



Pest Plant and Animal Management Policy

Agreed to by the VFF Policy Council
Meeting 173
1 September 2021

Policy Statement

Executive Summary

1. The VFF seeks a public acknowledgement by the State of Victoria that pest plants and animals and overly abundant wildlife are key threats to biodiversity, biosecurity and productivity and that active management across tenure is required to reduce these impacts.
2. The VFF seeks a commitment from the Victorian Government that Public Land Management standards shall be equivalent to those required of private landholders.
3. The VFF seeks assurances that a full range of tools to manage pest plants and animals will be available for use in any area where appropriate control methods are in place, including capacity to deal with biosecurity outbreaks impacting of food and fibre production, human health or animal welfare.
4. The VFF seeks a commitment by the Victorian Government to fully fund actions required by the Crown to stop the spread of all weeds and pest animals across Victoria. This should include investment in biosecurity programs to prevent and manage incursions of new and exotic pests and diseases and increase efforts to deal with established pests and diseases. No area will be deemed 'decontrolled'.
5. The VFF calls on the Victorian Government to require each crown land management body to report on the extent of their compliance with the *Catchment and Land Protection Act* in their annual reports.
6. Key performance indicators for senior management of departments and agencies with public land management responsibilities should include compliance with *Catchment and Land Protection Act* General Duty of Landholders.ⁱ
7. The Conservation Regulator should be responsible for monitoring the prevalence of pest plants and animals and overly abundant wildlife on public land and government compliance with its statutory duty as a landholder.
8. The impact of pest plants and animals on the Victorian economy and on biodiversity should be reported to Parliament annually.

Cross Tenure Approach

9. The VFF calls for ongoing funding to Catchment Management Authorities to coordinate cross tenure management of pest plants and animals.

Crown Land Management

10. The State Government should ensure that all crown land managers have dedicated funding to manage pest plant and animal issues on crown land and are able to comply with actions required under cross tenure pest plant and animal plans.
11. A fully costed and funded management plan should be prepared to manage pest plants and animals, including overly abundant wildlife for each crown land reserve.
12. Mineral earth buffers shall be provided on the crown land side of public – private fence lines, to protect private assets and assist in management of fire, weeds and pest animals.
13. State of Environment Reports should include assessments of the management of pest plants and animals on crown land.

Control methods

14. Farmers need access to a range of chemicals and control mechanisms to manage the risk of pest plants and animals to their property.
15. VFF seeks the removal of barriers to use chemicals or other control mechanisms near urban areas, including the need to notify neighbours.
16. Private land holders should be able to manage threats to their assets from pest plants and animals, including overly abundant wildlife.
17. The Crown will pay for the price differential between a standard farm fence and a fence able to keep pest animals or wildlife from accessing private land.
18. The VFF seeks an ongoing program of research into the development of new and innovative pest weed and animal control technologies.
19. The VFF seeks commitment to ongoing funding of pest plant and animals taskforces.
20. The VFF seeks a dedicated stream of funding for Landcare programs to manage pest plant and animals issues.
21. The VFF seeks maintenance and expansion of programs, including fox bounties and aerial baiting for wild dog control.

Regulatory Systems

22. VFF seeks commitment to using legislative tools to enable farmers to manage overly abundant wildlife.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

VFF Good Neighbour Policy Statement

VFF Right to Farm Policy Statement

ⁱ 20 General duties of land owners

- (1) In relation to his or her land a land owner must take all reasonable steps to—
 - (a) avoid causing or contributing to land degradation which causes or may cause damage to land of another land owner; and
 - (b) conserve soil; and

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- (c) protect water resources; and
 - (d) eradicate regionally prohibited weeds; and
 - (e) prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds; and
 - (f) prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals.

21 Additional duties of the Secretary

- (1) The Secretary must take all reasonable steps to eradicate State prohibited weeds from all land in the State.
- (1A) The Secretary must take all reasonable steps to control restricted pest animals on any land in the State.