

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.

APPLICATION

A departmental Case Manager is available to work with stakeholders and can assist during the approval process. Contact details are at the end of this document.

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

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.

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

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

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 Wildlife Management Branch of DPIPW must be contacted to determine the animal's import status and requirements under relevant legislation.

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

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

APPLYING TO HAVE A SPECIES RISK ASSESSED

DPIPWE has assessed many species and the risks they pose to Tasmania. If a person wants a new species to be assessed by DPIPWE, the first point of contact is the Wildlife Management Branch (DPIPWE) (contact details are at the end of this document) to ensure the applicant has all relevant advice.

An application to import consists of an Application Form and a Species Profile. The application must contain the minimum information DPIPWE needs to assess the risk of importing the species into Tasmania. Application Forms and guidelines for preparing a Species Profile are available on the [DPIPWE website](#). DPIPWE endeavours to process all applications within four weeks.

The flow chart at Appendix A shows the process for applying to import a species and associated decision making. The assessment is conducted by the Natural and Cultural Heritage Division (NCH) and Biosecurity Tasmania (BT) Divisions within DPIPWE. The process supports public consultation and allows for decisions to be reviewed by an independent third party.

NOTE: The animal **must** be on the Australian Government list of species that may be imported into Australia, or be present in Australia legally.

RISK ASSESSMENT

NCH personnel, with advice from Biosecurity Tasmania, undertake a risk assessment and publish the assessment online for public comment for 10 business days. The DPIPWE Secretary makes a decision, based on the risk assessment and stakeholder comments, on whether the import should be permitted, and any conditions on the transport and holding of the animal in Tasmania that will apply.

THIRD PARTY INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Should the DPIPWE Secretary decide that a species may not be imported, the applicant can write to the Secretary and request a review of the decision by an independent third party. Only the applicant may request the review and must do so within 10 business days of being notified of the decision. A third party independent review will be conducted within 10 business days and the Secretary and applicant notified of the outcome. In accordance with the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*, the DPIPWE Secretary makes the final decision.

PERMITS AND LICENCES

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 ensure the overall biosecurity risk to Tasmania remains low.

CONTACT

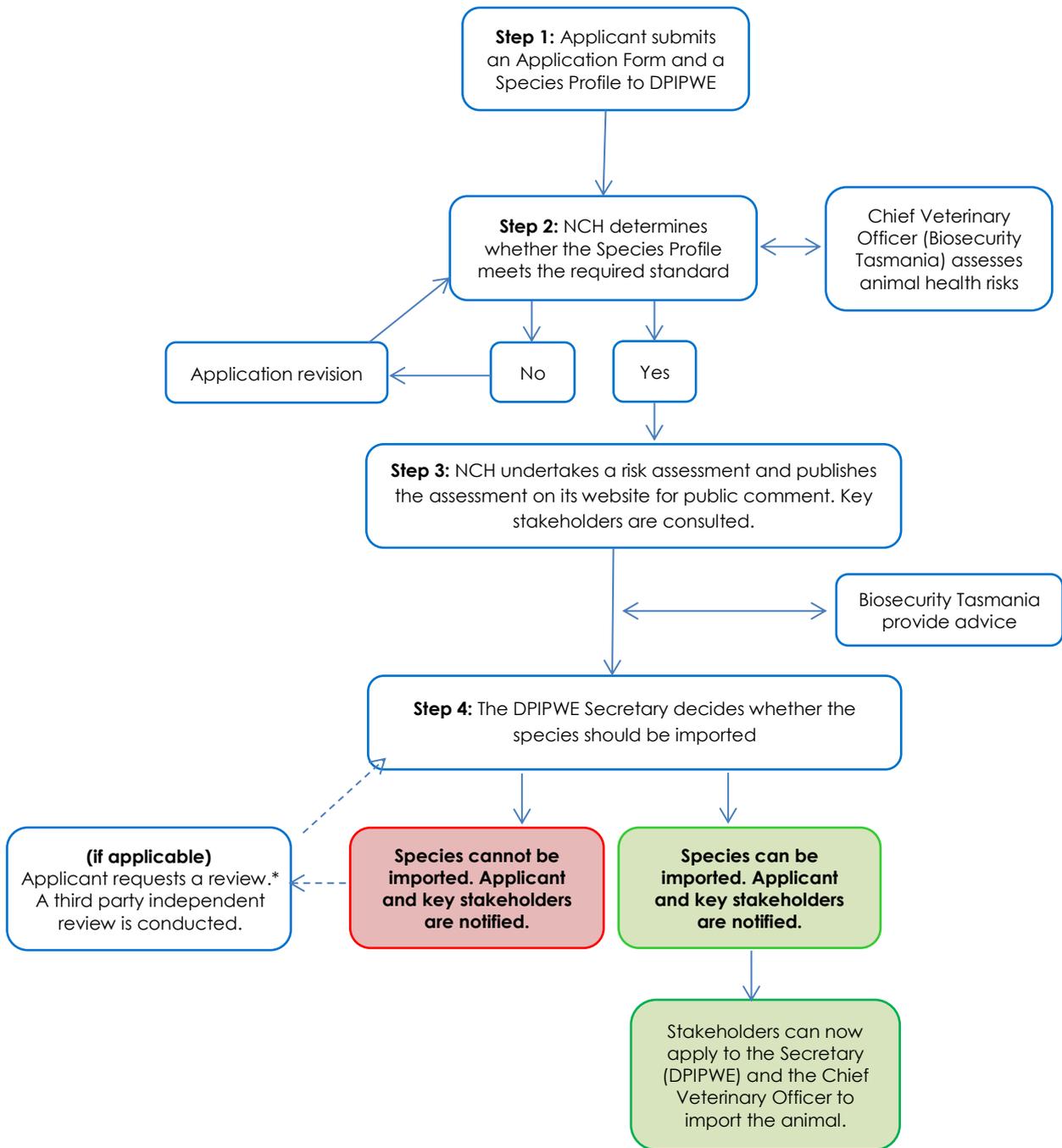
For further information about this Policy, or any supporting documents, contact:

Wildlife Management Branch
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
134 Macquarie Street
GPO Box 44
HOBART TAS 7001

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Website: wildlife.reception@dpiuwe.tas.gov.au

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



* Note the Secretary may decide that an independent review is not appropriate. Rights of review under the Judicial Review Act 2002 and review mechanisms for administrative matters provided by the Ombudsman Tasmania are also available.