



Hon Tim Mulherin MP
Member for Mackay



**Minister for Agriculture, Food
and Regional Economies**

Reference: 02341/11

07 APR 2011

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Corner Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 10 March 2011 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 1630-11 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, regarding the draft Feral Deer Management Strategy.

I have considered the request that the House reconsider the aim of the document and retain deer in historic areas.

The *Queensland Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* provides a framework and powers for management of pest animals in Queensland. Under the Act, feral chital deer and feral rusa deer are Class 2 pest animals and feral fallow and feral red deer are Class 3 pest animals.

Land managers, including State Government agencies, have a responsibility under the Act to take reasonable steps to control Class 2 pest animals on land under their control. Landholders in or adjacent to environmentally significant areas may have a responsibility to control Class 3 pest animals on land under their control.

The draft feral deer strategy was developed with input from stakeholders during 2009–10 and was released for public consultation on 27 October 2010.

The consultation period was extended until 28 February 2011 to allow additional time for those persons and organisations affected by natural disasters to respond.

Despite harvesting and management efforts to date, the feral deer population in Queensland continues to grow at around three percent per annum with increasing reports of negative impacts. We need to take steps to deal with those negative impacts.

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The strategy is to provide guidance for stakeholders on how they might address their responsibilities under the Act. The intent of the strategy is to prevent new feral deer populations establishing and ensure that reasonable measures are in place for managing existing populations. Specific requirements will be developed at the local level through Local Government Area Pest Management Plans in consultation with local communities.

I am advised that over one hundred submissions on the draft Feral Deer Management Strategy have been received by Biosecurity Queensland, a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation. The submissions received reflect a diversity of views about how feral deer should be managed and all submissions will be considered during finalisation of the strategy.

Opportunities for recreational deer hunting, with the permission of landholders, should not be reduced in the foreseeable future. Even with current hunting pressures, the increase in deer numbers suggest that, without reasonable control efforts, the numbers of feral deer and the severity of their impacts would continue to increase.

The role of organisations, such as Research into Deer Genetics and Environment Inc and Australian Deer Association, which act as intermediaries between landholders and recreational hunters, is acknowledged in the draft strategy. There is nothing in the strategy which will limit ongoing financial arrangements between these organisations, landholders and recreational hunters.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Nicole Seils, Acting Principal Advisor in my office on telephone 3239 3000.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Mulherin', with a stylized, cursive script.

TIM MULHERIN, MP
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and Regional Economies
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