



## SUBMISSION

11 June 2024

Dog and Cat Management Reform  
Department of Environment and Water  
By Email: [DEW.dogandcatreform@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.dogandcatreform@sa.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Breeder reforms: Updating the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995***

Livestock SA is the peak industry organisation for South Australia's red meat and wool producers. Representing over 5,200 sheep producers and more than 2,700 beef cattle producers across the state, we work to secure a strong and sustainable livestock sector. South Australia's \$4.3 billion livestock industry is a key economic contributor to the state which supports 21,000 South Australian jobs across the red meat and wool industries.

We welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to the draft Dog and Cat Management (Breeder Reforms) Amendment Bill 2024 (the Bill), which is important to our members.

Livestock SA supports the aim of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (Act) to encourage responsible ownership to reduce public and environmental nuisance and promote effective dog and cat management.

Effective feral cat management is an important issue for livestock producers. The spread of parasites such as *Toxoplasma* and *Sarcocystis* by cats have considerable livestock health and production impacts.

*Toxoplasma* can cause abortions in sheep and has a significant impact on the South Australian sheep industry. Areas such as Kangaroo Island (KI) are substantially affected, with estimates that *Toxoplasma* causes on average 17% of all sheep abortions on the island. This results in over 62,000 unborn lamb losses each year, with an associated cost to the sheep industry of approximately \$10 million a year.

*Sarcocystis* is also spread by cats and impacts on the South Australian sheep industry through cysts resulting in meat trimming and carcass condemnation at abattoirs. *Sarcocystis* costs the Australian sheep meat industry approximately \$2 million a year, with South Australia more severely impacted than other areas, with the cost to the SA sheep industry of \$1.2 million a year.

KI is disproportionately impacted by *Sarcocystis*, being 15 times more common on farms than on the adjacent mainland, with cysts from *Sarcocystis* detected in up to two-thirds of slaughtered adult sheep.

Limitations within the current Act impact the efforts to reduce feral cat numbers on KI. Part 5A Division 2 – Destruction and Seizure of Cats outlines the lawful seizure and destruction of cats. It permits cats found more than one kilometre from a genuine place of residence to be legally trapped and destroyed. This includes if a producer finds a cat on their property, and it is more than one kilometre from a genuine place of residence.

However, cats found less than one kilometre from a genuine place of residence can only be destroyed by authorised people. Authorised people include RSPCA officers, veterinarians, and authorised officers under other legislation such as the *Crown Land Management Act*, *Landscape South Australia Act* and *Animal Welfare Act*. Cats must still be checked for identification by authorised people (microchip scanning) and cats must be confirmed not to be identified before they can be destroyed.

Livestock producers are not included as authorised officers and cannot destroy cats found less than one kilometre from a genuine residence, even if they are found on land owned by a primary producer. This has led to confusion from landholders that under the Act they can destroy cats on their property, but this is only the case if the area is a declared designated area proclaimed by the Governor of South Australia.

The restrictions on the destruction of cats less than one kilometre from a place of residence have impacted the Kangaroo Island Cat Eradication Program where producers can trap cats on their property but cannot humanely destroy them. It can also impact producers who may be unaware of the legislation and limit their ability to manage cats coming onto their property that could spread *Toxoplasma* and *Sarcocystis* and seriously impact the health and production of their sheep.

Livestock SA urges the government to amend the Act to allow the humane destruction of a cat trapped on a property with a residence less than one kilometre away, by the owner of that property. We note that a recommendation to consult further with relevant stakeholders on the humane destruction of cats was made in the 2022 review of the Act, due to limitations on powers for certain personnel and locations. This recommendation should be included in the current amendments to the Act to allow for the effective management of feral cats.

Livestock SA supports the management of feral cats through effective and practical legislation. Amendments to the Act will further enable livestock producers to better manage the damage caused to South Australia's livestock industries and wildlife by feral cats.

Please contact the Livestock SA office on (08) 8297 2299 or via email at [admin@livestocksa.org.au](mailto:admin@livestocksa.org.au) if you would like to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Travis Tobin.

Travis Tobin  
Chief Executive Officer