# CDMC Annual Report

**December 2020**

Well, thank goodness 2020 is over. Let’s hope the new year is a lot brighter.

It has been a difficult year in so many ways for so many people. I hope you have all come through it in a position to embrace future opportunities.

Like so many other groups, the CDMC has been affected by the various restrictions to activities, movement and gatherings.

Despite the lockdowns and restrictions, a lot has happened in the past year both within the CDMC but also outside our coalition, assisting us in our efforts to pursue our ultimate goal: protecting our environment through humane deer reduction.

**2020 Summary** Firstly a summary of the events of the past 12 months or so:

Nov 2019 – CDMC incorporates and terminates its auspice agreement with the UBCC

19 Mar 2020 – Fed Govt communities environment program $20K grant received

Mar – Covid hits and turns everything upside down

Autumn 2020 – with the technical & persistent support of Steve Denny, we transitioned from DropBox to Office365 which we can get for free due to non-profit status and get the @cardiniadeer.org.au email domain. Changed website name to the same, so everything matches

1 April 2020 – Andrew Gray legal advice received and changes made to some of the documentation to further remove perception we manage the controllers

8 May 2020 – Melbourne Water Incentives program grant of $25K received

Late May 2020 – ERPAN strategy released – 10 year plan

22 Jul 2020 – Adprint – CDMC printed landowner information folders delivered

22 Aug 2020 – CDMC affilliates with Landcare – incl. insurance, broader reach & kudos of association with a widely respected environmental network

Sep 2020 – approached by two large local land managers seeking help with culling deer on their properties. Talks are ongoing with the landholders, but controlling deer on these two properties would give a significant impact on deer numbers

Sep 2020 – invited to participate in a $200,000 eDNA survey grant application by LaTrobe Uni

Late Sep 2020 – Invasive Species Council (ISC) advertised the new position of a Victorian Deer Control Coordinator

Late Sept 2020 – a member of CDMC, Johannes Wenzel begins pursuing the goal of establishing a Victoria-wide network of groups concerned with deer control – presumptively called the Victorian Deer Control Network

2 Oct 2020 – Dr Anneliese Wiebkin appointed to the new position within Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) of a National Deer Coordinator, funded by Fed Govt

Early Oct & ongoing – invitations to various groups throughout the state inviting expressions of interest in a Victoria wide collaborative network in relation to deer control

30 Oct 2020 – Victorian Deer Control Strategy released

23 Nov 2020 – Peter Jacobs appointed by ISC to the new position of Victorian Stemming Deer Impact Coordinator

24 Nov 2020 – Yarra Ranges Deer Control Network meeting of many of the key stakeholders

24 Nov 2020 – CDMC AGM held via zoom

15 Dec 2020 – inaugural meeting of the Victorian Deer Control Network held by zoom conference, chaired by CDMC’s Johannes Wenzel

As mentioned, the aerial survey will go ahead, covid willing, next autumn, and discussions are currently taking place with Dr Ami Bennett, Melb Uni in relation to ground survey works to be conducted in 2021

18th Australian Vertebrate Pest Conference is going digital => price drop to $350

 **Current state of affairs**

Current CDMC membership of 21

We have 120+ people on our regular correspondence list

CDMC have assisted 21 local landowners in their efforts to control deer on their properties

There are currently 7 controllers on our preferred controller list

**Newly elected office bearers**

At the AGM, the successful candidates for the official positions were:

President: Mike Hall

Vice-president: Glen Kostiuk

Secretary: Carl Hirst

Treasurer: Andrew Rewell

**At last year’s AGM we discussed our *What's next* list for 2020. How did we go?**

* Incorporation of group and start our own bank account - DONE
* Move those on who are on our contact list on to our member list – DONE. About 20% of those on the contact list have joined.
* Ongoing assessment of hunters wishing to be placed on our controller list – unable to conduct this due to covid
* Continue assessment of properties who wish to have deer culled on their land – have helped about 10 more properties access controllers and have a number waiting
* Further assessment of our risk analysis as per advice from the solicitor - DONE
* Continue to fine tune and develop our strategies and protocols – DONE & Ongoing
* Work with scientific and educational institutions to use citizen science to help monitor deer numbers, impact and effects of culling on all of these – IN PROGRESS. Severely curbed by covid. Many scientists are flat out catching up on backdated surveys and writing them up.
* Working with other land tenures, develop cross tenure culling strategies – ON GOING. Verbal support is excellent, but it is requiring changes to mindset. Workers at the coal-face are keen but the higher managers are dragging the chain.
* Develop or assimilate better mechanisms strategies for controlling deer – NO MOVEMENT
* Continue advocacy at local, state and federal government level for a better response to feral deer – DONE & Ongoing
* Establish contact with like-minded groups who are grappling with this problem to share knowledge \_ DONE, Victorian Deer Control Network in establishment phase
* Await Vic Govt Deer Management Strategy (was due June 2019) – RELEASED

**Goals for 2021**

* Getting more properties involved in deer control and increasing the numbers of deer culled
* Expanding our active footprint, especially Harkaway & Emerald
* Conduct surveys and studies into deer distribution and environmental damage
* Encourage citizen science
* Community education and involvement
* Continuing advocacy

**State of play**

**Aerial survey** The aerial survey is booked in for the end of May. Actual date is weather dependant.

**Ground survey** The ground surveys are being planned and designed with the intent of conducting them alongside the aerial study. We are currently having discussions with several universities who are interested in assisting us in our survey works with design, implementation and interpretation. It sounds very promising, but is in the very early stages. Watch this space.

**Victorian Deer Control Network (VDCN)** CDMC are working closely with the Invasive Species Council and others in the establishment of the Victorian Deer Control Network. This is a state-wide network of groups who are all interested in controlling deer. There has been a massive increase in the interest and efforts of groups and individuals across the state in significantly reducing the deer population. The intent of the VCDN is to share knowledge, support each other and create a stronger base for advocacy for more effective government policy and funding for deer control.

**Victorian Deer Management Strategy** The strategy is now underway and being managed by DELWP. Much of the initial effort is expected to be targeted towards the eastern Melbourne peri-urban areas. We are waiting to see how this will integrate with current control programs, including our own.

**Australasian Vertebrate Pest Management Symposium** This year the symposium will be held as a virtual conference, meaning tickets that would normally cost over $2000, will be only $350 (students $120). This is a great opportunity to get a close look at the latest research and innovations in pest control.

**Deer culling** With the easing of restrictions this should pick up again this year, after a covid enforced slow down last year. Unfortunately covid did not slow down deer reproduction. As ever, we are looking for more properties to come on board and assist us in our effort to protect our beautiful environment.

**Conclusion:**

Special thanks to the sub-committee for all their help and support. A diverse, talented, constructive & supportive group.

Thanks again to my family for their patience.

Mike Hall

President
Cardinia Deer Management Coalition