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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Taking a balanced approach to wild deer management

The Tasmanian Government is delivering on its commitment to modernise the management of Tasmania's fallow deer population with the release today of a new five-year Plan.

The first Tasmanian Wild Fallow Deer Management Plan brings together existing and contemporary management strategies to form a single point of reference for deer management in Tasmania.

The growing number and widening geographic range of wild fallow deer in the State continues to have increasing economic, environmental and public safety impact.

The Plan takes a flexible, balanced and evidence-based approach to addressing these impacts while aiming to reduce the likelihood of deer populations establishing in new areas and acknowledging that deer are an important recreational hunting resource.

For the first time, three zones will be established to underpin management of the deer population. There will be a clear focus on seeking to eradicate deer in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area given its high conservation value, as well as in peri-urban areas where deer can present an unacceptable safety risk. We will also look to partner with the Australian Government on additional management controls in the World Heritage Area.

These new zones also acknowledge that deer will continue to be managed as a sustainable hunting resource within its traditional range, as an important part of our Tasmanian way of life. Greater flexibility will also be provided to individual land owners and farmers to manage down deer numbers on a property level, where they are having an unacceptable impact on agriculture.

In recognition of the importance of implementing the Plan as a matter of priority, the Government will provide up to \$2 million towards resourcing its Actions in the upcoming Tasmanian Budget. This will include employing an officer dedicated to working with farmers and hunters to increase the take-up of property based game management plans, and support for existing deer farmers to market and showcase their product and support the creation of a Tasmanian Deer Farmers Association.

In line with the Government's commitment at the 2021 State Election, the potential wider use and sale of wild shot deer products will not be considered until the impact of the deer management strategies currently being deployed are evaluated through the implementation of the Plan.

An initial review of these strategies and their impact will occur 12 months after the commencement of the Plan and following this review and informed by its outcomes, it is the Government's intention to conduct a limited fixed-term trial to evaluate the potential for deer farmers and landholders to supply value-added wild deer products for the regulated food or restaurant trade. Further analysis will be undertaken over the next 12 months into the potential opportunities and barriers of the use and sale of wild shot deer, to further inform decision making including into food safety, regulatory and other relevant requirements.

The Plan has been developed in stages, with input from more than 300 stakeholders including community members, land managers and the Tasmanian Game Council. This feedback has been critical to the successful development of the Plan and we thank all stakeholders for giving up their time to support this process.

The Government will develop an implementation strategy outlining specific actions, timelines, priorities, resourcing requirements and reporting processes to ensure the five-year Plan is delivered. It is expected that the implementation strategy to be developed over the next 6 months.

A copy of the Plan can be found here: <https://nre.tas.gov.au/deer-plan>