

Policy on Importing (and Keeping) Vertebrate Wildlife in Tasmania

PURPOSE

Importing wildlife can generate employment, support local businesses, and contribute to education, research and conservation. The Tasmanian Government delivers a range of programs and services to manage wildlife imports and protect our people, our environment and our economy.

This Policy has been developed by DPIPWE and sets out arrangements for importing (and keeping) vertebrate wildlife in Tasmania. These arrangements support appropriate importing of wildlife and help protect Tasmania's biosecurity status. The risk-based approach in this Policy is consistent with the Tasmanian Biosecurity Strategy and approaches used by other Australian jurisdictions. It ensures risks are known, understood and managed, and recognises this is preferable to a zero risk approach.

This Policy has been informed by feedback from wildlife parks, zoos, clubs, organisations and individuals that are interested in importing and keeping wildlife. It sets out efficient and transparent arrangements for maintaining sound biosecurity and supports better service delivery for stakeholders.

Protecting Tasmania's biosecurity and the welfare of animals are key objectives of this Policy, along with supporting individuals and businesses that want to import wildlife.

MANAGING WILDLIFE IMPORTS

The *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (the Act) and its regulations provide for the conservation and protection of Tasmania's flora and fauna. This Policy applies to the import of controlled animals (including all mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles). The Act prohibits the import of controlled animals without the written permission of the Secretary.

The Australian Government regulates the importation of animals into Australia. Applications to import wildlife into Tasmania will not be considered if the species is not able to be imported into Australia, or if the species is not legally present in Australia.

Strict conditions may be applied to wildlife imports to protect Tasmania's biosecurity status. Species that are imported into Tasmania without the necessary permits may be seized, exported, re-housed, or humanely euthanized.

For species that are approved for import into Tasmania, certain permit or licence conditions may be required for possession. The conditions will be appropriate to the level of risk posed by the species and will be applied to reduce the overall biosecurity risk to Tasmania.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The following set of policy principles guides decisions on importing controlled animals, and the conditions that may apply under a permit:

- Decisions will be fair, transparent and well-communicated.
- Decisions will comply with relevant legislation and be consistent with international agreements and conventions to which Australia is a party.
- Decisions will take into account threats to biological diversity to safeguard Tasmania's ecosystems, habitats and species and protect Tasmania's biosecurity status.
- The precautionary principle¹ will be applied to protect biodiversity, community health and primary industries.
- Decisions on importing wildlife will not involve unjustified or disguised trade barriers.
- The person applying to import wildlife must demonstrate that a proposed import will not adversely affect Tasmania's people, environment or economy. This must be achieved through evidence based risk assessment.
- Decisions will support the objectives of the Tasmanian Biosecurity Strategy to ensure Tasmania's relative pest and disease free status is maintained for the benefit of our environment, industries, and public well-being.

WILDLIFE THAT CAN BE IMPORTED

Not all wildlife can be imported or kept in Tasmania. To ensure the animal sought for import can enter the State, both Biosecurity Tasmania and the Natural and Cultural Heritage Division of DPIPWE must be contacted to determine the animal's import status and requirements under relevant legislation.

WHO CAN IMPORT WILDLIFE?

Wildlife can be imported by the general public, research organisations, and businesses that display wildlife. Wildlife assessed as a low threat can generally be imported with few, if any, conditions. Wildlife assessed as a moderate, serious or extreme threat will only be permitted if the overall biosecurity risk can be mitigated to low. This means that some wildlife cannot be imported, and some species may only be imported by people that hold wildlife exhibition licences, or permits to display wildlife, and can securely house the animals.

¹ The precautionary principle is that 'when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically' (Science and Environmental Health Network, 2006).

Businesses that display reptiles for educational purposes may apply to import a small number of moderate and serious threat reptiles. Strict conditions on possession will apply to ensure the residual biosecurity risk is low.

Aviculturists may apply to import low and moderate threat bird species. Strict conditions on possession may apply to ensure the overall biosecurity risk is low.

APPLYING TO IMPORT WILDLIFE INTO TASMANIA

A Departmental Case Manager is available to work with stakeholders and can assist during the import application and approval process.

If the import status of the species is known (that is, a risk assessment of it being imported into Tasmania has been completed) and it has previously been decided that it can be imported under certain conditions, the applicant can submit an application form for an interstate import permit. This form is submitted to DPIPWE, and provides information about the import proposal and the animal being sought.

The application is assessed by the Secretary (or his/her delegate), and a decision is made:

- If the species can be imported, the application is approved (with certain conditions, if required) and a wildlife import permit is issued.
- If the species cannot be imported, the application is refused and the applicant is advised.

DPIPWE endeavours to process all applications within four weeks.

If the import status of a species is unknown, then a risk assessment is required to enable an assessment of whether a species can be imported into the State, and under what conditions.

The flow chart at Appendix A shows the process for applying to import a species and associated decision making.

RISK ASSESSMENT

If the import status of a species is unknown, a risk assessment of the animal is undertaken. Under this Policy, animals are assessed as low, moderate, serious, or extreme threat to Tasmania. The '[Bomford model](#)', which is applied by other Australian jurisdictions and other countries, is used for the risk assessment. The model is used to consider risks that are specific to Tasmania.

The applicant will be required to prepare and submit a Species Profile. This provides the minimum information DPIPWE needs to assess the risk of importing the species into Tasmania. Guidelines for preparing a Species Profile are available on the [DPIPWE website](#).

The assessment is conducted by DPIPWE. The assessment process may involve recommending certain conditions on the transport and holding of the animal in Tasmania to reduce the biosecurity risk. The risk assessment and the Species Profile are published for comment on the DPIPWE website for 10 business days.

DECISION

After the consultation period, the DPIPWE Secretary (or his/her delegate) makes a decision on whether the import should be permitted. The reasons for the decision by the Secretary (or delegate) will be provided to the applicant. Note that a number of factors can be considered when making the decision, including the risk assessment, the Species Profile, public submissions, and matters in the public interest.

DPIPWE has assessed many species and the risks they pose to Tasmania. For further information about species that have been assessed, or if you are interested in importing a species that has not previously been assessed, please contact DPIPWE (details are provided below).

Following the decision by the Secretary (or his/her delegate), the applicant and those stakeholders who made submissions will be informed of the decision. The applicant will have 14 days to provide any extra information in support of their application to the Secretary (or delegate).

If an applicant, after providing further information to the Secretary (or his/her delegate) is still dissatisfied with the decision, the Department's external complaints process can be utilised. Information on the external complaints process can be found on the DPIPWE website.

CONTACT

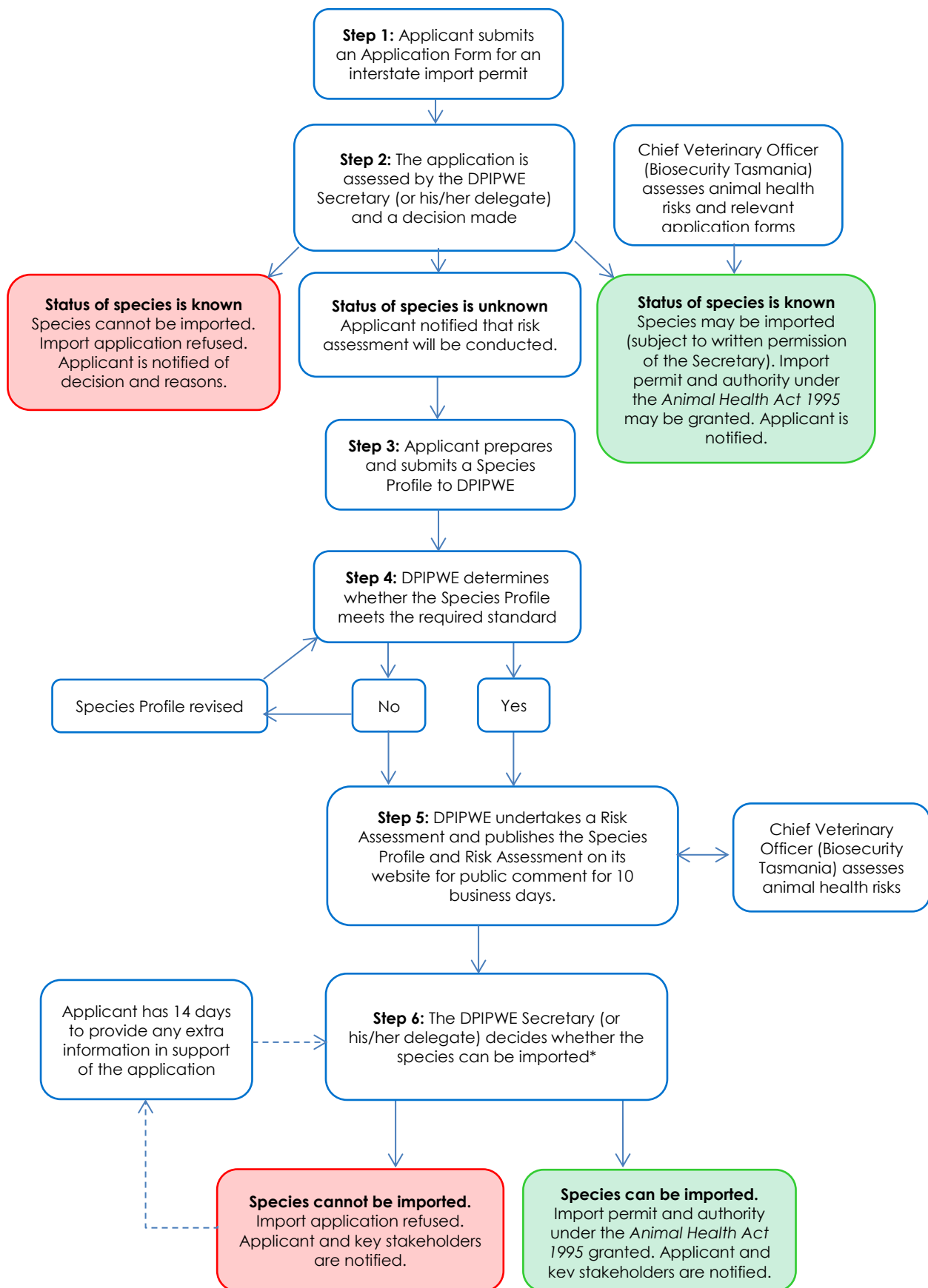
For further information about this Policy, or any supporting documents, contact:

Natural and Cultural Heritage Division
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
GPO Box 44
HOBART TAS 7001

Phone: (03) 6165 4305
Fax: (03) 6173 0253
Email: wildlife.reception@dpiipwe.tas.gov.au
Web: www.dpiipwe.tas.gov.au.

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APPENDIX A – FLOW CHART OF PROCESS FOR APPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS AND DECISIONS



* NOTE: If an applicant after providing further information to the Secretary (or his/her delegate) is still dissatisfied with the decision the Department's external complaints process can be utilised. Information on the external complaints process can be found here.