



Your strong and independent  
voice for livestock producers

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Parliamentary Officer  
Natural Resources Committee  
GPO Box 572, Adelaide SA 5000  
By email: [NRC.Assembly@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:NRC.Assembly@parliament.sa.gov.au)

**LIVESTOCK SA...**

Unit 5, 780 South Road, Glandore SA 5037

**P** 08 8297 2299 **F** 08 8293 8886

**E** [admin@livestocksa.org.au](mailto:admin@livestocksa.org.au)

[livestocksa.org.au](http://livestocksa.org.au)

## **Re: Review of the Native Vegetation Act 1991**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Natural Resources Committee's review of the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* (the Act). This is an issue of importance to Livestock SA. We thank the Committee for granting an extension of time for our submission to the 30 July 2021.

Livestock SA is a not-for-profit member-based organisation that is the voice for livestock producers on all industry related issues. Livestock SA works to inform government, businesses, and the wider community on the contribution of livestock producers to the food and fibre industries and to the South Australian economy. Established in 2012, Livestock SA is a member of Primary Producers SA, working with other commodity groups on issues affecting all farmers and nationally is the South Australian member of Sheep Producers Australia, WoolProducers Australia, Cattle Council of Australia, Goat Industry Council of Australia, and the Southeast Australian Livestock Exporters Association. Through Livestock SA and the Peak Councils, Livestock SA is also a member of the National Farmers Federation.

Livestock SA welcomes this review into the Native Vegetation Act 1991 and strongly encourages the Natural Resources Committee to seek agreement from the Government to open the Act and Regulations with the intent of modernising the legislation and developing regional management of native vegetation based on integrated natural resource management principles.

### **Pastoral Leases and Rangelands**

Livestock SA is of the view that pastoral lands should be exempt from the application of clearance by livestock grazing regulations in the Act. The regulations of the Act potentially limit the use of pastoral land for pastoralism where land has been effectively un-grazed for 10 years. Currently approval from the Native Vegetation Council is required to approve the ongoing use of land for pastoral purposes. Livestock SA is keen to see the urgent introduction of the Pastoral Lands Bill 2020 into the parliament. The Bill's focus is on supporting the continued growth of South Australia's pastoral industry, while ensuring the sustainable management for future generations.

By definition all grazing on a pastoral lease is of native vegetation. The lease grants the right to graze this vegetation. The management practices of pastoral lease holders are closely scrutinized by the Pastoral Board, who set stocking rates. This is set in response to an examination of the state of the vegetation on the lease. Stocking rate is the only management variable available to lease holders. Infestations of rabbits, kangaroos or even locusts all result in a decrease in the number of stock which can be carried on lease. Best pastoral practice has been to take water to stock rather than stock to water. The rationale behind this strategy has been to limit localized damage to areas surrounding watering points by increasing the number of watering points – fewer stock per watering point equates to less damage. The Native Vegetation Council has opposed this strategy under several clauses of the Act which protect re-growth and 'un-grazed' vegetation (the 10-year rule). The supposition of the Council on this issue is that stock are unable to graze country not immediately adjacent to established watering points. This view clearly ignores the practical reality that stock are

able to access all of a lease in different seasons depending upon the incidence of rain and pasture growth. Preventing stock access to significant portions of a lease simply places more grazing pressure upon areas surrounding previously established watering points.

### **Heritage agreements**

The system by which Heritage Agreements (HAs) is administered is outdated. The provisions of the Act that relate to Heritage Agreements needs to be modernised. Heritage agreements lock out grazing and this does not allow for crash grazing for fire management purposes to reduce fuel loads. Also, revegetation agreement under HAs require the reseeded stock to be sourced from local provenance to ensure genetic consistency. Livestock SA believes that this needs to be reviewed to allow for climate change resilience planning in revegetation planting. Finally, there is a need to review the requirements regarding support funding for exclusion fencing to separate livestock from HAs. When HAs were first introduced funding was provided for fence management but now all costs fall on the landholder. Whilst landholders are keen to fence to keep stock out of agreement areas there is no funding assistance to help with this.

### **Vegetation overhanging roads**

Management of tree canopy cover, those that overhang roadways is a key concern for the livestock industry. Local government acknowledges that tree canopy management can influence road safety, but a review of the Act could assist in removing impediments that prevent the removal of dangerous vegetation.

### **Management costs**

Most of the costs and responsibilities for the ownership and management of native vegetation in South Australia falls to private individuals with almost no consideration for either direct loss of income or to the significant contributions and efforts required to manage remnant native vegetation. Governments have made token efforts regarding the issue of compensation by offering minor monies for land managed under Heritage Agreements. The costs of retaining native vegetation should be shared amongst the beneficiaries in proportion to the level of benefit that they receive (e.g., landholder, local community and/or wider community) and these proportions should be determined through the application of an agreed cost sharing formula.

### **Fire hazard reduction in native vegetation.**

The Department for Environment and Water / National Parks & Wildlife Service must be encouraged to interact with adjoining landholders with regards to hazard reduction and the creation of fire breaks, both on the perimeters and within parks and reserves. Strategically placed breaks, in combination with the early use of equipment in native vegetation, would lessen the risk of major fire outbreaks on public land. It is important that the Government reviews issues such as fire breaks, controlled burns and selective grazing within areas of native vegetation. We need to re-visit planning rules, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and develop better linkages between National Parks, the CFS and other stakeholders, including farmers.

Livestock SA would welcome the opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss how landholders could assist the Government in reviewing and updating this Act.

Yours sincerely



Joe Keynes  
President Livestock SA