Ms Mechtild Rossler,

Director, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO,

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By email: m.rossler@unesco.org

**Tasmania’s World Heritage Area’s and Fallow Deer – Fact or Fiction?**

Dear Ms Rossler,

The Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee believe your attention has recently been drawn and assistance requested to address concerns relating to a perceived impact on Tasmania’s World Heritage Areas by the supposed incursion of Fallow Deer. The TDAC can state unequivocally that the information you received on behalf of Christine Milne and Andrew Cox is both false and misleading.

Tasmania is undoubtedly unique and has an abundance of natural heritage and cultural values that all Tasmanians support. As a result of this, the Tasmanian hunting industry and its constituents fully support the plan to ensure our TWHA are not impacted by Fallow Deer (Dama Dama). Whilst it is correct that deer currently inhabit some parts of the TWHA, the reasoning behind how and why this has occurred needs to be clarified.

The Tasmanian Government and hunting, farming and environmental organisations continually meet to discuss Fallow Deer management in our State. As a result of these collaborations, some great outcomes have recently been achieved such as:

* A 300% increase to hunting season length
* Removal of harvest quotas per licence holder (previously 3 deer, now unlimited)
* Remove the requirement for hunters to tag harvested animals
* A Fallow Deer census conducted by aerial survey

These outcomes have ensured that Fallow Deer can continue to be managed effectively, so their impact on the environment and farmland is negligible.

It is important to remember that Fallow Deer have been a part of the Tasmanian landscape for close to 200 years and in that time, they have failed to populate the TWHA consistently due to the carrying capacity of the land and the lack of a suitable food source.

Fallow Deer are ‘park deer’ and have successfully evolved worldwide by feeding predominantly on pasture crops and grazing farmland. The simple fact is the TWHA just does not hold a food source of this nature and as a result, the deer prefer to populate agricultural areas. Native grasslands and uninhabited forest have nothing to offer a Fallow Deer so the risk of the TWHA being heavily populated is a false narrative.

It is also important to note that the recently expanded TWHA boundaries procured land that had previously held a very small population of Fallow Deer. These animals were already established during the process of expansion, the deer did not migrate to the TWHA. The Tasmanian community do not want to see fallow deer occupy these areas and as a result, any animals that are located within these boundaries are to be humanely culled by volunteer hunters. This would be a perfect solution for all parties, regardless of the number of animals that are located.

Arguably the most important research conducted because of the numerous inquiries and collaborations is the population census. The data received has estimated the Tasmanian Fallow Deer population at approximately 50,000 animals. An estimate of 25,000 deer in 2016 which was quoted by Ms. Milne and Mr. Cox in a previous correspondence to yourself was simply a guess and nothing more. Whilst population figures have been estimated flippantly and recklessly in the past, the fact of the matter is the 2020 aerial survey is the first time we have received scientific data. As you can understand, by using numbers and quotes from numerous sources, you are able to manipulate numbers to achieve an outcome. I think we can all agree that scientific data is what carries the most weight.

You may or may not be aware that Andrew Cox and Christine Milne have been absent from Deer management in Tasmania for over 20 years. The Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee have been the most active and forthcoming organisation when it comes to Wildlife Management and have pro-actively endorsed changes to how Tasmanian Fallow Deer are managed on both private and public land. It is of no benefit to anyone to have deer populate the TWHA and we will keep working hard to ensure that it never occurs.

Please feel free to contact myself if you require further clarification or have any questions.

Regards

Andrew Winwood.

Chairperson - Tasmanian Deer Advisory Committee Inc.

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