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Ms Jenny Mannering
Inquiry Secretary
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Hobart TAS 7000

21st June 2016

I intend to address the following term of reference:

**The partly protected status of fallow deer
under the Wildlife (General) Regulations 2010**

My current and previous employment has dealt largely with pest control projects and wildlife / invasive species population monitoring across Australia, including; *The Macquarie Island Pest Control Project* (Tas. Parks and Wildlife), *The Save the Tasmanian Devil Program* (Dept. Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment), *Yellow Crazy Ant control* (Parks Australia), *Feral Cat control* (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service). I have also worked for many years bushwalking guiding in Tasmania, and am an avid recreational hunter. Although I am currently living and working interstate, Tasmania is and always will be, home.

I believe it is time for a shift in mentality towards the regulation of fallow deer - away from its partly protected status and to recognize deer for what they are, a feral pest, whose population is increasing in number and range. By deregulating the status of fallow deer (essentially to that of no status - such as the European hare), Tasmania will come into line with the majority of mainland states where it occurs.

It's no secret that deer are regularly moved within Tasmania in order to bolster and enhance local populations and therefore hunting opportunity. I am aware of attempts by deer hunting enthusiasts to move deer as far South as possible to enable the establishment of a population within the World Heritage Area. The idea was to increase poaching opportunities in an area where deer are unlikely to be controlled under the current legislation as well as to provide a future argument for allowing recreational hunting within National Parks and World Heritage Areas. There is no shortage of examples of fences being cut to allow farmed deer to escape into surrounding bushland where they readily establish populations and provide hunting opportunity.

These methods are working to fulfill their purpose. Partly as a result, deer numbers are increasing and their range is expanding - well outside what was once deemed their core area. I regularly see fallow deer crossing the road at Campania and have had several close calls when driving at night with large numbers of deer on the road in the States North East. A growing number of deer move in and out of Freycinet National Park around Saltwater Lagoon.

While physical movement of deer may still occur following deregulation, there will be greater avenues for control on private land, within National Parks or other areas managed for natural values. By deregulating fallow deer we may overcome an historical (often cringeworthy) attraction

to deer hunting and management as a status symbol – one that has always, and continues to, come at a cost to wildlife conservation and Tasmania's natural values.

To continue to spend meager wildlife management budgets and resources on policing deer take and seasons comes at the expense of native wildlife compliance issues and other nature conservation outcomes. This does not reflect the changing attitudes to environmental management that a growing number of Tasmanians possess, nor does it seem appropriate for an invasive species to enjoy a greater protected status than some native wildlife species.

Inevitably, partly protected status or not, the State Government will one day be footing the bill for damage mitigation by fallow deer within National Parks and World Heritage Areas at great expense to the public purse. A change in management practice is necessary now to mitigate against future complications to potentially costly control or eradication programs. The potential financial gain from recreational hunting license fees is far outweighed by the potential future cost of control and eradication and the current costs imposed on Game Management.

The public questioning of regulation of the fallow deer population is unlikely to disappear if the status quo is maintained – in fact, it is likely to grow and become increasingly more voluble. As the fallow deer population increases and expands more and more Tasmanians will become affected by, and aware of, the issues surrounding invasive species and their negative relationship to healthy ecology and sustainable farming practices. The removal of the partly protected status of fallow deer is a logical, necessary and defensible first step in moving forward with the progressive management of this species.

It's exciting that these questions are finally being publicly acknowledged, discussed and debated. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the discussion.

Yours Sincerely,

Tom Ralph.

Allison Waddington

From: Tom Ralph <tomdralph@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 30 June 2016 3:51 PM
To: DEER; tomdralph
Subject: Submission for inquiry into fallow deer
Attachments: Submission for inquiry into fallow deer popn. docx.docx

Please find attached a submission for the inquiry into fallow deer.

Many thanks,

Tom Ralph.