

# Control of feral animals in National Parks and surrounding areas



**ITS2-00887**

## Part A.2 – Specifications

The control of feral animals in National Parks and surrounding areas has been divided into separable portions constituted by the following Projects

1. Alpine National Park and surrounding areas, and
2. Barmah National Park and surrounding areas.

The Projects are described in this specification.

This form **must** be used to apply for a project/s.

**You can apply for both or either Project.**

**Please read the Request for Tender (Invitation to Supply) prior to completing your offer.**

This document is Part A.2 – Specifications of the Request for Tender (Invitation to Supply).

### **How to use this document –**

This document describes each project, including its aim, the proposed dates, the number of personnel required, access both to and within the project area, accommodation options and any location specific conditions that apply.

### **Offers –**

Offers must be lodged electronically through Buying for Victoria by no later than the stated closing date.

It is your responsibility to ensure that correct lodgement occurs. Submissions not conforming with the Request for Tender (Invitation to Supply) may not be accepted or may be disregarded by Parks Victoria. Late applications will not be accepted.

**Offers close on WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> June AT 2:00PM.**

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## 1. Program Statement

Parks Victoria is seeking to engage suitably qualified and experienced contractors to deliver safe, humane and effective ground shooting of feral animals, including feral horses (primary target), deer, pigs, foxes, goats, cats and rabbits in the Alpine National Park and Barmah National Park (see Maps 1 and 2).

Work is to be conducted from commencement of the contract/s period through to 30 June 2023, with exact scheduling determined by Parks Victoria in negotiation with the successful contractor. Noting there will be 2 options to extend for 1 year each (i.e. a maximum of 3 years for each Project) subject to funding availability and supplier performance, and at the full discretion of Parks Victoria

**Note: if the COVID-19 pandemic, or other unforeseen circumstances, result in a change to the agreed program, a variation to the contract may be negotiated, including the possible postponement of works until a mutually agreeable date.**

### 1.1 Introduction

This project will implement intensified and sustained feral animal control through ground shooting to enable survival and recovery of significant ecological vegetation communities, critical habitat and threatened flora and fauna species, and mitigate impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage values, in the Alpine National Park and Barmah National Park.

The impacts of feral animals on natural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values and the strategic approach that Parks Victoria uses for feral animal control in these parks is described in the [Protection of the Alpine National Park: Feral Horse Action Plan 2021](#) the [Strategic Action Plan: Protection of floodplain marshes in Barmah National Park and Barmah Forest Ramsar site \[2020-2023\]](#) and the [Victorian Deer Control Strategy](#).

### 1.2 Aim

The project aims to reduce the impacts of feral horses, deer and other feral animals and encourage survival and recovery of significant ecological vegetation communities, critical habitat, threatened flora and fauna species, as well as protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the Alpine National Park and Barmah National Park.

### 1.3 Scope of work/timing

#### *Scope of work*

This program involves the ground shooting of feral horses (primary target), deer, pigs, foxes, goats, cats and rabbits in the Alpine National Park and Barmah National Park, and surrounding Crown lands (by agreement) under strict security and safety conditions. The work will occur during the day and at night, either on foot and/or from a vehicle, including ATV. The number of operations and the number of teams, fit for purpose vehicles, nights etc. required per operation is provided in more detail in each individual Project description.

#### *Timing*

Work is to be completed **within 12 months of the commencement of the Contract/s**; the proposed program for each park is described in more detail in the individual Project descriptions. The exact dates of operations will be determined in negotiation with the successful contractor.

## 1.4 Program Risks

There are numerous inherent risks associated with feral animal control using ground shooting which the contractor will need to identify in collaboration with Parks Victoria and establish appropriate risk management processes. Separate to the inherent risks of ground shooting, is the significant risk posed by feral horse activists. Activists have gone to extreme measures to try to stop the control of feral horses including death threats to Parks Victoria staff, protests and threats to sabotage control operations.

The contractor will work with a small group of Parks Victoria staff who have operational knowledge of the program on a “need to know basis”. Each Project will have a specific and separate team of Parks Victoria representatives. The highest levels of information security are required and all operations will be conducted covertly. This is to ensure the safety of Parks Victoria staff and the contractor involved, and to ensure the aim of the program can be met. The contractor/s will be required to enter into a Deed Of Confidentiality. Leaks of information of any kind by the contractor will be deemed a breach of contract. Any contractor personnel deemed by Parks Victoria staff as being unfit to maintain information security or lack the necessary risk management approach to maintaining operational safety will be stood down at the sole discretion of Parks Victoria as being unfit for the duties described herein.

From time to time the contractor will be supported by a Parks Victoria Authorised Officer/s to manage security risks, and by Program staff to implement successful works.

Note, to protect their identify the details of the successful contractor/s will not be made public.

## 1.5 Data

- The contractor must assist the Parks Victoria project manager to summarise outcomes must be prepared, and submitted to the Project Manager, within 5-days of the end of each operation within 5 days of each operations, or at a formal de-briefing immediately or as soon as possible after each operation.
  - The dates of the operation, the weather, the personnel involved, the methodology used, details of any safety issues or incidents, the areas worked, the number of feral animals and type shot, hotspots, areas where feral animals were absent, any other relevant observations, comments on findings and recommendations for future work to improve efficiency, humaneness and effectiveness.
- The location of every animal shot must be recorded using Avenza or another PV nominated and secure GPS waypoint/data collection system. Information on the age and sex of the animal is to be included with the waypoint.
- A track log must be recorded by each person/team for each shift using Avenza or another PV nominated and secure GPS waypoint/data collection system.
- The location of any pest or weed data e.g. dust baths, heavy pugging, sick or deceased animals, wallows, scrapes, preach trees etc should be recorded with a way point to aid management effectiveness.
- All data is to be provided to the Parks Victoria Project Manager as a shapefile as soon as possible after the operation.

## 1.6 General conditions

- Victoria is currently in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic. Contractors will be required to submit a COVID19 safe plan as part of their response to project brief.
  - Your proposed methodology should meet the requirements to slow the spread of the coronavirus and ensure physical distancing and hygiene standards are maintained at all times.
- If the COVID-19 pandemic, or unfavourable weather conditions, result in a change to the agreed program, a variation to the contract may be negotiated, including the possible postponement of works or extension to the time allowed, until a mutually agreeable date.

- All activities conducted as part of this project must be carried out in accordance with all relevant legislation, policies, plans and procedures. Parks Victoria must be informed immediately of any incident(s) that occur.
- **All operations will be conducted in accordance with the *Firearms Act 1996*.**
- **Contractors will be required to adhere to the conditions outlined in** (note - these documents will be provided to the successful contractor)
  - **the Firearms Use Operations Plan;**
  - **the Tactical Plan;**
  - **the Standard Operating Procedure HOR001: Ground Shooting of Feral Horses;**
  - **the Standard Operating Procedure DEE001: Ground Shooting of Feral Deer;**
  - **the Authority to Destroy Game;**
  - **Victorian Code of Practice for ensuring the welfare of animals when hunting; and**
  - **the conditions of the section 37 authorisation under the National Parks Act 1975 to carry and use a firearm in a National Park.**
- Contractors must carry all permits and authorisations with them at all times.
- Parks will remain open to the public during control work.
- **Feral horses are the primary species.**
  - Pigs, deer, and goats (in that order) should be targeted in preference to any other species, excepting feral horses, and only if doing so does not compromise the treatment of feral horses.
  - Foxes, cats and rabbits may be targeted but only if doing so does not compromise the treatment of feral horses, deer, pigs and goats.
- Section 130(2A)(e) of the Firearms Act 1996, which allows a person who holds a firearms licence and who is acting in the course of their duties under any relevant law within the Conservation Forests and Lands Act, to possess, carry and use a loaded firearm in a public place, including public highway, road and footpath, applies to this program. How this will be applied will differ for each Project and will be discussed during the initiation meeting.
- Shooting in any area outside the Alpine National Park and Barmah National Park, and more specifically outside the areas described in the Firearms Use Operations Plan (to be completed) is not permitted, unless agreed to first by Parks Victoria
- Access to both Project areas is by sealed and gravel roads, including Management Vehicle Only tracks. A 4WD, or ATV (Side-By-Side with ROPs), is required. Some tracks are not regularly used and so may be blocked by fallen timber. The contractor will need to carry, and be experienced in the use of a chainsaw.
- The majority of access within the Project areas is by foot. In the Alpine National Park the terrain can be remote, rugged and steep. In Barmah National Park there are extensive swamps, wetlands and controlled flooding occurs which can make access and navigation difficult. Contract staff will need to be fit and capable of working in those landscape conditions. Working from vehicles will be by exception and only if approved, as the contractor is expected to access rugged areas only accessible by foot.
- Every effort must be made to avoid shooting feral animals in waterways, close to roads, vehicle and walking tracks and camping areas where carcasses may be visible to the public. Carcasses in waterways, carcasses visible from a road, vehicle track, walking track or camping area must be moved and/or broken down and removed from view if safe and feasible to do so.

- The projects may be subject to independent scrutiny and oversight by a suitably qualified veterinarian or other person of Parks Victoria's selection (herein called the 'Auditor'). The Auditor may wish to observe culling activity to provide an independent report on the conduct of the operation, compliance of the operation with codes and standards, and recommend improvements or changes towards best practice. The contractor must support an Auditor's involvement, if an Auditor is deployed, and will be provided with opportunity for input into any audit report produced. The Auditor will not be permitted to compromise the contractor's SOPs or incur a cost against the contractor, nor will the Auditor be privy to the contractor's identity.
- The contractor will deploy only team(s) of professional shooters that are suitably skilled, experienced, equipped and insured to work on sensitive control activities, and Parks Victoria may cease any persons involvement at any time due to concerns regarding technique, behaviour or conduct, particularly with regards to skill, humaneness, and information security.
- The contractor must comply with any prohibition, restriction or condition placed on shooting feral horses or other species from any area, from time to time, as notified to the contractor by Parks Victoria.
- The contractor is encouraged to identify any risks, concerns or operational matters that need remedying or treatment during the planning, briefing, conduct and de-briefing phases of each operation, in an attempt to ensure a successful and safe operation.
- All spent ammunition casings, and any other litter, are to be removed.
- Q Fever vaccination is recommended for all contractor staff.

## 1.7 Specialist equipment

- Rifles (at least two per shooter), including Category D, as described in the current SOP HOR001. The preferred calibre is a 300 Winchester Magnum, although the minimum .308 or 30-06 may be used in certain settings subject to prior discussion with the Parks Victoria Operations Controller.
- Suppressor.
- Professional level thermal imaging equipment, scopes and mono/binoculars.
- Optical rifle scopes, binoculars and thermal scopes suitable for day culling activities.
- Separate lockable storage for firearms and ammunition per Victorian firearms law.
- **Current Victorian Firearms Licence.** Once the contractor has been appointed Parks Victoria will organise authorisations under S37 of the National Parks Act (to use, carry or possess a firearm in a park) for those involved in implementing the program.
- One fit for purpose vehicle is required per team of two (2).
- A 4WD is necessary to access operational areas. Recovery gear, including 4WD recovery tracks, must be carried at all times. All drivers will have relevant experience in driving a 4WD.
- An ATV (side-by-side) is required for access in many circumstances and for dragging carcasses where there is a requirement to do so.
- A device with Avenza or other agreed GPS/data collection app installed
- A drone may be used for surveillance and finding animals with the prior approval of Parks Victoria and subject to an Aircraft Operations Plan.
- Bonafide working dogs (detection dogs) may be used for the purpose of locating feral animals, especially in the unforeseen event of wounding, and will be authorised for use only by prior agreement with Parks Victoria.

- The projects involve camping in remote locations, particularly in the Alpine National Park, for the period of the operation, and hence the contractor will need to provide all appropriate camping equipment for the conditions.
- Suitable communications equipment, e.g. satellite phone, PLB, Garmin inReach etc. Parks Victoria may be able to supply portable trunk radios to complement the contractor's equipment.
- The contractor will need to supply a chainsaw, and all operators will have relevant experience and hold the appropriate certification.
- The contractor must supply first aid equipment and all necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including but not limited to:
  - hearing and eye protection;
  - sturdy boots and gaiters;
  - first aid kit, including snakebite kit; and
  - chainsaw chaps, hardhat, gloves and steel cap boots.

## 1.8 Selection criteria

Selection of the successful contractor will be based on the following:

- Demonstrated expertise and experience in planning and conducting safe, humane and effective feral animal control by ground shooting, in particular feral horse control. Including maintaining the highest levels of information security to ensure ongoing operational safety and success.
- Demonstrated knowledge of feral horse ecology and behaviour.
- Organised and well thought out approach to the project requirements, including ideas for program design, working in remote locations, communications etc.
- Understanding of the type of environment in which the projects are to be undertaken and experience working safely in this type of environment.
- Access to, and experience in the use of, equipment required to undertake feral animal control operations, including specialist control equipment such as thermal optics and detection dogs, as well as field gear such as chainsaw, 4WD and other means of remote transport.
- Value for money
- Timing, i.e. ability to deliver the work within the specified timeframe.
- Compliance with tender conditions, i.e. provision of OHS documentation etc

## 1.9 Further information

Any queries regarding this project are to be made via the Buying for Victoria website ([tenders.vic.gov.au](https://tenders.vic.gov.au)).

## 2. Project - Alpine National Park

### 2.1 Project statement

The project aims to reduce the impacts of feral horses and other feral animals and encourage survival and recovery of significant ecological vegetation communities, critical habitat, threatened flora and fauna species, as well as protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the Alpine National Park.

### 2.2 Scope of work/timing

#### *Scope of work*

This project requires the contractor to undertake **control operations consisting of 4 consecutive nights with 4 people (2 teams of 2 contractors)**. Noting this will be the standard and preferred operating model however may change from time to time by negotiation e.g. 1 x 2 person team. Each operation includes a pre-operation briefing and a post-operation debrief at a time and location determined in consultation with Parks Victoria.

Note: each team will include 1 shooter and 1 non-shooting off-sider aka 'spotter' (all contractors on-site must be accredited and capable of performing shooting duties). Noting this will be the standard operating model however may change from time to time by negotiation. To build knowledge of the control area, to maintain information security and to ensure consistency, it is preferable that the same personnel are used throughout a project. New personnel will only be introduced to the work following agreement with Parks Victoria.

The successful contractor will be thoroughly briefed on the key areas to be targeted and exclusion areas and buffer zones, however the general area of operation is displayed in Map 1.

#### *Program of Work*

The program of work will be finalised in discussion with the Project Manager, however as an indication of the number of operations required for the 12 month contract period, and for quotation purposes, **the number of operations will be approximately 25 per annum (one operation comprising 1 x 2 person team, two operations comprising 2 x 2 person team in different locations etc)**. In some circumstances operations may be back to back, however not more than 2 consecutively. The actual number of operations undertaken during the contract period will be subject to need and the implications of weather and other unforeseen circumstances. Operations can occur at any time during the year however will avoid peak visitation periods such as school and public holidays and weekends.

### 2.3 Access

Access to the park boundary is generally by sealed or unsealed 2WD roads, however once inside the park the access to the control areas is by 4WD. A limited number of vehicle and formal walking tracks exist within the control area and an ATV is recommended. The majority of the work will need to be done on foot and off-track.

Plans for access will be discussed during the initiation meeting.

### 2.4 Accommodation

In the Alpine National Park the majority of time remote camping will be required for the period of each operation.

Minimum impact camping protocols must be observed when camping.



## 2.5 Location specific conditions

- This project is to be undertaken in relatively remote areas of the Alpine National Park with limited vehicle access. It requires walking off-track in, at times, steep, rugged terrain with dense vegetation. The contractor will:
  - be required to prepare a 'job safety analysis' that assesses the risks associated with the project and the steps they will undertake to minimise these risks; and
  - need to have a high level of physical fitness and be able to navigate using a topographic map, compass and/or GPS.
- Given the remoteness of the location in which this work is being undertaken, contractors will need to be self-sufficient, i.e. have the skills, experience and equipment to be able to deal with a range of situations including medical emergency, vehicle breakdown, bogged vehicle and blocked tracks. Local Parks Victoria staff are unable to render assistance in these types of situations.
- It is vital that the Parks Victoria Operations Controller can make contact with the contractor at any time. Mobile phone reception in the area is unreliable. The contractor will be required to prepare a communications plan and to carry suitable communications equipment with them at all times.
- Given the type of environment that the project is being implemented in, the weather could deteriorate rapidly at any time.
- Parts of the control area are open to recreational hunters from 15 February to 15 December.

## 2.6 Map 1 - Control areas Alpine National Park – general location



## 3. Barmah National Park

### 3.1 Project statement

The project aims to reduce the impacts of feral horses and other feral animals and encourage survival and recovery of significant ecological vegetation communities, critical habitat, threatened flora and fauna species, as well as protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values in Barmah National Park.

### 3.2 Scope of work/timing

#### *Scope of work*

This project requires the contractor to undertake **control operations consisting of 4 consecutive nights with 4 people (3 contractors and 1 PV staff member)**. The group may split into 2 teams of 2 depending on the circumstances. Noting this will be the standard operating model however may change from time to time by negotiation. Each operation includes a pre-operation briefing and a post-operation debrief at a time and location determined in consultation with Parks Victoria.

Note: the team will include 2 shooters and 2 non-shooting off-siders, aka 'spotters' (all contractors on-site must be accredited and capable of performing shooting duties). Noting this will be the standard operating model however may change from time to time by negotiation e.g. 1 x 2 person team. To build knowledge of the control area, and to ensure consistency, it is preferable that the same personnel are used throughout a project. New personnel will only be introduced to the work following agreement with Parks Victoria.

The successful contractor will be thoroughly briefed on the key areas to be targeted and exclusion areas and buffer zones, however the general area of operation is displayed in **Map 2**.

#### *Program of Work*

The program of work will be finalised in discussion with the Project Manager, however as an indication of the number of operations required for the 12 month contract period, and for quotation purposes, **the number of operations will be up to 10**. In some circumstances operations may be back to back, however not more than 2 consecutively. The actual number of operations undertaken during the contract period will be subject to need and the implications of weather and other unforeseen circumstances. Operations can occur at any time during the year however will avoid peak visitation periods such as school and public holidays and weekends.

### 3.3 Access

Access to the park boundary is generally by sealed or unsealed 2WD roads, however once inside the park the access to the control areas is by 4WD. A limited number of vehicle and formal walking tracks exist within the control area and an ATV is recommended. The majority of the work will need to be done on foot and off-track.

Plans for access will be discussed during the initiation meeting.

### 3.4 Accommodation

In Barmah National Park the majority of time remote camping will be required for the period of each operation.

Minimum impact camping protocols must be observed when camping.

### 3.5 Location specific conditions

- This project is to be undertaken in relatively remote areas of Barmah National Park with limited vehicle access. It requires walking off-track in areas that can be wet and boggy, sometimes in thickly forested areas and other times in open plains. The contractor will:
  - be required to prepare a 'job safety analysis' that assesses the risks associated with the project and the steps they will undertake to minimise these risks; and
  - need to have a high level of physical fitness and be able to navigate using a topographic map, compass and/or GPS.
- Given the remoteness of the location in which this work is being undertaken, contractors will need to be self-sufficient, i.e. have the skills, experience and equipment to be able to deal with a range of situations including medical emergency, vehicle breakdown, bogged vehicle and blocked tracks. Local Parks Victoria staff are unable to render assistance in these types of situations.
- It is vital that the Parks Victoria Operations Controller can make contact with the contractor at any time. Mobile phone reception in the area is unreliable. The contractor will be required to prepare a communications plan and to carry suitable communications equipment with them at all times.

Map 2 - Control area Barmah National Park – general location

