“NPWS will provide final confirmation to neighbours and the public a minimum of 48 hours ahead of any operation.

“Similarly, any area where a pest control operation will occur will be closed to visitors on the days of these operations, with appropriate signage and road closures in place.

“The program will not occur during school holidays and is expected to commence in some parks from October.”

Parks and reserves will be zoned A or B.

Zone A: Volunteers will be part of the NPWS team and working shoulder to shoulder with experienced NPWS staff.

Zone B: Experienced and trained volunteers are supervised by NPWS staff. This will include induction and daily safety briefings. Detailed reporting, data collection and debriefing requirements will also apply. Site specific shooting plans with detailed maps will direct operations, with these being approved by NPWS regional managers consistent with regional pest strategies.