

# Operational policy

## Natural Resource Management

### Management of pests on QPWS managed areas

*Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Science. Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.*

#### Policy issue

How are pests managed on land managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS)?

#### Definitions

**Pest** means any animal, plant, parasite or disease causing organism (such as bacteria, virus or fungus) capable of causing adverse impacts to environmental, economic or social values, whether or not it is declared and listed in the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Regulation 2003.

**Pest management** includes all activities involved in the planning, detection, control, monitoring or eradication of pests in QPWS managed areas.

**QPWS managed areas** include:

- protected areas (State land) managed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*;
- State forests and other lands managed under the *Forestry Act 1959*;
- recreation areas managed under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*;
- marine parks managed under the *Marine Parks Act 2004*; and
- other areas managed by QPWS including a range of freehold lands, *Land Act 1994* reserves and other tenures.

**QPWS Pest Management System** refers to a system to facilitate pest management planning and reporting which guides operational implementation, including monitoring, on all QPWS managed areas.

#### Background

Pests have the potential to cause significant adverse environmental, economic and social impacts on QPWS managed areas and surrounding lands.

Pest plants can invade natural communities and replace native plants. They can change the intensity and frequency of fire and significantly change the structure, composition and function of ecosystems. Pest animals can have major impacts on natural communities by preying on native animals, by competing for their food and by damaging ecosystems. Some pests damage specific habitats or species; while others can affect numerous species, ecological processes and ecosystems.

All pests can have a significant effect on the productive capacity of rural lands surrounding QPWS managed areas. Pest animals may carry diseases of livestock and humans and can also adversely affect the recreational values of QPWS managed areas.

QPWS is obligated to manage pests (both declared and undeclared) under both Commonwealth and State legislation, including the:

- *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*
- *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- *Forestry Act 1959*
- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*
- *Health Act 1937*
- *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001.*

QPWS has a Pest Management System to help meet these obligations and to guide pest management planning and actions. The system encourages an integrated and long-term approach to managing pests.

Pest management priorities for QPWS are to:

- protect the natural and cultural values of all QPWS managed areas, including threatened species and ecosystems, by eradicating pests or significantly reducing their impacts
- meet the legislative requirements of the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* regarding declared pests on QPWS managed areas
- undertake cooperative pest management activities with neighbouring land managers, other government agencies and local government in accordance with the *QPWS Operational Policy – Good neighbour policy*.

## **Policy statement**

The QPWS Pest Management Plan prepared under the requirements of the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* has been implemented and is periodically reviewed.

The QPWS Pest Management System and ParkInfo databases will be used to plan, manage, record and monitor all pests and pest management on QPWS managed areas.

Where practical and appropriate, QPWS will participate cooperatively in pest management planning and implementation across the landscape with surrounding land managers, other government departments, local governments and utility providers (e.g. power, telephone, water providers) to ensure landscape-level pest management is successful.

All pest management principles outlined in the *QPWS Operational Policy – Good neighbour policy* will be followed.

Any pest management on QPWS managed areas must not adversely affect the natural integrity (an area's natural condition and cultural resources and values) of the QPWS managed area and use the best available scientific and technical knowledge.

Pest management operations will be supported by developing and implementing relevant QPWS policies and procedural guides.

All pest management will adhere to the legislative requirements of the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

All pest management activities using firearms will be consistent with the *QPWS Firearms Manual*.

The QPWS will participate in and/or facilitate research by others into the impacts, ecology and control of pests on QPWS managed areas.

Planning for pest management will be integrated with all other planning processes conducted for, or relevant to a particular QPWS managed area.

Management of native wildlife on QPWS managed areas will only be carried out where necessary to meet legislative pest management obligations and to reduce threats to other native wildlife, the values of QPWS managed areas, their users and neighbouring lands.

## **Procedures**

### **Use of the QPWS Pest Management System**

The QPWS Pest Management System is to be used to plan and implement all pest management on QPWS managed areas. The system includes documents that provide planning and/or strategic direction for pest management at different geographical scales and guides and outlines specific on ground activities.

All QPWS managed areas will be required to be included in an approved *Level 2 Pest Management Strategy* that outlines and guides on ground pest management priorities and actions.

A Pest Management Activity Proposal must be approved prior to carrying out any pest management activity. The activity proposal is used to detail specific operational information about a particular pest or pests. A Pest Management Activity Report summarises the outcome of operations conducted under a Pest Management Activity Proposal.

For information about how to use the Pest Management System, including the review and approval process for Pest Management Strategies and Activity Proposals, see the *Pest Management System Manual* or contact a QPWS staff member who has been trained in using the system. Details can be found online at: QPWS Pest Management System.

### **Humane pest animal management**

All pest animal management activities must use approved humane methods at all times, as set out under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* and Regulation 2002, including the *Model code of practice for the welfare of animals – Feral livestock animals destruction or capture, handling and marketing* (see below). Refer to Appendix 1 for a summary of currently endorsed methods.

Codes of practice and standard operating procedures prepared by Industry and Investment NSW for the Federal Department of Environment may also be used as guides for conducting humane pest animal management activities.

These and other documents are listed below and are available on the: QPWS Pest Management pages.

- *Model code of practice for the welfare of animals – Feral livestock animals: destruction or capture handling and marketing*, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Health Committee, published by CSIRO, 1991, SCA Technical Report Series No. 34.
- *Australian model code of practice for the welfare of animals – Land transport of cattle*, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 1999, SCARM Report No. 77.
- *Model code of practice for the welfare of animals – Land transport of horses*, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resources Management, published by CSIRO, 1998, SCARM Report No. 62.

- *Model code of practice for the welfare of animals – Livestock at slaughtering establishments*, prepared for the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management, published by CSIRO, 2001, SCARM Report No. 79.
- *Model codes of practice for the humane control of rabbits, wild dogs, foxes, feral horses, pigs, goats and cats*, prepared by Bureau of Rural Sciences Invasive Animal Cooperative Research Centre.
- Standard operating procedures prepared by Bureau of Rural Sciences Invasive Animal Cooperative Research Centre for:
  - ground shooting of rabbits, wild dogs, foxes, feral horses, pigs, goats and cats
  - aerial shooting of feral horses, goats and pigs
  - mustering of feral horses and goats
  - trapping of rabbits, wild dogs, foxes, feral horses, pigs, goats and cats.

### **Pest management by authority holders**

Where an authority holder (such as a lessee) has responsibility for pest management on QPWS managed areas, appropriate conditions that are consistent with this policy will be attached to the relevant authority.

Responsibility for pest management on QPWS areas by authority holders extends to meeting legislative requirements of the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* particularly regarding management of declared pests.

Pest management activities carried out by authority holders must be consistent with this policy, the QPWS Pest Management System and meet the requirements of the *QPWS Firearms Manual*. Relevant QPWS staff should be involved in the planning and/or implementation of any pest management activities and be regularly informed about their progress.

### **Disclaimer**

While this document has been prepared with care it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Science should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

### **Approved By**

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Signature

3 August 2011

Date

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**Appendix 1 – Endorsed pest species management methods**

Species	Endorsed pest species management methods*						
	Exclusion	Aversion	Capture	Biological	Chemical	Human Destruction using firearms	Other
Pigs	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Foxes	✓ <sup>1</sup>		✓		✓	✓	
Goats	✓		✓			✓	
Wild dogs	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Cats	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Deer	✓		✓			✓	
Horses	✓		✓			✓ <sup>2</sup>	
Cattle	✓		✓			✓	
Rabbits				✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>3</sup>
Camels			✓			✓	
Buffaloes			✓			✓	
Donkeys			✓			✓	
Birds		✓	✓			✓	
Rats					✓		
Mice					✓		
Fish			✓				✓ <sup>4</sup>

**\*Non-lethal methods are to be given preference where applicable.**

<sup>1</sup> Only for small areas which are intensively managed

<sup>2</sup> Strict case by assessment, liaison with Operational Support Unit required and approval by the relevant Regional Manager for the region in which the action is proposed

<sup>3</sup> Burrow ripping – accepting only when rabbit populations are low

<sup>4</sup> Electrocutation