



The Hon Mark Furner MP
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries
and Minister for Rural Communities

Our ref: CTS 14255/22

6 September 2022

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 17 August 2022, regarding a petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 3699-22 – allowing Queensland Councils to sustainably manage deer within their boundaries.

The main purpose of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act) is to provide a framework for an effective biosecurity system that helps minimise biosecurity risks and facilitates responding to impacts on biosecurity considerations – Queensland's agricultural economy, the environment, public health and social amenity.

A local government's function under the Act is to ensure that invasive biosecurity matter, within the meaning of the Act, is managed within the local government's area, in compliance with the Act.

Local governments must have a biosecurity plan for the invasive biosecurity matter present in their area which includes, if present, the four established feral deer species – red, fallow, chital and rusa deer.

A local government biosecurity plan may include objectives, strategies, activities and responsibilities for actions to be taken to manage the impacts or potential impacts of feral deer on relevant agricultural industries, environmental values and public safety in the local area.

This existing arrangement in the Act allows local governments to consider all relevant local issues in regard to appropriate control methods, animal welfare, environmental safeguards, cultural heritage and even allows the application of local laws, so long as the local biosecurity plan addresses the impacts of the feral deer.

I am of the view that the main thrust of the petition to allow for local decision making about the priority and level of management of feral deer is already provided for in the Act.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) has consulted with agricultural industries, government agencies, local governments, conservation groups and the community to develop a Queensland Feral Deer Management Strategy. During this consultation, over 65 per cent of the respondents to a survey claimed affiliation with recreational hunting and many provided helpful comments. I will be considering this strategy in due course.

While the cultural significance of the red deer on the Coat of Arms is important, there would be overriding priority given to effective management actions when responding to an emergency animal disease outbreak to protect Queensland's livestock industries and the rural communities that rely on them.

If you require further information, please contact my office on 07 3719 7420.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Furner'.

MARK FURNER MP

**Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and
Minister for Rural Communities**