Submission from add your name

Hog Deer Management Plan for (insert property or business name)

Game Management Authority

Using this template

On the front cover:

Add your name after “Submission from” deleting the red text.

Insert your property or business name after ‘Hog Deer Management Plan’ and delete the example text. The title should be kept within the green area on the cover.

All final text on the cover should be in white.

On the text pages:

Section headings indicating the required material are in place.

Red text describes the information required. Please delete it after you have entered your information

Blue text shows two examples (if applicable) of the type of information required.

- Example 1 is for a large organisation
- Example 2 is for small or individual operator

Use the example appropriate to your submission as guidance for the information you need to supply and please delete both examples after you have entered your information.

Please note the *Application for an extension to the Hog Deer Hunting Season on Private Property* from must be filled out and attached to the plan

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Contents

Introduction

Provide a short introduction about the contents of the management plan and why the plan is being developed.

Standard text:

This is a Hog Deer Management Plan for [insert property or business name] detailing how the property will be managed to benefit Hog Deer and wildlife generally in order to sustainably harvest Hog Deer under permit outside of the normal one month season.

This management plan has been prepared for the purpose of section 28A(1AB)(g) of the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

Further text example:

Currently, Hog Deer hunting is conducted during the regulated one month season in April, however, there has been considerable amount of interest from international hunters who would like access to the private property for Hog Deer hunting opportunities.

The management plan details the harvest objectives and how Hog Deer populations will be monitored, along with the management systems that are proposed for the property. These include habitat, wildlife and pest management as well as hunting arrangements.

Property details

A – Key staff

Name and contact details of key staff that will work on the property to manage the Hog Deer hunting venture (only required if different to the landowner).

Example:

Landowner: Gippsland Station Limited (Ben Smith, Director)
1 Jones Road
Melbourne 3000
Ph: 03 0123 4567
Mobile: 0412 345 678

Bruce and Nicola Johnston (Farm Managers)
723 Gippsland Lakes Road
Vic 3844
Ph: 03 9123 4567
Mobile: 0412 345 678

Bruce Johnston will be operate the day-to-day hunting venture with his wife Nicola. They will be the first point of contact for the hunters on Gippsland Station. They will also be the key contact for on-ground operational issues.

B – Property information

Please provide information on:

- **property size (Ha)**
- **property boundaries and fencing**
- **main infrastructure (buildings and sheds)**
- **access points (main roads or tracks)**
- **main vegetation types/crops/pasture**
- **water features or points**
- **livestock location**
- **neighbouring land classifications (e.g. Crown land/private) and use (e.g. farming, school, State forest).**

[Applicants may want to attach a map or diagram to support the description]

Example 1:

Gippsland Station comprises of 375 hectares. It is surrounded by private property along three boundaries and is adjacent to a state forest on the southern boundary. There are three buildings on the property, with a machinery shed and hay shed at the south-east of the property and a residential building located in the south-west corner of the property.

The property is completely fenced along the boundary with paddocks also fenced. The fencing prevent stock escape, however, both deer and wallabies are not excluded.

John Road creates the northern boundary of the property it is also the sole vehicle entry point. There are two entry points along the southern boundary, however, they are management tracks and are gated, preventing general vehicle use.

Adjoining properties on the east and west side are also sheep farms. Properties on the northern side are smaller subdivided blocks, catering for hobby farmers. Many of these hobby farms have small vineyards which are being negatively impacted by Hog Deer.

The property has two artificial water points fed by tanks, one semi-saline damn and a temporal creek running through the south east corner of the property.

Example 2:

Gippsland Station is a small 15 hectare hobby farm. The Gippsland Flora and Fauna Reserve abuts the southern boundary of the property, with Gippsland Costal park surrounding the rest of the property. 'Mitchells Road' runs along the east boundary of the property and provides the only access point to the property.

There is one shed which has been converted to residential accommodation in the middle of the property. There are no permanent natural water sources on the property, however, a small temporal creek runs alongside the south western corner. The water from this creek has high salinity.

C – Existing land use

Describe the principle business conducted on the land e.g. sheep/beef farming, hobbyist. Would this change if a permit was granted? [Please note, successful applicants may be required to substantiate that they are conducting a true Hog Deer hunting commercial venture].

Example 1:

The farm is a commercial sheep farm with approximately 1500 Merino ewes. The farm will continue to run sheep at the current stocking rate, with supplemental income being derived from providing access to restricted parts of the property for hunters wanting to harvest Hog Deer.

Example 2:

The property is not being used for commercial purposes. It is a hobby farm with four horses and two goats. The opportunistic hunting of Hog Deer will be the sole commercial interest on the property.

Wildlife management and pest control

A - Hog Deer

What is the estimated population and sex ratio of Hog Deer on the property – include both resident and transient animals?

Example 1:

It is unknown how many Hog Deer are on Gippsland Station, however, it is estimated that there may be as many as 120 deer that commonly frequent or reside on Gippsland Station. It has been estimated qualitatively that the male to female ratio is one to three.

Gippsland Station realises this ratio is too high when trying to establish good trophy potential within the local population. It is proposed to have a heavy take of hinds in the first two seasons to address this uneven balance within the population. If the required number of hinds is not taken then the property may seek to remove excess hinds through a targeted program.

Example 2:

Hog Deer don't reside on Gippsland Station, rather they move through it on their way from bedding to feeding areas. It is estimated that around 60 deer move through the property. An unknown number of dispersing individuals are similarly expected to occur on the property from time to time. It has been estimated qualitatively that the male to female ratio is close to one to one.

B - Pest animals

What pest animals inhabit the property and how are these being controlled?

Example 1:

Rabbits and foxes are present on the station. These are controlled in-house by station staff, and hunters will not be allowed to shoot any animals other than Hog Deer. Pest animal control will not be conducted on Gippsland Station during the Hog Deer season to minimise disturbance.

The station currently implements baiting programs as well as warren ripping. Visible numbers of pest animals indicates that they are decreasing.

Example 2:

Rabbits are they main pest species present on the property. Pest control is undertaken by landowners with the primary method being shooting. Although not encouraged, hunters may shoot pest animals as long as it doesn't conflict with current Hog Deer hunting opportunities.

C - Other wildlife

List any threatened species or over abundant problem wildlife that inhabit the property and steps implemented to manage these?

Example 1:

Gippsland Station has many native animals on the property with no significant species for conservation known. Wombats are increasing in populations, and in recent years have caused significance damage to infrastructure. Throughout the year, wombats are removed via the 'unprotection Order in the Wildlife Act' on an ad hoc basis.

The station also has an Authority to Control Wildlife Permit to remove 150 kangaroos. During drier years there was an increase in kangaroos and wallabies on the property due to modified pasture and water sources. In the two years following the breaking of the drought conditions, kangaroo numbers significantly increased resulting in over browsing of native grasses on many areas within the property. Ongoing work is still being undertaken to manage the level of kangaroos.

Example 2:

Some kangaroos frequent the property, however, the numbers are not considered an issue.

Harvest goals for the property

Some landowners may choose to manage for quality trophy stags, while others may seek to provide for maximum hunting opportunities. What harvest levels and animals do you intend to take from your property? What management regimes (if any) will you put in place to try and achieve your harvest goals – factors for consideration may include:

- **food**
- **shelter**
- **cover**
- **water**
- **reduction in competition with native wildlife/stock**
- **manipulation of existing deer populations.**

Example 1:

Gippsland Station would like to harvest trophy stags only. To achieve this, clients will be allowed to harvest a stag and will also be offered the opportunity to take a hind. This will provide balance to the sex ratio of the resident population. In addition, in the last two weeks of the season, the Station will target satellite males and non-typical males to increase the quality of the stags.

Modified pasture and watering points will be implemented within the property to try and limit the need for deer to move through to other areas.

Example 2:

Gippsland Station does not have a resident population of Hog Deer, but rather receives transient deer feeding on its pasture. Due to its location and the surrounding forest, the Station would like to offer as many hunting opportunities as possible, noting that there is little it can do to manipulate the broader population.

Proposed hunting arrangements

A – Harvest arrangements

List how many hunters are proposed to be accommodated and what periods they will be hunting. [A List of hunters and their details will need to be provided to the GMA at least 14 days prior to a hunting period to enable relevant permits to be produced].

Example 1:

Gippsland Station can comfortably accommodate four hunters at a time. The station will be requesting a permit for an additional three months (February, March and May) this will enable four months of hunting. A proposed scheduled is shown in the table below. Appropriate rest periods, and considerations for both Easter holidays and time required to transfer clients has been considered. Hunters will generally start on a Sunday and go through until the Friday of that week.

February		**March**		**April**		**May**	
Week 1	4 hunters (trophy stag only)	**Week 1**	Rest period	**Week 1**	4 hunters (trophy stag and hind)	**Week 1**	4 hunters (non-trophy stag, hind)
Week 2	4 hunters (trophy stag only)	**Week 2**	4 hunters (trophy stag only and hind)	**Week 2**	Easter Holidays	**Week 2**	4 hunters (non-trophy stag, hind)
Week 3	Rest period	**Week 3**	Balloted opportunity	**Week 3**	4 hunters (trophy stag and hind)	**Week 3**	4 hunters (non-trophy stag, hind)
Week 4	4 hunters (trophy stag only)	**Week 4**	Rest period	**Week 4**	Rest period	**Week 4**	4 hunters (non-trophy stag, hind)

Example 2:

Given the size of the property we will only be allowing one hunter at a time. We only wish to hunt for one extra month during March. Hunters will be allowed to hunt from Monday until Friday of each week. Our proposed schedule is shown below:

March		**April**	
Week 1	1 hunter (non-trophy stag and hind)	**Week 1**	1 hunter (non-trophy stag and hind)
Week 2	1 hunter (non-trophy stag and hind)	**Week 2**	Rest period
Week 3	1 hunter (non-trophy stag and hind)	**Week 3**	1 hunter (non-trophy stag and hind)
Week 4	Rest period	**Week 4**	1 hunter (non-trophy stag and hind)

B – Public opportunity

How will the public opportunity be managed?

Example 1:

As the property will be offering more than five additional hunting opportunities outside of the normal season, a balloted place for one hunter will be offered for the third week in May. That hunter will be allowed to take one animal only, wether a stag or a hind.

Accommodation can be provided at cost, however, there will be no catering offered. Maps of the property will be included as well as a quick induction into the site. Should the hunter wish to camp, there is a designated camping site, however, no fires will be permitted.

Guiding services can be provided – at cost.

Example 2:

As there are fewer than 5 additional hunting opportunities sought, there will be no public ballot offered.

Habitat management

A - Habitat description

List what habitats are occurring on the land including natural and artificial systems. If possible list some of the major vegetation types present e.g. Tea Tree (*Leptospermum*).

Example 1:

Gippsland Station has a diverse range of habitats. The lowland section of the property is pasture and covers an area of about 170 hectares. It comprises primarily rye grass pasture and feed crops of kale lucerne.

Approximately 80 hectares is scrubland, with the main vegetation being Teatree (*Leptospermum*) and banksia. This area has not been modified to improve pasture because it is generally unproductive land, however, it is used by stock.

The remaining 125 hectares are heathland. This area is marginal farmland and can only support low stocking rates.

Example 2:

Gippsland Station was originally part of a larger sheep farm. Over half the property is low quality pasture. Scrub, mainly Teatree (*Leptospermum*) and banksia, has started to recolonise much of this area. On the wetter parts of the property a mix of marshy heathland plants are present, with some stringy bark (*Eucalyptus sp*.). Historically, this area was drained and planted with pasture, this practice has meant there are introduced grasses mixed with the heathland.

B – Habitat management

What habitat management systems will be implemented on the property to enhance Hog Deer populations? Things such as scrub clearance, feed crop planting, crash grazing, controlled burning, pasture fertilization, dam construction (fresh water storage)

Example 1:

The lowland area of the farm is managed intensively for livestock production. This is the most fertile land on the property and can support higher stock densities than other areas. Super phosphate and lime are added to paddocks at least once every two years but more frequently if the paddocks have had feed crops planted. Paddocks where food crops are grown are sprayed, ploughed fertilised, and then planted the following spring. After the crops have been eaten, they will again be ploughed and fertilised, and sown with rye grass. Cropping is quite 'hard' on the soil so paddocks are constantly rotated to stop paddocks from becoming too nutrient poor. Thistle (*Asteraceae sp.*) and ragwort (*Senecio sp.*) are primary weeds, and are sprayed annually. Pastures are re-sown as required.

Historically, heathland was burned, ploughed and sown with grass. Currently, limited controlled burning takes place to induce new growth of nutrient rich grasses for livestock (Hog Deer and other wildlife species also benefit from this activity). The controlled burning is conducted periodically in late winter; this is not done every year and is ad hoc dependant on time constraints and weather conditions.

There are three small farm dams scattered around the property which, in addition to numerous water troughs, provide water for livestock. The Station's dams meet the requirements of the stock and at present there is no plan to build more dams or enlarge any existing dams.

When stock numbers are down and lower than the carrying capacity of the property, stock is used to crash graze paddocks. This provides a better matrix of grassland for browsers, including deer.

Example 2:

Contractors have been engaged to clear marginal scrubland in patches to form a mosaic effect with the current pasture and heath. This will provide areas where animals can feed near places of shelter. Areas of higher quality pasture have been ploughed and fertilised and feed crops of lucerne and oats have been planted to increase areas of nutrient rich feed.

Three water troughs have been constructed these each have their own tank and roofing system to collect and supply troughs with water.

Monitoring

A - Population monitoring

Describe the monitoring methods used to determine the number of Hog Deer on your property. You may want to consider what other animal surveys will be conducted (e.g. fox numbers, kangaroo numbers) to determine if some control is needed.

Example 1:

Gippsland Station undertakes spotlight counts along set transects to estimate the number and quality of Hog Deer present. These counts are undertaken quarterly, with a count occurring in early February to inform harvesting arrangements.

A count is also conducted in September/October to measure the level of recruitment of young animals and predict the health of the population.

The monitoring of kangaroos is undertaken to inform Authority to Control Wildlife Permits.

Example 2:

As the Hog Deer are transient through this property, game cameras have been erected along key game trails to provide an indication of the number, sex, and health of Hog deer using the property.

There is no structured monitoring of other species.

B - Harvest monitoring

Detail how biological information will be collected from harvested Hog Deer. Information including, a photograph, sex, body length, antler details, weight, of all Hog Deer harvested must be recorded and a lower jaw sample taken. Other biological information may also be required at the discretion of the Game Management Authority. During the normal season (April) designated Checking Stations can be used.

Example 1:

Gippsland Station is in the process of building a Checking Station, walk-in butcher's kitchen and cool room on site. Given these facilities, the station will conduct the collection of all biological samples required.

Example 2:

The property will use current Checking Station operators for the month of April. Outside of April, we will use the existing Checking Station Operator at Golden Beach. A contractual arrangement with the Checking Station Operator at Golden Beach has already been drawn and entered into.

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