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DEER NOT SO DEAR Governments lobbied to declare deer feral pests

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The Invasive Species Council has urged the Victorian Government to declare deer feral pests and implement control programs to protect the state's environment and agriculture – in line with other states.

The call is also being made in New South Wales.

The move was prompted by Queensland's Primary Industries Minister Tim Mulherin's recent announcement that seven deer species would be declared pests in the state to help control populations and prevent new introductions.

South Australia also controls deer as feral pests.

ISC project officer Tim Low said although deer Australia's worst emerging pest problem – causing great damage to the environment and farms – Victoria and New South Wales protect them as a hunting resource.

This, he said, was at the sacrifice of environmental and agricultural values.

Both states required people to obtain game licences to kill deer and there were closed seasons and bag limits on some species.

"With no proper control programs in most places, deer are spreading and new populations are establishing," Mr Low said.

He warned that unless deer were controlled, they could come to outnumber kangaroos in some national parks.

He also emphasised the damage deer did to native vegetation and wildlife habitats.

Carol Booth of the ISC said Sambar had been declared "threatening" under Victoria's Flor and Fauna Guarantee Act.

"They are causing a lot of damage to Victoria's forests," she said.