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**TASMANIAN COMMUNITY  
FOREST AGREEMENT**

**RESEARCH INTO  
ALTERNATIVES TO THE USE OF  
1080**

**OPERATING PLAN**

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Australian Government



Tasmania

## Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to set out agreed operating arrangements for the implementation of the commitment in the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement relating to researching and developing alternatives to the use of 1080 for the control of browsing animals on private forest and agricultural land. It is designed to set out the steps leading to the implementation of a programme of research, field trials, extension and communication about suitable alternatives.

## Background

The Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement (TCFA) includes several commitments to research and develop alternatives to 1080 in controlling browsing animals -

39. The Parties agree to work collaboratively on a joint program to accelerate research into, and implementation of, alternative strategies for browsing animal control on private forest and agricultural lands. The Commonwealth will invest \$4 million in a research, field testing and demonstration program to provide alternative options for private landholders, and work with the State in the light of these results to continue to reduce the usage of 1080 on private lands.

41. The Parties note that the wallaby management plans for Flinders and King Islands are currently being developed for public consultation prior to formal consideration by State and Commonwealth regulatory bodies in accordance with relevant legislation. The State will develop a pilot wallaby management plan for a forested area on the Tasmanian mainland as a priority as an alternative animal browsing control strategy.

A review of the Tasmanian code of practice for the use of 1080 has been undertaken to ensure that 1080 is used only as a last resort. Further verification of damage and alternative control effort, and the development of game management plans, will be required. Implementation of the new code will require both new and ongoing training of staff responsible for the assessment of 1080 applications and training of farmers to enable them to lay baits.

Two staff members in the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment (DPIWE) Game Management Services Unit are currently employed to encourage the use of alternatives to 1080 including game management planning.

The development of an export industry for wallaby and possum products may provide incentives for primary producers to shoot wallabies commercially rather than use 1080 poisoning. The commercial export of products sourced from wild harvested wallabies can occur only if sourced from a Wildlife Trade Management Plan or a Wildlife Trade Operation approved under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has approved Wildlife Trade Management Plans developed by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment for wallabies on Flinders and King Islands. Work will be undertaken on the development of wallaby trade management plans for other parts of Tasmania. The

management plans cover the commercial harvest and aim to ensure the ecological sustainability of wallaby harvesting by regular monitoring of population trends and adopting appropriate management in response to any observed trends. A wildlife trade management plan for possums expired on 31 December 2004. DPIWE has submitted a draft plan to the Department of the Environment and Heritage for assessment under the EPBC Act.

Research undertaken in recent years by Forestry Tasmania, the CRC for Sustainable Production Forestry and other institutions has supported the development of an integrated management approach to browsing animal damage. The TCFA funding commitment will enable browsing damage management research and development activities to be significantly expanded and will require significant additional management and coordination. It is important that new and existing browsing damage management programs are properly coordinated to gain maximum benefit from the new funding.

This operating plan aims to coordinate and integrate browsing damage research, demonstration, extension, management planning and regulatory activities in the short to medium term.

## **Objective**

The objective of the programme is to develop and implement a coordinated research, field testing and demonstration program into practical, effective and financially viable alternatives to 1080 in controlling Tasmanian browsing animals on private forest and agricultural land, as a supplement to current state-level research and development activities. The aim is to ensure that alternative strategies or treatments are thoroughly assessed in order to provide effective alternatives for land managers. The programme is to include extensive demonstration trials to encourage adoption of alternative approaches.

## **Desired Outcomes/Benefits**

The desired outcomes of the project are:

1. Enhanced knowledge of alternatives to 1080 in controlling browsing animals in Tasmania;
2. The development and deployment of effective alternative browsing animal control techniques and strategies to replace 1080 usage on private land; and
3. Increased industry, landholder and community awareness of the biology of browsing animals, browsing damage management and effective control techniques and strategies.

## **Outputs**

Outputs of the project will include:

- a) An independent assessment and gap analysis of current research;
- b) The development of a research and development plan for research and investigation, field testing and demonstration of alternatives to 1080 in controlling browsing animals;
- c) The development and implementation of a number of sub-projects aimed at researching, field testing and demonstrating alternatives to 1080;
- d) The involvement of key industry sectors and landholders in the sub-projects;
- e) An assessment of economic impacts through an appropriate modelling approach;

- f) The production of information products designed to improve industry, landholder and community understanding of the biology of browsing animals and browsing damage management; and
- g) Enhanced collaborative partnerships with key interstate and international institutions, community and industry stakeholders and sponsors.

## **Project Management**

### **Governance**

The project's governance framework will be headed by a high-level, joint Australian and Tasmanian Government implementation committee.

#### **Implementation Committee:**

Dr John Whittington, General Manager, RMC, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment (DPIWE), Tasmania  
 Mr Tony Bartlett, General Manager, Forest Industries, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Australian Government  
 Project Manager (executive officer)

The Implementation Committee will have primary responsibility for developing the programme plan and annual progress reports for the consideration of Ministers. It will also oversee the work of the Technical Panel, as well as developing appropriate channels of interaction with the Stakeholder Advisory Group. On this basis, it will make final recommendations to Ministers on the nature and content of any further research judged as necessary and subsequent extension and demonstration activities.

The Implementation Committee will be supported by a **Technical Panel** and **Stakeholder Advisory Group** as follows:

#### **Technical Panel**

Project Manager (convenor)  
 Greg Hocking, Manager – Wildlife Policy and Planning, DPIWE  
 Quentin Hart, Bureau of Rural Science (BRS)  
 Cindy Steensby, Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH)  
 Representative, Browsing Damage Management Group (BDMG)  
 Andrew Walsh, Forestry Tasmania  
 CRC for Sustainable Forestry  
 CRC for Invasive Animals  
 Other experts as required

The Panel will meet on a six monthly basis and have responsibility for the ongoing implementation of the programme, including:

- Liaison with the **Stakeholder Advisory Group** on technical research and/or field trial issues;
- Participation in the initial review of research and other technical activities already undertaken, and outcomes from these activities;
- Advising on any additional research that may be needed, providing advice and support on contracting for that research and advising on the implications for programme timelines;

- Providing recommendations and support on the contracting of extension and demonstration activities as and when required; and
- Providing key input to the final programme evaluation and report.

### **Stakeholder Advisory Group**

To comprise representatives from the stakeholder groups, which have been identified as including:

- Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association
- Private Forests Tasmania
- University of Tasmania
- Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group
- Tasmanian Conservation Trust
- Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research
- Forestry Tasmania
- Forest Industries Association of Tasmania
- Forests and Forest Industry Council
- Browsing Damage Management Group
- Tasmania's three Regional Natural Resource Management Committees

The Stakeholder Advisory Group will be chaired by a member of the Implementation Committee, or a delegate as required. The members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group will be invited to provide their representative views to the Implementation Committee annually on matters including the following:

- the content of the program plan;
- the initial review of research and other technical activities already undertaken and outcomes from these activities;
- potential research and extension activities;
- approaches to effectively and efficiently monitor the program; and
- effective communication strategies for the program.

## **Reporting**

The Implementation Committee will report to Ministers by 1 June 2006 on 2005-06 achievements and a proposed research and/or development programme to commence during 2006-07. Subsequent reports to Ministers will be through overall TCFA Annual Reports on Implementation.

The project manager will provide progress updates to meetings of the Implementation Committee. On the overall completion of research into alternatives to the use of 1080, the implementation committee will submit a final report incorporating outcomes and recommendations for future research to the Ministers.

Normal agency budget and operational reporting protocols will also be adhered to.

## Budget and Expenditure

The Australian Government has allocated a total of \$4 million to the project with \$1.5 million to be disbursed in 2005-06 and \$2.5 million in 2006-07.

Recommendations to Ministers on the allocation of these funds will be determined by the Implementation Committee in accordance with the research plan.

It is proposed that the funds be disbursed as follows:

- 50% of the 2005-06 allocation (\$0.75m) to be provided to Tasmania following the agreement by Ministers to this initial plan;
- The remaining 50% to be disbursed in June 2006 after Ministers have agreed to the report on 2005-06 activities and the programme of subsequent research and/or development;
- The first 50% of the 2006-07 allocation to be disbursed following receipt of an agreed acquittal of the 2005-06 funds provided;
- The remaining funds to be disbursed upon receipt of a detailed expenditure plan for the remaining research from the Implementation Committee.
- Subject to an approved expenditure plan, funds disbursed in 2006-07 may be earmarked for future use as part of the agreed expenditure plan for the remaining research.

## Communications Strategy

An ongoing communications strategy for the project will be developed. Communication activities will focus on well timed and regular announcements of key milestones and outcomes as well as stakeholder communication and management. Key communication opportunities and events may include:

- Ministers announce details of this initial plan;
- Ministers announce the membership and role of the Stakeholder Advisory Group;
- Ministers announce the appointment of an independent expert for the review of existing research;
- The Stakeholder Advisory Group meets annually for updates on progress and also to provide inputs to key decisions as the process proceeds. The Group becomes the key medium for communication with stakeholders;
- Ministers announce the research and extension programme(s);
- Ministers also periodically announce progress with the programme;
- As part of the extension programme, and through the Stakeholder Advisory Group, the Implementation Committee engages in two-way communication with landholders and other affected parties;
- At the end of the programme, Ministers announce the results and next steps in implementation.

## Programme Activities and Milestones

Proposed milestones for the Alternatives to 1080 programme are:

December 2005	Payment of first instalment of 2005-06 funds to DPIWE following approval of this plan by Ministers
January/February 2006	Appointment of a project manager;  Approval of membership of Technical Panel and Stakeholder Advisory Group  Appointment of an independent expert to assess current research into alternatives to 1080
February/March 2006	Workshop chaired by independent expert to review/gap analysis of current research  First meeting of Technical Panel (6 monthly)  First meeting with Stakeholder Advisory Group (annual)
April 2006	Identification of new research and/or field demonstration options
May 2006	Development of a report on 2005-06 activities;  Development of a research and demonstration/extension programme  Both for consideration by Ministers by 1 June 2006
1 June 2006	Payment of second instalment of 2005-06 funds, pending approval of above report and programme by Ministers
2006-08	Completion of research phase
2007-09	Ongoing demonstration activities for most promising lines of research (some demonstration work will take place in conjunction with research phase)
June 2009	Development of final report of most promising management options for consideration and announcement by Ministers

## Risk Management

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Research fails to produce cost-effective alternatives.	Focus research on most practical options identified by independent review.	Possible	Severe
Individual projects do not achieve agreed milestones	Careful attention to project proposal development, contracting and oversight of individual projects.	Possible	Moderate to high
Techniques in final report not well received by industry and/or the general community	Early and regular opportunity for meaningful input from stakeholders.	Possible	Severe
Research/demonstration trials fail to produce effective evaluated alternatives within the Australian Government funding timeline	Subject to approved expenditure plans, trials designed to extend beyond funding milestones	Likely	Low
Research fails to identify cost effective alternatives for both private forest and agricultural areas	Ensure research of alternatives focuses on both sections through input from stakeholders	Possible	Moderate to high