

# **Declared Animal Policy**

## **under section 10 (1)(b) of the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004***

*[This policy is interim and will be updated in the future to align with the proposed Landscape South Australia Act]*

### **Feral Pig (*Sus scrofa*)**

#### **Preamble**

Feral pigs impact on agriculture, the environment and cultural sites across Australia. The number of feral pigs in South Australia is small but they can breed and spread rapidly. Pigs are declared for control under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (hereafter NRM Act). The prevention and early response to incursions is a cost-effective alternative to long term control of established feral pig populations. Once feral pig populations become established, they are prohibitively expensive to eradicate.

This policy outlines measures to prevent isolated incursions from becoming established populations. The policy also requires control to reduce the number of feral pigs in existing populations to prevent them spreading.

#### **Definitions**

Feral pigs are pigs that are that are not kept in captivity.

- This policy summarises legislation that requires feral pigs to be destroyed, and not moved, sold, kept or released.

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

Pig keepers must be registered to keep domestic pigs under the *Livestock Regulations 2013* and they must comply with instructions of an authorised officer under the NRM Act, to keep domestic pigs confined. A pig keeper's property where domestic pigs are kept must have a valid Property Identification Code.

Declared to be destroyed means that all land managers must carry out proper measures for the destruction of all pigs until there are none left.

#### **Outcomes**

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

#### **Objectives**

- Reduce numbers of feral pigs on all properties and in all populations.
- Prevent domestic pigs from escaping into the wild.
- Prevent the release of domestic and feral pigs.

## **Feral pig risk**

### Invasiveness

The number of feral pigs in South Australia is small (estimated to be 3,000-6,000 in 2018) (Appendix 1). Populations are concentrated in four areas; western Kangaroo Island, Lake Eyre Basin, North Eastern Pastoral District and the Riverland. Isolated incursions have also been reported across the State, particularly since 2013.

There is a risk that new populations of feral pigs will establish in South Australia and that existing populations may spread. Feral pigs have a rapid reproductive rate and so their populations can double or more in size each year. Feral pigs move into South Australia along waterways, from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, especially during good seasons.

### Impacts

Feral pigs impact agriculture, the environment and public safety by

- spreading diseases to domestic pigs, other stock and humans (including potential for spreading Foot and Mouth disease)
- eating pasture for stock
- eating crops
- eating native plants and digging soils in wetlands, grasslands and forests
- eating culturally important bush foods
- eating native animals and lambs
- spreading plant diseases and weeds
- increasing soil erosion
- reducing water quality
- damaging fences

Local impacts of feral pigs vary and they can be severe where populations are large.

### Trends

Numbers of feral pigs in established populations are stable in the North Eastern Pastoral District (more than 1000 pigs) and western Kangaroo Island (1000-5500 pigs). Numbers of feral pigs probably fluctuate in the Lake Eyre Basin. In the Riverland coordinated control reduced the population to about 200 pigs in 2010. Active control by individual landholders has continued but the population may have increased between 2010 and 2018.

Numbers of new areas where incursions of feral pigs were reported has remained stable since 2013, but the numbers of pigs in some incursions are increasing.

The number of properties registered to keep domestic pigs increased from 438 to 1274 properties between 2006 and 2018.

The number of pigs that escaped from captivity is unknown, because many domestic pigs are not tattooed.

## **Feasibility of Containment**

The prevention and early response to incursions is the cost-effective alternative to ongoing control of established feral pig populations. Annual baiting, trapping, aerial and ground culling over district scales (including groups of adjacent properties) are effective methods to reduce feral pig populations. The number of female pigs culled each year must exceed the number of female piglets produced. Reducing pig numbers is particularly effective in drier years when reproduction and survival rates are lower. Once populations become large and established, they are prohibitively expensive to eradicate.

The eradication of feral pigs will not be possible in the Chowilla floodplain, North East Pastoral and Lake Eyre Basin populations because feral pigs from New South Wales or Queensland will continue reinvading along waterways.

## **State Level Risk Assessment**

The [SA Pest Animal Management Guide](#) was used to assess the future risks of feral pigs and the feasibility to contain them. The guide indicated a need to focus on surveillance and mapping, destruction of all populations and to prevent keeping, movement and sale of feral pigs so that new populations do not establish.

## **Management plan for feral pigs**

### **Implementation at the State level**

#### Ongoing decline in the numbers of feral pigs in established populations

Landholders are responsible for destroying feral pigs on their land under section 182(1) of the NRM Act. NRM boards will inform landholders about the importance and methods of culling feral pigs before populations grow and impacts become intolerable.

NRM boards will try to source external funding to assist the community in coordinating culling programs, in the areas of greatest impacts. NRM boards recognise the need to collaborate with interstate organisations on coordinated culling programs, where feral pigs are moving from New South Wales or Queensland, into South Australia. The effectiveness of culling programs will be reported.

### Prevent the establishment of new populations of feral pigs in South Australia

NRM boards will encourage and facilitate community surveillance programs to detect incursions of feral pigs.

NRM boards will inform landholders of local incursions of feral pigs and require that all feral pigs are destroyed at incursion sites.

Landholders are responsible for destroying feral pigs on their land.

Across the State (excluding Kangaroo Island), any sightings of feral pigs must be reported to the local NRM Group or Board, with an emphasis on areas outside of established populations.

Any sightings of escaped domestic pigs must be reported to the local NRM Group or Board. Escaped domestic pigs become feral pigs (by definition) once they are no longer kept in captivity, and should be destroyed by landholders, on whose land pigs have strayed.

### Prevent feral pigs from being released illegally

The NRM Act requires that feral pigs must not be moved, sold, kept or released.

### Welfare

Methods used to cull feral pigs must adhere to the National Animal Welfare Codes of Practice (Feral Livestock Animals) and the *Animal Welfare Act 1985*. It is an offence to allow a dog to harm, bring down or kill a pig, under the *Animal Welfare Act 1985*. The use of dogs in pig hunting poses welfare risks to the pig and the dogs.

Dogs can only be used to flush feral pigs from vegetation to assist with control programs.

## **Management plan for domestic pigs**

### **Implementation at the State level**

#### Prevent domestic pigs from escaping due to unforeseen circumstances or being released illegally

South Australia has a productive pig farming industry. Domestic pigs must not be released into the wild. They must be kept in captivity in an enclosure with security measures designed to ensure that the pigs cannot escape, and controlled in accordance with instructions from an authorised officer. Fencing standards to confine domestic pigs in outdoors environments will be enacted in the future under the *Landscape South Australia Act* (Appendix 2).

When domestic pigs, which weigh more than 20kg, leave the property where they are normally kept (e.g. in transit between properties of different registered owners, or at an abattoir), they must be tattooed with an identification linked to the Property Identification Code, under section 72, of the *Livestock Regulations 2013*.

Domestic pigs (with or without tattoos), which belong to a pig keeper who is registered to keep them under the *Livestock Regulations 2013*, may be moved for emergency veterinary care or on a short-term temporary basis as may be required by the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* and due to any welfare emergency such as a bushfire emergency. While domestic pigs are absent from their enclosure (for welfare purposes), they must be confined and supervised by a responsible person.

### **Regional Implementation**

Refer to management plans of local NRM boards for details on culling programs for feral pigs. NRM Board management plans may use a risk management approach to minimise the number of domestic pigs that escape farms.

### **Exclusions**

This policy does not seek to address the issue of hunting feral pigs. Legislation relating to hunting is under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, the *Firearms Act 1977* and the *Animal Welfare Act 1985*.

## Declaration

To implement this policy, feral pigs and domestic pigs are declared under the NRM Act in SA.

The following sections of the NRM Act apply to feral pigs in each of the areas shaded below:

Sections of Act	AMLR NRM region	AW NRM region	EP NRM region	SE NRM region	NY NRM region	SAAL NRM region	SAMDB NRM region	KI NRM region	All offshore islands (excluding Kangaroo Island)
175(1) Prohibiting entry of feral pigs to area									
175(3) Prohibiting movement of feral pigs within area									
176(1) Prohibiting possession of feral pigs in area									
177(1) Prohibiting sale of feral pigs									
179 Prohibiting release of feral pigs									
180 Requiring notification of feral pigs									
182(1) Landowners to destroy feral pigs on their properties									

The following sections of the NRM Act apply to domestic pigs across the whole of the State:

Sections of Act	Whole of the State
179 Prohibiting release of domestic pigs	
181(1) Domestic pig keepers to comply with instructions of authorised officers	

## Review

This policy will be reviewed by 2024, including evaluation of:

- Whether the management plan was effectively implemented
- Whether the numbers and distributions of feral pigs in established populations changed between 2018 and 2024
- Whether the number and size of incursions changed between 2018 and 2024
- Unintended consequences

## References

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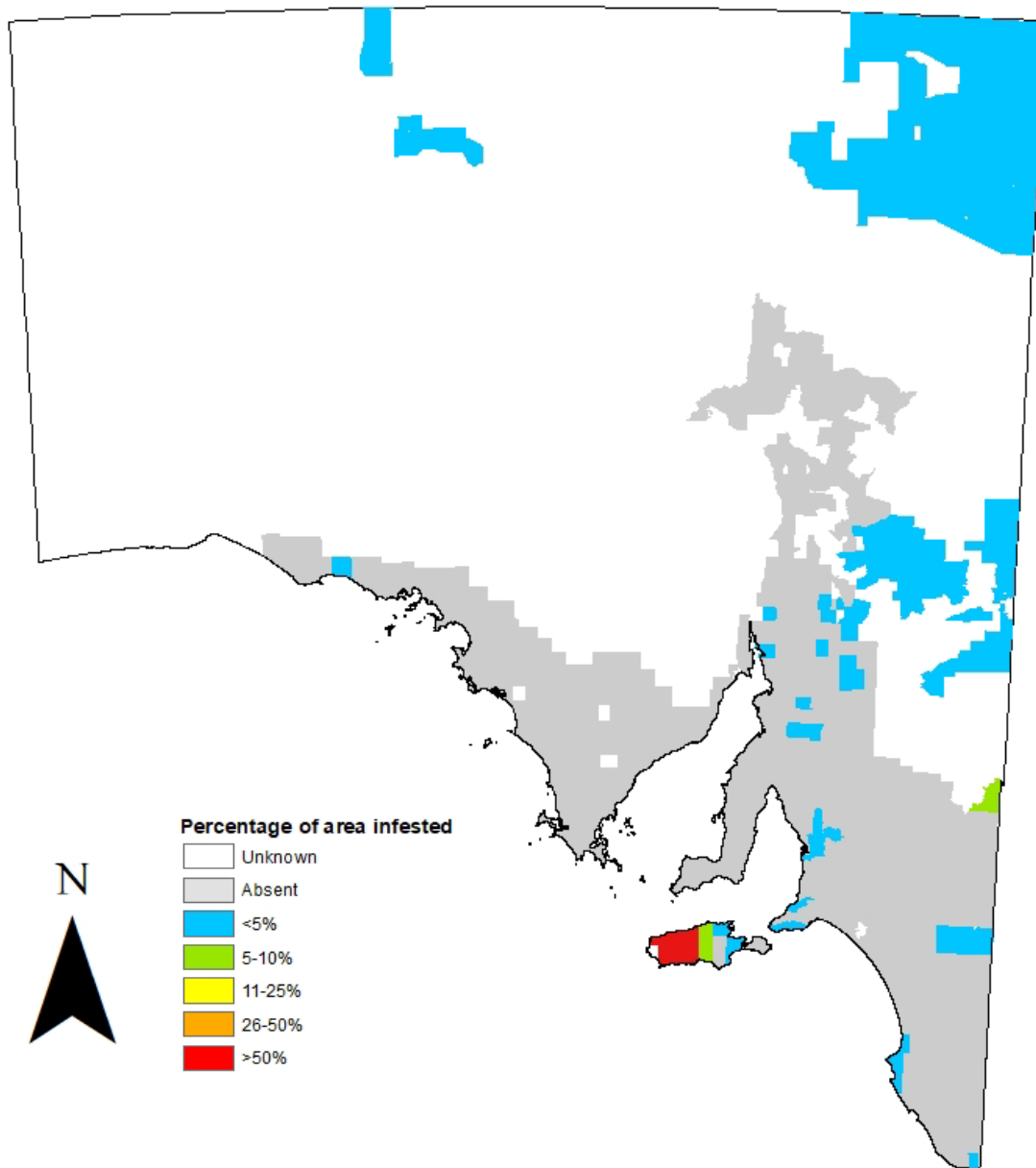
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Gentle, M. and Pople, A. (2013). Effectiveness of commercial harvesting in controlling feral-pig populations. *Wildlife Research* 40, 459-469.

Koichi, K. and Halliday, D. (2015). Glovebox Guide for Managing Feral Pigs. Invasive Animals CRC, pp 28.  
<http://www.pestsmart.org.au/glovebox-guide-for-managing-feral-pigs/>

Masters, P., Butler, J., Florance B. and Markopoulos, N. (2011). *Managing feral pigs on Kangaroo Island*. Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board. Unpublished Report.

**Appendix 1. The distribution of feral pigs in South Australia (2018).**





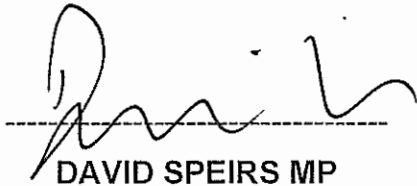
## Appendix 2.

Domestic pigs must be kept in captivity in an enclosure with security measures designed to ensure that the pigs cannot escape. The following measures to secure or confine pigs will be enacted in the future under the forthcoming *Landscape South Australia Act*. These measures do not apply under the current NRM Act.

Domestic pigs that are kept (at times) outside on land owned or occupied by the owner of the pigs, or on land with the consent of the owner, must be secured or confined in the following circumstances.

Where an authorised officer under the *Landscape South Australia Act* has reason to believe that domestic pigs on land with the consent of the owner are not being kept securely and are not remaining confined within the property boundary, the officer may serve a protection order requiring the owner of the domestic pigs to erect or modify and permanently maintain a pig enclosure fence in accordance with the following specifications:

- All boundary fences of pig enclosure must be constructed so that fences and gates are a minimum of 1.1m in height from the ground.
- All boundary fences of pig enclosure must be constructed using:
  - a) Hingejoint or ringlock pig mesh (size 8/80/15) to a minimum of 0.8 m above the ground, plus wire spaced each 50 mm above the mesh to the maximum height of the fence. Fences must use steel posts, that are a minimum of 2 m long, on the outside of the mesh, and the posts must be spaced no more than 10 m apart. Two electrified wire outriggers should be installed on the inside of the fence, which must be live at all times while pigs are enclosed. The outriggers should be spaced 375 mm from the ground and set out 200 mm from the fence, and 200 mm from the ground and set out 350 mm from the fence, respectively, or;
  - b) solid panels of metal, brick, concrete or wood.
- All boundary fences of pig enclosures must be kept clear of fallen trees or branches, which are lying over or have damaged the fence; and
- All holes under boundary fences and gates of pig enclosure must be repaired or blocked with additional mesh (or equivalent material) in accordance with the minimum standard for size and strength and the fence must be pegged down so that the bottom horizontal wire in the fence or the bottom of the gate is not greater than 50 mm distance in a vertical direction down to the ground level at any point; and
- Where the contour of the land under the boundary fence is deeply undulating, or where the soil is sandy or rocky, such that it increases the risk of pigs escaping, sections of the boundary fence post spacing must be less than the 10 m, where in the opinion of an authorised officer under the *Landscape South Australia Act*, action is required to stop pigs escaping under the fence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Speirs', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

DAVID SPEIRS MP

Minister for Environment and Water

22/02/2019