

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



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FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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CONSULTATION ON DRAFT BARMAH PLAN BEGINS

Victorians can now have their say on the future of the Barmah National Park with the release of the draft four-year strategic plan for public consultation.

Strategic Action Plan: Protection of floodplain marshes in Barmah National Park and Barmah Forest Ramsar site (2019-2023) outlines management strategies to improve the health of the internationally significant floodplain marshes in the Barmah Forest Ramsar Site and the Barmah National Park.

The site supports at least 553 native species of flora and 273 native species of fauna – it is a vital habitat for thousands of waterbirds, native fish, aquatic mammals, reptiles and frogs.

The draft plan sets out a range of conservation measures to increase the extent and cover of wetland vegetation, including Moira grass, by:

- improving current ecological water regimes
- controlling the grazing and impacts of feral horses, feral pigs, deer and goats
- managing invasive plants.

Current estimates are that more than 500 feral horses feed off and trample the Barmah National Park to destructive levels. This has been identified as a key cause in the environmental degradation of the National Park.

In the first stage of the plan, the aim is to reduce the feral horse population down to approximately 100 animals by 2023. The long-term goal is for total removal.

The plan is the result of almost 10 years of consultation with the community, which resulted in a formal engagement and three roundtable meetings with the community to develop the draft plan in 2018.

The Barmah Forest Ramsar Site is largely located within Barmah National Park and is jointly managed by Parks Victoria and the Traditional Owners, the Yorta Yorta Nation.

The ecological health of the area is essential to Traditional Owners' cultural and spiritual connection to Country.

Victorians are encouraged to review the draft plan and provide their feedback between 5 April and 30 May 2019 at engage.vic.gov.au/barmah-strategic-action-plan.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"We have developed a strong plan to protect this important part of the world and we're encouraging the community to have their say."

"We want to protect the environment and cultural heritage of Barmah National Park and ensure it's maintained for future generations."