



## Livestock SA Limited

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## SUBMISSION

13 April 2025

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Agriculture House  
70 Northbourne Avenue  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Via email: [aaws@aff.gov.au](mailto:aaws@aff.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Submission to the Renewal of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy – Animal Group Chapters**

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

Livestock SA welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to Renewal of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy – Animal Group Chapters, which is important to our members and industries.

We provided a submission to the initial consultation phase of the Renewal of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy. In this submission we highlighted the significant investments into continuous animal welfare improvement in the livestock industry. This includes the development of the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework<sup>1</sup> (ABSF), the Sheep Sustainability Framework<sup>2</sup> (SSF), the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS)<sup>3</sup>, and the ongoing review and endorsement of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (AAWSG).

It should be noted that industry-led advancements in animal welfare frameworks such as the ABSF, SSF and AWSS have occurred in the absence of an AAWS and respond to commercial market expectations and demands. As such, a renewed national strategy must support and enhance this leadership and deliver a greater understanding and collective ownership of Australia's animal welfare credentials.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Beef Sustainability Framework <https://www.sustainableaustralianbeef.com.au/the-framework/>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Sheep Sustainability Framework <https://www.sheepsustainabilityframework.com.au/>

<sup>3</sup> Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS) <https://www.australianwoolsustainability.com.au/>

The South Australian livestock industry has further demonstrated its commitment to animal welfare with the development of the SA Red Meat and Wool Blueprint 2030 (Blueprint)<sup>4</sup>. The Blueprint was developed in collaboration between industry, government, and researcher partners and it outlines a shared vision for a stronger, more sustainable industry underpinned by measurable targets to be achieved by 2030.

The Blueprint includes a specific animal welfare priority:

- *Protect animal wellbeing and adopt production practices that have been scientifically proven to minimise, pain injury and distress.*

And is supported by specific, measurable animal welfare targets including:

- *100% of SA livestock consistently experiencing animal welfare practices which meet sector guidelines (i.e. the AAWSG); and*
- *100% SA livestock receiving appropriate analgesic and anaesthetic treatment during husbandry procedures.*

It is essential that the development of the Livestock Chapter within the renewed AAWS recognises and aligns with these objectives, supporting rather than hindering their delivery.

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The following feedback is focussed on the *Livestock and Production Animals* chapter.

***Better alignment of animal welfare arrangements across states and territories, to avoid confusion and achieve consistent outcomes. For example, legislation, standards and codes of practice.***

Livestock SA supports the alignment of animal welfare legislation through the adoption of the AAWSG<sup>5</sup>. The AAWSG provide a nationally consistent framework, effectively harmonising and streamlining livestock welfare legislation across jurisdictions through endorsed, evidence-based standards and guidelines.

Livestock SA strongly advocates for continued use of the AAWSG as the foundation for animal welfare regulation nationwide. The introduction of alternative legislative frameworks would create unnecessary complexity and confusion, particularly when the AAWSG are already in place, nationally endorsed, and subject to regular review to ensure they remain current, relevant, and scientifically robust.

Moreover, the Blueprint explicitly aligns its welfare targets with the AAWSG, recognising them as a scientifically validated and evidence-based benchmark for animal welfare performance. Any departure from this established framework risks undermining the industry's strategic direction and evidence-based welfare commitments.

The South Australian regulations to mandate the standards incorporated in the Cattle and Sheep S&Gs came into operation on 15 April 2017.

***Identifying core skills and capabilities for workers and students in relevant fields and creating or enhancing education, training or awareness programs to achieve these skills.***

The Blueprint identifies training and education as key priorities for the advancement of the SA livestock industry. This includes the priority to, *"Foster a culture of continuous, evidence-based*

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<sup>4</sup> SA Red Meat and Wool Blueprint 2030 <https://livestocksa.com.au/industry-development/industry-blueprint>

<sup>5</sup> Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines <https://animalwelfarestandards.net.au/>

*learning and adoption along the value chain*". Accordingly, Livestock SA supports the development of education, training, and awareness programs where they are evidence-based and contribute meaningfully to improved animal welfare outcomes.

However, it is essential to recognise the existing training and accreditation requirements already in place for producers. For example, the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) Program includes a mandatory animal welfare module, which producers must complete to attain accreditation. In this context, any additional training, education, or awareness initiatives should remain voluntary and should not impose unnecessary compliance burdens on producers who are already operating within a rigorous assurance framework.

***Defining what good animal welfare looks like and developing a clear approach to achieving and showcasing good animal welfare outcomes in Australia.***

Livestock SA support the AAWSG as the national standard for defining animal welfare in Australian livestock production systems. The AAWSG provide a scientifically grounded and nationally consistent framework that underpins welfare practices across jurisdictions.

In addition to these standards, the Australian livestock industry demonstrates and communicates its animal welfare achievements through the ABSF and the SSF. These frameworks should continue to be leveraged to highlight ongoing improvements and innovations in animal welfare across the sector.

Australian livestock producers also consistently demonstrate strong animal welfare outcomes through compliance with recognised accreditation programs and the ability to meet rigorous international market requirements. These outcomes reflect the industry's high welfare standards and global competitiveness.

***Identifying and measuring performance indicators for animal welfare.***

The Blueprint identifies and measures performance for animal welfare in South Australia. These targets were identified through strong collaboration between producers, government, researchers and supply chain partners.

The Blueprint is closely aligned with the ABSF and the SSF, both of which include annually reported animal welfare metrics. This alignment ensures consistency and reinforces the credibility of the welfare indicators used across the sector.

These frameworks are the appropriate mechanism for defining and measuring animal welfare metrics in the livestock industry. Annually reviewed and regularly refined in response to market and society expectations, the metrics remain scientifically valid, measurable, and reflective of actual welfare practices and outcomes. They should be formally recognised within the renewed AAWS.

***Sharing of information within the research and development sector to align priorities and prevent duplication across all animal groups.***

Livestock SA supports removing duplications and streamlining investments into research and development as much as possible. Where appropriate, aligning research across multiple species can result in more efficient use of resources and broader application of findings.

However, it is equally important to recognise that certain research areas are inherently species-specific. Attempting to directly transfer research findings between species can lead to ineffective or invalid outcomes. For example, while research into methane reduction in cattle and sheep may be based on similar principles, physiological and anatomical differences between species necessitate tailored approaches to ensure scientific validity and effectiveness.

The Australian livestock industry has already demonstrated strong leadership in coordinating R&D, minimising duplication, and reducing unnecessary animal use. Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) priority-setting process enables cross-jurisdictional collaboration to identify, and fund targeted, high-impact research.

In South Australia, the Blueprint guides strategic R&D investment. Projects funded through the Sheep and Cattle Industry Funds<sup>6</sup> are assessed against Blueprint priorities to ensure alignment with industry goals and to avoid redundant or low-impact research. This coordinated approach supports the advancement of animal welfare, productivity, and industry innovation while maintaining ethical research standards.

***Increasing the Australian public's awareness of animal welfare related arrangements and measures, including standards and guidelines, codes and other mechanisms such as sustainability frameworks and extension activities.***

There is a well-recognised gap in public understanding of animal welfare practices within the Australian livestock sector. Livestock SA supports initiatives to increase public awareness, provided they are grounded in accurate, balanced, and evidence-based information. Australians are exposed to incomplete or misleading representations of animal welfare in livestock production, and it is essential that the public receives a truthful and up-to-date portrayal of welfare practices on Australian farms and within production systems.

Livestock SA supports promoting the achievements and continuous improvements in livestock animal welfare through increased public awareness of the following key frameworks and initiatives:

- Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (including their ongoing review and application)
- Australian Beef Sustainability Framework
- Sheep Sustainability Framework
- Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme
- South Australian Red Meat and Wool Blueprint 2030

As noted in our previous submission, misinformation and misconceptions regarding the Australian livestock industry have led to activism and the dissemination of inaccurate information. These campaigns have caused considerable distress for producers targeted by such actions, without delivering any meaningful improvements in animal welfare. It is therefore critical that public awareness efforts are fact-based, transparent, and aimed at fostering informed dialogue rather than division.

***Identifying all stakeholders connected to the animal group sector and supporting or developing effective ways to share information and collaborate.***

Livestock SA actively fosters collaboration among key stakeholders in the animal sectors, promoting the exchange of information to enhance animal welfare outcomes. The South Australian red meat

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<sup>6</sup> SA Sheep and Cattle Industry Funds <https://livestocksa.com.au/industry-funds>

and wool industry acknowledges the importance of effective communication and information-sharing, exemplified by initiatives such as the Red Meat and Wool Blueprint Working Group. Through this group, critical information was exchanged to shape the strategic direction of the industry, including the establishment of specific targets for various priorities, such as animal welfare.

***Continuing to integrate animal welfare into existing livestock and production industry quality assurance programs.***

Australian livestock producers are increasingly required to comply with animal welfare programs and assurance schemes, such as the LPA Program to sell red meat. These programs play a critical role in demonstrating producers' commitment to animal welfare and reassuring our customers, both domestically and overseas, that livestock are cared for humanely and ethically.

The introduction of additional assurance program requirements would contribute to an already complex compliance and reporting landscape for livestock producers. As such, the development of new animal welfare assurance programs must involve extensive consultation with relevant industry stakeholders, carefully considering the necessity of the program in relation to existing initiatives.

The integration of any assurance program should be balanced, ensuring it effectively supports animal welfare goals, meets market demands, and does not impose undue burdens on producers who are already navigating increasing regulatory and reporting obligations.

***Coordination of current and future livestock and production research and development programs.***

The South Australian livestock industry effectively coordinates research and development programs, fostering collaboration between researchers and industry stakeholders. The Blueprint brings together researchers and industry representatives, facilitating connections, collaboration, and direct input into research initiatives. Additionally, the industry aligns closely with researchers applying for funding from industry sources to ensure that research outcomes are beneficial to the industry, animals, and producers.

South Australia further demonstrates its commitment to livestock research coordination through the University of Adelaide's Davies Research Centre<sup>7</sup>. This centre serves as a hub for leading livestock researchers, enabling direct collaboration with the livestock industry to coordinate and conduct impactful research, including projects focused on animal welfare.

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

Yours sincerely

Travis Tobin  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>7</sup> Davies Livestock Research Centre <https://set.adelaide.edu.au/davies-research-centre/>