

Guidance note: Applications for pest animal research/education collections permits

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

PURPOSE

The *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP) prohibits the keeping, selling, releasing and importation into Victoria of declared pest animals without permission.

A person wanting to use pest animals for medical, veterinary or biological research or education purposes in Victoria must apply for, and be granted a pest animal research/education collection permit. In limited circumstances an exemption may apply for the keeping and selling of regulated and established pest animals.

This guidance note will provide assistance to applicants for such permits and animal ethics committees (AECs) considering applications for the use of pest animals for medical, veterinary or biological research and education purposes.

GENERAL

An application form must be completed to apply to apply to keep, sell, release or bring a pest animal into Victoria for medical, veterinary or biological research and education purposes. The [application form](#) is available on the [Agriculture Victoria](#) website or by contacting the pest animal permit administrator on:

- telephone: 136 186
- email pestanimal.permit@ecodev.vic.gov.au
- or in writing

Department of Economic Development, Jobs,
Transport and Resources
Pest Animal Permit Administrator
Mickleham Road
Attwood Victoria 3049

The applicant may be a natural person, body politic or corporation. Where the applicant is a body politic or corporation the applicant must nominate a responsible

natural person who is directly involved and has authority over the care and use of the animals (for example animal facility manager or principal investigator).

A separate permit application is required for each pest animal species at an authorised premises or location or a change in already permitted arrangements.

Pest animal permits will not be issued for a particular species to be kept for medical, veterinary or biological research or education purposes where the department considers the associated risks to be greater than any demonstrable benefit.

Permission to privately keep, sell, release or bring into Victoria pest animals declared under the CaLP Act for medical, veterinary or biological research or education purposes will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and in line with nationally agreed principles of risk management.

The translation of these principles in the permitting of pest animals in research and education results in consideration of:

1. Collection and benefit;
2. Risk assessment and management; and
3. Welfare

1. COLLECTION AND BENEFIT

The applicant must provide evidence of the Licence issued under part three of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1995* (POCTA) and relevant animal ethics committee (AEC) approval.

The applicant must demonstrate, where appropriate, that there is no alternative, non-declared species that could be used for the research and education purpose.

Persons and organisations referenced within an application may be contacted to confirm information provided.

The duration of the proposed activity will be considered when determining the duration of any permit issued; permits may be issued for up to two years.

For ongoing research and education programs a permit may be issued for a period of time longer than the AEC approval at the time of the application.

A permit condition requiring ongoing AEC approval will apply to all pest animal research/education permits.

The applicant must specify the total number of animals proposed to be kept at any time.

The pest animal permit, if issued, will specify the maximum number of animals that may be kept at a point in time. This number may differ from the total number of animals approved by the AEC for use in the project.

1.1 Permission to import into Victoria

Species applied for must be on the Australia Government Live Import List or already present in Australia.

1.2 Permission to sell

The authority of the receiving establishment will be considered.

1.3 Permission to release

The applicant must detail how released pest animals will be contained within the release site and as applicable, how the pest animal will be captured or destroyed at the end of the proposed use.

The applicant must specify the total number of animals to be released.

2. Risk assessment and management

Management of pest animals kept under permit must prevent their escape, unplanned release, establishment, and negative impact.

2.1 Risk assessment

The risk associated with the keeping, selling, releasing or bringing into Victoria of pest animals will be considered.

In accordance with the Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (IPAC) *Guidelines for the import, movement and keeping of non-indigenous vertebrates*

in Australia (IPAC Guidelines), risk assessments, based on the Bomford (2008) model, are to be developed for applications to keep, release and bring into Victoria pest animals that are:

- declared under the CaLP Act; and
- are considered by IPAC to pose an extreme threat; and
- not known to be present in the wild or have not previously been in legal keeping in Victoria.

Risk assessments will be subject to endorsement by IPAC.

The applicant will be responsible for obtaining and meeting the cost of any required nationally endorsed risk assessments.

The applicant must provide any endorsed risk assessments to the department.

Assessment of applications will be based on the risks posed by the keeping, selling, releasing or bringing into Victoria of pest animals and the strategies implemented to mitigate that risk.

The application assessment will consider:

- compliance with the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013)*
- the CaLP Act declaration category
- the threat category according to the *Australian list of threat categories of non-indigenous vertebrates* as endorsed by IPAC
- any relevant nationally endorsed species risk assessment
- the location of the authorised premises
- the security of the authorised premises
- relevant attributes of individual animals (e.g., source (wild or captive bred), quarantine status, age, sex)
- breeding potential including local existing populations of the species or species with which hybridisation is known to occur.

Applicants should note; under the precautionary approach detailed in the IPAC Guidelines any species that has not been assessed previously is considered to be in the extreme threat category and should be treated accordingly, until a risk assessment is endorsed.

2.2 Risk management

2.2.1 Minimising establishment risk

Breeding is prohibited for all declared pest animal species unless it is specifically necessary for the activity approved by the AEC.

Where breeding is applied for, applicants must provide evidence of the medical, veterinary or biological research requirement to undertake the breeding, demonstrate there is no suitable alternative, outline population management practices such as planned breeding and contraception and disposal, and meet biosecurity, animal welfare and conservation objectives.

Disposal arrangements for all animals at the conclusion of the AEC approved activity must be provided in the application.

Applications to breed extreme threat species that have a high potential to become a serious threat to primary production, Crown land, the environment or community health may be refused.

Where possible and practical, all pest animals must be permanently identified.

2.2.2 Collection management of extreme threat species

Mixed sex collections of extreme threat species will only be considered if appropriate measures to prevent unauthorised or unplanned breeding have been demonstrated and the keeping of a mixed sex collection is a specific requirement of the AEC approved activity.

2.2.3 Capability

The applicant, in the case of a natural person or the nominated responsible natural person and key personnel must be appropriately qualified or experienced in the keeping of the species of pest animal being applied for.

Appropriate resources must be available to ensure the ongoing security, care and health of pest animals.

2.2.4 Containment

For permits to bring into Victoria, keep and sell pest animals;

- pest animals must be securely contained and controlled by appropriately trained personnel at all times
- enclosure design must be appropriate for the maximum number of animals to be kept
- security measures must be relevant to the species kept and appropriate for the maximum number of animals applied for

- security infrastructure must prevent unauthorised movement of animals and people into or out of the site and access to pest animals should be limited as appropriate
- all possible threats to ongoing security for all containment facilities intended to be used must be considered
- containment design should be informed by current best practice
- containment for extreme and serious threat species may be subject to a requirement for endorsement by a recognised independent expert.

2.2.4 Transport

The applicant must provide details of any transportation of pest animals.

2.2.5 Highly dangerous or venomous animals

Before granting a permit the decision maker must be satisfied that risks to human health and safety posed by highly dangerous or venomous animals are adequately mitigated and may request endorsement of containment or management plans by an independent expert.

2.2.6 Contingency planning

Biosecurity, human health and safety, disruption to normal supply, natural threats and escaped animals must be considered and risk mitigation plans implemented.

The applicant must have appropriate contingency plans in place that meet the requirements of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013)* and the decision maker must be satisfied contingency planning has been addressed.

a. Biosecurity

The applicant must have in place a biosecurity plan that aims to prevent the escape and establishment of the pest animal while recognising animal health and disease prevention for the pest animals kept.

b. Human health and safety

The applicant must have in place a plan that considers and manages the risk of impact of the pest animals to human health and safety including the possibility of injury, envenomation and transmission of disease.

c. Disruption to normal supply

The applicant must have in place an emergency plan that takes into account how disruption of normal supply will be managed to ensure ongoing animal welfare and containment security.

d. Natural threats

The applicant must have in place an evacuation/natural disaster contingency plan containing detail of mitigation plans to manage the risk of all possible natural disasters such as storm, flood or fire.

e. Escaped animals

The applicant must have in place an escape contingency plan outlining the response that will be taken in event of escape and provides detail as to the method and timing of notification to the department in the event of animal escape. Where dangerous or venomous animals are held, the plan must include decision-making criteria for humane destruction of an escaped animal and include details of suitably qualified persons and, as appropriate, licensing arrangements.

3. Welfare

Animal ethics committee approval is required before a pest animal research/education collection permit will be granted. The primary responsibility of an AEC is to ensure, on behalf of the institution for which it acts, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with relevant legislation including the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013)*.

Applicants must demonstrate compliance with the relevant codes of practice, guidelines, standards and animal husbandry manuals.

For applications to release animals in 'Judas' programs the applicant must specify any relevant codes of practice.

While the purpose of a pest animal permit is to reduce the risks associated with declared pest animals, the welfare of those animals must be taken into account. Before granting a permit, the decision maker must be satisfied that the welfare of pest animals has been appropriately considered.

ACCESSIBILITY

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please telephone pest animal permit administrator on 136 186.