

# Declared Animal Policy

*This policy relates to natural resources management, as per section 9(1)(d) of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 (the Act), enabling co-ordinated implementation and promotion of sound management programs and practices for the use, development or protection of natural resources of the State. Specifically, this policy provides guidance on the use and management of natural resources relating to the prevention or control of impacts caused by pest species of animals/plants that may have an adverse effect on the environment, primary production or the community, in accordance with section 7(1)(f) of the Act.*

## Feral goat (*Capra hircus*)

This policy summarises the requirements to manage feral goat under the following legislative instruments: *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* (the LSA Act), *Landscape South Australia (General) Regulations 2020* (the General Regulations), Chief Executive Control Notice (published in the Government Gazette on 11 September 2020 under section 192(3)(a) of the LSA Act and in accordance with regulation 25 of the General Regulations) (the Chief Executive Control Notice), and *Livestock Regulations 2013*. This policy also provides interpretation and recommended best practice on how legislative requirements can be met.

### Preamble

Various goat products are used by the community, and domestic goats have a place in Australian primary production. But it is also recognised that domestic goats can escape readily and become feral, contributing to environmental degradation and competing with livestock for pasture.

Goats are declared for control under the LSA Act and the associated General Regulations and other legislative instruments apply.

This policy recommends measures to control the number of feral goats, and outlines fencing and identification standards to stop domestic goats escaping.

### Definitions

Feral goats are goats that are not kept in captivity.

- This policy summarises the legislative requirements for feral goat numbers to be controlled, and not moved, kept or released.

Domestic goats are goats that are kept in captivity in an enclosure with security measures designed to ensure that the goats cannot escape (other than in circumstances that cannot be reasonably foreseen and guarded against).

- This policy summarises the legislative requirements for domestic goats to be contained and outlines instances in which they are required to be identified.

## **Purpose**

To reduce the environmental, economic, and social impacts of feral goats.

## **Objectives**

- To protect native vegetation from damage by feral goats;
- to protect primary production from over-grazing by feral goats and their competition with livestock for pasture; and
- to ensure that domestic and re-domesticated feral goats are properly confined and do not escape.

## **Feral goat risk**

### Invasiveness

A population of feral goats can increase by 60 - 75% a year, or several fold over three to four years.

### Impacts

Feral goats can impact on primary production and the environment by:

- eating pasture for stock
- eating crops
- eating native plants
- spreading plant and animal diseases
- damaging fences

Local impacts of goats can be severe where populations are large.

### Trends

The number of feral goats in South Australia has fluctuated with droughts and good seasons, reaching about 350,000 goats in 2016. Feral goats have demonstrated a greater capacity to survive in the wild in South Australia than other domestic ruminants. They are common in the South Australian pastoral zone south of the Dog Fence and occur in and around numerous patches of scrub in the higher rainfall (mainly agricultural) areas of South Australia. In 2018 feral goats were eradicated from Kangaroo Island. Reinfestation from poorly managed domestic goat herds is the greatest threat to the long-term success of control programs.

The number of domestic goats in South Australia has increased in recent years. This has resulted in more escapees and new feral goat populations (e.g., on north-western Eyre Peninsula, in the Coorong National Park and the Beetaloo Reservoir Catchment Area). Re-domesticated captured feral goats escape more often than those born in captivity.

Feral goat numbers outside of the South Australian Dog Fence are low, likely due to predation by wild dogs.

## **Feasibility of containment**

Feral goats can be controlled by mustering, trapping or shooting (ground or aerial). Control is most effective when control efforts are repeated throughout the year. Many landholders seek to benefit from mustering goats and sending them to market. Escaped domestic goats that are not recaptured, can quickly establish new feral populations.

## **State level risk assessment**

The [SA Pest Animal Risk Management Guide](#) was used to assess the future risks of feral goat and the feasibility of containing them. The guide indicated the need to manage pest animal populations for feral goats in SA.

## **Management plan for feral and domestic goats**

### **Management required for reduction in the numbers of feral goats to an acceptable level**

Under section 185(1)(a)(i) of the LSA Act, the Minister for Environment and Water has declared that section 192(3) of the LSA Act applies to goats, meaning public and private landholders are responsible for controlling goats on their land. An acceptable level of control is to be determined by the landscape board within the purview of the requirements of the Chief Executive Control Notice.

If a landscape board is of the view that a landholder has failed to adequately control feral goats on their property, the landscape board can institute control operations, to be undertaken either by third parties or by its own staff, and recover costs from the landholder.

Methods used to cull goats must adhere to the National Animal Welfare Codes of Practice (Feral Livestock Animals) and the *Animal Welfare Act 1985*.

### **Management required to prevent feral goats from being released illegally**

Under section 185(1)(a)(i) of the LSA Act, the Minister for Environment and Water has declared that sections 186(1), 186(3), 187(1) and 189 of the LSA Act apply to captured feral goats held in captivity for less than 3 months, meaning they must not be moved, kept or released.

All captured feral goats must be either destroyed on the property, sent for slaughter, or re-domesticated on land where domestic goats are permitted.

### **Holding and re-domestication of feral goats**

Captured feral goats may be held on the property where they were captured for a maximum of 6 weeks (as per the Chief Executive Control Notice) to give the landholder an opportunity to capture more and make transporting them to an abattoir or depot cost-efficient. At the conclusion of the 6 weeks, they must either be removed or destroyed. Goats may be:

- (a) Sent to an abattoir for slaughter and over-the-hooks sale.

- (b) Transported to a property on which feral goats are held prior to slaughter or transportation elsewhere. A permit under section 197(1) of the LSA Act must be obtained from the landscape board before such unidentified goats are held on a property. Or;
- (c) Transported to a property on which they are to be re-domesticated. Any goat which is to be re-domesticated and has not been permanently identified must be immediately identified with a PID as per the *Livestock Act 2013*. Any goats which have not been held in captivity for at least three months after leaving the property on which they were captured must not be held on a property unless a permit under section 197(1) of the LSA Act has been obtained from the landscape board.

If not properly confined, recently captured feral goats are more likely to escape than others. When inspecting facilities used to contain feral goats, the landscape board may consider this fact when determining their suitability or otherwise.

Clearance of native vegetation, whether through grazing or for feed, may be illegal under the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*. It is strongly recommended that advice be sought on this matter either from the Native Vegetation Council before establishing facilities to hold goats.

### **Management required to prevent domestic goats from escaping**

Under section 185(1)(a)(i) of the LSA Act, the Minister for Environment and Water has declared that section 189 LSA Act applies to goats, meaning they cannot be released. Goat owners must:

- (a) confine them within goat proof fencing;
- (b) obtain a permit from the regional landscape board before re-domesticated feral goats are held on a property; and
- (c) identify them with a PID, as per the *Livestock Act 2013*.

Fences must be goat-proof. The minimum standards for measures that landowners must take to control and keep controlled any goats on their land within the declared area of mainland South Australia (excluding Kangaroo Island) are specified in the Chief Executive Control Notice (Appendix 1).

Subject to the minimum standard being met, the landholder is in the best position to build and maintain a suitable fence, based on knowledge of their land and animals, as the land and or animals may require fencing over and above the minimum standard.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that boundary fences to confine goats are either a six-line electric fence or a fence based on 8/90/30 prefabricated fencing for large goat breeds; a lesser fence appears to be adequate for angora goats (for more details see Lund and May, 1990).

Electric fencing is strongly recommended against in situations where it is unlikely to be adequately maintained (e.g. un-staffed properties), however it could be allowed in the pastoral zone provided adequate testing facilities are included in the design and the property is permanently manned.

If in the opinion of an authorised officer, a fence does not effectively confine the goats, they may require a landholder to upgrade their fence.

Regional landscape boards are authorised to:

- (a) impose penalties on goat owners who allow domestic goats to stray; and
- (b) recover from the goat owner the cost of recapturing or destroying released or escaped domestic goats when it can be proven that the release was due to a wilful or negligent act.

### **Management required for protection against indiscriminate slaughter of escaped goats**

Goat owners are afforded a measure of protection against the destruction of escaped goats as per the Chief Executive Control Notice. A landholder onto whose land goats have strayed must, if the goats have identification tags, notify the owner of the goats (or the regional landscape board if the owner of the goats is not known) and enable the goats to be collected and removed.

### **Regional implementation**

Under section 8(2)(i) of the LSA Act, local circumstances must be taken into consideration when determining reasonable requirements for the management of natural resources. Local community-driven management of goat control is integral to this policy and regional landscape boards should seek to implement legislative requirements in accordance with local circumstances and in consultation with local communities.

Emphasis can be given to any aspect of control wherever it is of particular concern: for example, controls over domestic goat keeping might be stricter in areas with large tracts of goat-free native vegetation than in those which are extensively cleared, and the local community can determine this through their landscape board. Biosecurity SA will help boards develop their own policies by providing technical and other support.

### **Prohibition of goats from certain areas**

Under section 187(2) of LSA Act, the keeping of domestic goats is prohibited in the following areas:

- (a) **Offshore islands.** The keeping of domestic goats is prohibited. Note: exceptions to this prohibition are Wardang Island and Kangaroo Island.
- (b) **Flinders Ranges.** Feral goats occur throughout most of the north Flinders Ranges and have long been a cause for concern because of the high biodiversity value of the area, and the hilly terrain that makes confining goats behind fences difficult. Keeping domestic goats in the Flinders Ranges Planning Area is prohibited. A permit to keep goats may be issued by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, both to anyone needing to keep goats for medical reasons, and to landholders in the Flinders Ranges Planning Area who owned domestic goats before 1 July 1987, subject to compliance with identification and fencing requirements.

Feral goats have been eradicated from Kangaroo Island. The keeping of goats on Kangaroo Island is prohibited without a permit. Permits may be issued by the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board under section 197(1) of the LSA Act that will enable existing goat owners to maintain their

animals, subject to a range of conditions relating to identification, fencing and movement specified in the permit.

## Identification

As per the *Livestock Regulations 2013*, goat owners must identify their goats with a permanent identification device (PID) tag when they are moved into the State or if they are removing the animal from land on which it has been pastured. This requirement also applies to feral goats that are being re-domesticated. The requirement does not apply to feral goats that are captured and pastured for a period of less than 6 weeks and are consigned to an abattoir for slaughter. An authorised officer may require a goat owner to identify their goat(s) with a PID.

As per the *Livestock Regulations 2013*, appropriate movement documentation is required and the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database manager must be notified when goats are brought into the State or moved from land on which they have been pastured, when they are moved to a livestock saleyard, or when consigned to an abattoir for slaughter.

## Declarations

To implement this policy, goats are declared under the LSA Act. The following sections of the LSA Act apply in each of the areas shaded below.

Sections of Act	Declared Area		
	Whole of the area comprising the Flinders Ranges Development Plan	All offshore islands Wardang Island and Kangaroo Island	Whole of the State (excluding any areas specified in other Classes)
186(1) Prohibiting entry of goat to an area			
186(3) Prohibiting movement of goat within an area			
187(2) Prohibiting possession of goat in an area			
189 Prohibiting release of goat			
190 Requiring notification of the presence of goat			
192(3) Landowners to control goat on their properties			

The following sections of the LSA Act apply to captured feral goat held in captivity for less than 3 months.

Declared Area	Whole of the State (excluding any areas specified in other Classes)
Sections of Act	
186(1) Prohibiting entry of goat to an area	
186(3) Prohibiting movement of goat within an area	
187(1) Prohibiting possession of goat in an area	
189 Prohibiting release of goat	
190 Requiring notification of the presence of goat	
192(3) Landowners to control goat on their properties	

## Review

- Whether the management plans were implemented
- Whether the numbers and distributions of feral goat changed between 2018 and 2024
- Unintended consequences

## References

Lund, R. & May, T. 1990. *Goat Fencing*. NSW Agriculture Agfact A7.2.1.

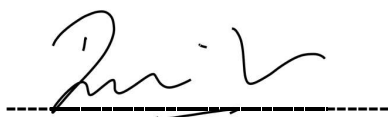
## Appendix 1.

Wording of the Chief Executive Control Notice, published in the Government Gazette on 11 September 2020:

An owner of land within the declared area of mainland South Australia (excluding Kangaroo Island) must take the following measures to control and keep controlled any goats on their land:

1. In the case of goats kept by, or with the consent of, an owner of the land:
  - the goats must be kept on that land within enclosures with boundary fencing (including any gates) constructed and maintained at all times to a standard sufficient to prevent the escape of any goats, taking into account the particular terrain;
  - boundary fencing (including gates) must be maintained in a state of good repair, free from any gaps, holes or damage, and be kept free from fallen trees or branches;
  - immediately upon becoming aware of an escape of goats kept on their land, the owner of the land must inspect and repair any damage to, or means of escape from, the goat enclosure fences.
2. Where an owner of land becomes aware that goats are on their land without their consent, the owner of land must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the goats are captured and, within 6 weeks of capture, either:
  - (i) removed from the land or destroyed; or
  - (ii) if the goats have identification tags, notify the owner of the goats (or the regional Landscape Board if the owner of the goats is not known) and enable the goats to be collected and removed.

On pastoral lease land as defined under the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989*, any stated policy of the Pastoral Board in relation to the management of domestic goats will take precedence over this Notice to the extent of any inconsistency.



**DAVID SPEIRS MP**

**Minister for Environment and Water**

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