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SUBMISSION

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Parliamentary Officer
Natural Resources Committee
C/- Parliament House
GPO Box 572
ADELAIDE SA 5001
Via email: nrc.assembly@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Submission to Inquiry into Kangaroo and Wallaby Populations in South Australia

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 Inquiry into Kangaroo and Wallaby Populations in South Australia, which is important to our members and industries.

Introduction

It is undeniable that since European settlement kangaroo and wallaby populations have increased. The significant increase in pastures and watering points across the country has resulted in an increase in their numbers across South Australia. The reality is that in some areas of the state, kangaroo populations outnumber livestock carried on properties.

While kangaroos and wallabies are an important part of the Australian landscape and natural order, the current levels of overabundance are significantly impacting the landscape, agricultural productivity, biodiversity, and the welfare of kangaroos, particularly in drought events. Therefore, management of kangaroo and wallaby numbers must balance all these factors going forward.

As the representative body of sheep, beef cattle and goat producers in South Australia, Livestock SA constantly receives reports of overabundant kangaroo populations exerting unsustainable pressure on landscapes, infrastructure, and pasture resources. These pressures impact both economic outcomes and the broader ecological balance of our rangelands and agricultural zones. The ongoing drought is increasing this pressure as water and feed resources become increasingly limited.

In South Australia, livestock production occurs on over 50 per cent of the state's landmass and occupies about 84 per cent of our agricultural land and therefore livestock producers are a critical stakeholder in kangaroo and wallaby management¹. The SA Red Meat and Wool Blueprint 2030 outlines the priorities for the SA red meat and wool industries, which includes environmental priorities to enhance biodiversity and management of natural resources and ground cover thresholds.²

Livestock SA supports evidence-based, humane, and regionally adaptable management strategies that prioritise animal welfare while ensuring livestock producers can maintain their land and business viability. We strongly support the regulated management of kangaroo populations to ensure humane kangaroo population management to prevent the environmental, animal welfare, and industry impacts of uncontrolled population booms. Lethal management approaches that implement the guidelines for humane commercial and non-commercial harvest realise far greater humane outcomes to kangaroo and wallaby populations than uncontrolled population growth.

Responses to the terms of reference

a) How they are affected by commercial and non-commercial harvesting

Livestock SA recognises the critical role that both commercial and non-commercial harvesting play in managing kangaroo and wallaby populations:

- **Commercial harvesting:** where available, offers a practical, regulated, and economically incentivised means of population control. However, access to skilled harvesters is increasingly limited, particularly in remote and low-density areas. This leads to a mismatch between harvest quotas and actual take.
- **Non-commercial culling:** carried out under permits, is often the only viable control method in many parts of the state. However, the administrative burden and regulatory constraints around permit acquisition and use are considerable and can prevent timely population management.

Producers affected by high kangaroo and wallaby densities often experience feed shortages, fence damage, reduced stocking rates, and increased management costs. Commercial harvesting must be expanded and better supported to be a more accessible and effective population control tool, while non-commercial avenues must be made more efficient and less onerous.

Based on member feedback, Livestock SA is concerned that the administration requirements for acquiring tags are impacting on the ability for harvesters to acquire and use tags and may impact on the number of commercial harvesters available. The current tag use time limits and associated administration process to acquire and use the tags is impractical. We recommend the department review the effectiveness and efficiency of the current arrangements and consider how to automate this process to reduce the administrative burden to acquire and return tags. The requirements to obtain tags currently do not reflect the reward and price for using them and this continues to act as a significant disincentive to the availability of commercial harvesters of kangaroos in South Australia.

¹ ABS Agricultural Commodities, Australia 2020-21, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/agricultural-commodities-australia/2020-21>

² SA Red Meat and Wool Blueprint 2030 <https://livestocksa.com.au/industry-development/industry-blueprint>

Commercial Harvesting – realised quota

Under the proportional harvest strategy, quotas are set at a maximum of 20% of the estimated population size of Red Kangaroos, 15% of Western Grey Kangaroos, Eastern Grey Kangaroos and Euros, and 10% of Tammar Wallabies. However, as detailed in the table below, over the last six years a very low percentage of the set quotas have been commercially harvested. From 2018 to 2023, on average only 18 per cent of the set quota was realised.

Quotas

Kangaroo Species	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Red	498,800	501,200	277,500	214,100	257,000	338,100
Western Grey	205,400	170,900	177,200	165,100	159,000	221,200
Euro	81,600	80,000	60,300	60,800	27,800	34,900
Eastern Grey			8,300	5,700	8,500	15,100
Tammar Wallaby			9,100	3,500	3,500	24,900
Total	785,800	752,100	532,400	449,200	455,800	634,200

Harvest

Kangaroo Species	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Red	74,597	68,711	49,784	41,775	49,371	58,644
Western Grey	26,697	24,565	36,603	42,063	37,064	28,403
Euro	7,247	6,013	4,303	7,918	7,682	6,049
Eastern Grey			8,272	5,633	6,644	7,445
Tammar Wallaby			0	0	135	53
Total	108,541	99,289	98,962	97,389	100,896	100,594

Harvest as a % of Quota	14%	13%	19%	22%	22%	16%
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This data clearly demonstrates a misalignment between harvest quotas and populations harvested. It also calls into question the true numbers of kangaroo populations, and this must be better understood. Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure the required number of kangaroos are being removed from the landscape every year to ensure effective and accurate population control.

b) The adequacy and enforcement of the 'National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes' and the 'National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-commercial Purposes' including methods used and their impact on animal welfare

Livestock SA support the use of the National Standards and Guidelines for Animal Welfare and the use of scientific decision making for policies and legislation relating to animal welfare. We support the use of the Commercial Code for the commercial harvest of kangaroos and wallabies as it outlines humane methods for destruction of kangaroos and wallabies and is the nationally endorsed animal welfare standard for kangaroo harvesting.

Ongoing research and development of other scientifically proven humane methods for kangaroo and wallaby destruction is supported. The Red Meat and Wool Blueprint includes animal wellbeing as a priority, and we recognise that practices are constantly evolving to result in improved animal welfare outcomes.

Both codes provide a clear, science-based framework for humane management. However, areas of consideration for improvement are:

- Training and accreditation programs for both commercial and non-commercial shooters should be expanded and made more accessible, particularly in rural and remote communities.
- Compliance monitoring is difficult in non-commercial contexts. Livestock SA supports greater investment in education and oversight mechanisms to ensure the codes are uniformly understood and applied.
- There is merit in revisiting the practical application of these codes in extreme conditions (e.g. drought, heatwaves), where inaction may result in more prolonged animal suffering due to starvation or dehydration.

The intent of both codes to minimise suffering through best-practice shooting techniques, must be balanced with the realities of population overabundance and the need for timely control.

c) The sustainability of current harvesting levels and their long-term impact on the species

Livestock SA considers the current harvesting levels to be sustainable, and in fact insufficient in many regions to address the escalating density of kangaroo and wallaby populations. In some cases, quotas are not being met due to:

- Lack of harvesters;
- Distance to processing facilities;
- Market limitations; and
- Administrative burden on landholders and contractors.

This results in under-utilisation of permitted take and no material reduction in local populations, thereby exacerbating environmental degradation and economic losses. Long-term sustainability must incorporate adaptive quota-setting, improved harvester support, and greater flexibility in commercial operations.

Well-managed, regionally targeted harvesting is not a threat to species sustainability. On the contrary, it is a critical tool in preserving land condition, biodiversity, and the long-term viability of both kangaroo and wallaby populations and livestock enterprises.

Livestock SA supports additional quotas to be taken during times of population growth. It is imperative to find a balance in the management of kangaroo and wallaby populations without significant impact on the environment or agricultural production. We support the High Abundance Quota (HAQ) being applied to kangaroo populations when the population estimate is above the population average and the Special Land Management Quota (SLMQ) for when commercial quota has been exhausted, and producers are experiencing ongoing kangaroo related land management impacts.

d) The impact of commercial and non-commercial harvesting on the health and wellbeing of animals, permitted wildlife rescuers and carers and First Nations Peoples

Livestock SA acknowledges that kangaroo and wallaby management has social and ethical dimensions, particularly in relation to animal welfare, wildlife carers, and First Nations Peoples. When conducted in line with best practice, commercial and non-commercial harvesting supports better animal welfare outcomes by reducing population stress, starvation, and disease.

Wildlife carers often witness the consequences of unmanaged populations — including vehicle strikes, orphaned joeys, and malnutrition. A well-regulated harvesting system can reduce these welfare burdens.

First Nations communities hold deep cultural, spiritual, and custodial connections with kangaroos and wallabies. Livestock SA strongly supports their ongoing participation in policy design, conservation planning, and economic opportunities related to harvesting.

The livestock industry has a shared interest in promoting respectful, culturally inclusive, and welfare-centric approaches to kangaroo and wallaby management.

From Livestock SA's perspective, proactive and sustainable management of kangaroo populations—particularly through commercial and non-commercial harvest—is essential to prevent the animal welfare, environmental and cultural harm caused by overabundance, especially during drought, when food and water shortages lead to mass starvation and severe stress for animals, producers and First Nations Peoples.

e) Alternative strategies and practices that could be implemented to ensure the humane treatment and conservation of these animals

Livestock SA supports a multi-faceted approach to kangaroo and wallaby management that goes beyond culling alone. Recommended strategies include:

- Market development to expand domestic and international demand for kangaroo meat and products.
- On-farm exclusion infrastructure (e.g. kangaroo-proof fencing) with appropriate financial incentives for landholders.
- Landscape-scale management plans developed collaboratively across regions.
- Investment in fertility control research, noting current limitations in cost and practicality.
- First Nations-led conservation and land management programs, acknowledging their traditional ecological knowledge and connection to country.
- Technology integration such as drone surveillance and remote sensors to assist with monitoring and targeting.

The common denominator in all strategies must be humane, sustainable, and locally adaptable solutions grounded in practical outcomes.

Livestock SA understand that kangaroo and wallaby populations may be negatively affected during environmental emergencies, such as wide-spread bushfires or floods. As such, we support the consideration of reducing or suspending commercial harvesting in affected harvest sub-regions during and after emergency events. We note that any decision to reduce quota, suspend harvest, or subsequently reinstate harvesting in an affected harvest sub-region, will be informed by a range of

factors and request that early communication with industry and permit holders occur to ensure there is a thorough understanding of any changes and fully informed decisions are made.

f) Any other related matters

Livestock SA would like to underscore the following additional points:

- The impacts of climate variability, including prolonged droughts, will increasingly exacerbate the effects of overabundant kangaroos and wallabies.
- There is an urgent need for long-term policy certainty, as ongoing review and uncertainty discourage investment in harvest supply chains and infrastructure.
- The psychological toll on producers forced to witness land degradation and animal suffering due to inaction must not be underestimated. Empowering landholders with practical tools and decision-making autonomy is vital for promoting animal welfare, enhancing landscape resilience, and supporting the mental wellbeing of regional communities.
- The new Biodiversity Act must ensure that clear, simple mechanisms for land managers and communities are available to effectively manage local populations.

The livestock industry plays a critical role in South Australia's economy, landscape management, and food security. It is essential that kangaroo and wallaby management policies reflect both ecological science and on-ground realities.

Livestock SA recommends that the South Australian Government adopt a coordinated, inclusive, and adaptive management framework that prioritises:

- Humane population control;
- Landholder empowerment;
- Cultural respect and engagement;
- Environmental resilience; and
- Economic sustainability.

We thank the Committee for considering this submission and stand ready to contribute further as required.

Yours sincerely

Travis Tobin
Chief Executive Officer