

We couldn't be more impressed or supportive of the Cardinia Deer Management Coalition.

Our property is a mix of bush and pasture with flat, open pasture and bush areas ranging from gently sloping through to quite steep falls to surrounding creeks. From the time we moved in, over 10 years ago, deer were common - in fact, the estate agent thought that were an attractive highlight of the property. She obviously wasn't aware that they were introduced and created considerable damage.

Both the sambar and fallow deer have created pronounced tracks through the bush with clear damage to native trees, under-storey and ground cover along with evidence of erosion along the waterways. Around the house they have been particularly destructive, damaging and stripping trees and requiring heavy guards around new trees. We came to expect any tree or shrub under a couple of metres high would get stripped bare and broken at some stage.

The Deer Management group responded to our query by first doing an on-site survey to ensure there were clear lines that would allow controlled shooting without the risk of shots travelling into neighbouring properties. They emphasised also the need to alert neighbours that there would be controlled shooting.

They then identified hunters that would be available in our area. We've been particularly impressed with the standard of training and marksmanship of the hunters. Safety and the humane shooting of the animal are always their first priorities. If there is any risk of a shot carrying or the animal not being killed by a single shot then they just don't shoot. Does with fawns at foot are never targeted.

They've always tried to harvest the meat so it's not wasted, and the remains have been left where we've requested to encourage and support the local wedge-tail eagle population.

At all times, the Coalition and their recommended hunters have supported their stated aims and our own ethics. The deer were, and are still, doing considerable damage to our own plantings but more importantly to the native environment. Numbers were growing. The humane, highly professional control of deer on our property has reduced that damage and we feel very confident in recommending the Coalition and their aims.

DB, Upper Beaconsfield, Oct 2021