

Media Release

Monday 3 May 2021

Feral deer are a major forestry pest

Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) welcomes the release this week of the ABARES Pest and Weed Survey results, which shows that feral deer are a significant pest in north eastern Victoria and more widely across the state.

“According to the Invasive Species Council, Victoria has Australia’s largest feral deer population with more than a million deer, and with no apex predators, the feral deer population is growing and expanding its range, said Ms Deb Kerr, VFPA CEO.

“Each year, the Victorian forest industry plants tens of millions of seedling trees and feral deer are a significant pest during the establishment of these new trees, said Ms Kerr.

Ms Kerr said, “In northern Victoria, a region where feral deer are prevalent, a recent sampling of plantation trees at five years of age showed that over one third showed damage by feral deer.

“Bizarrely, feral deer has a perplexing legal status in Victoria. Under different statutes, deer are variously protected, game, and pest species, which can only compromise controlling feral deer, said Ms Kerr.

“The Victorian Government released its Feral Deer Control Strategy in 2020, however, feral deer impacts occur across multiple jurisdictions and land tenures, said Ms Kerr.

“With Australian governments and the agriculture sector collaborating on wild dog and feral pig strategies, now seems time to work on an integrated strategy to manage our feral deer populations, concluded Ms Kerr.