

19EW0005728



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Mr Josh Teague MP  
Presiding Member  
Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament of South Australia  
PO Box 572  
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Dear Mr Teague, *Josh*

Thank you for the Natural Resource Committee's correspondence dated 15 July 2019 referring a copy of the *Inquiry into Management of Overabundant and Pest Species Report*.

I thank the Committee members for their significant efforts to consider the challenges associated with management of overabundant and pest species, and the associated recommendations for changes and improvements to the way that government departments address them. I also acknowledge the contributions that were made by various organisations and individuals who appeared as witnesses or who provided submissions during the course of the inquiry.

As required by section 19(2) of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1991*, and as the Minister to whom the relevant legislation is committed, I provide this response to the Committee's report. This response has been prepared collaboratively by the Department for Environment and Water and Primary Industries and Regions SA.

The government accepts the majority of recommendations made by the committee and with others, further consideration and potential legislative change is required for the recommendation to be agreed to. Further detail and discussion is provided for in Attachment 1.

Again, please thank the committee for their work in helping to inform the ongoing management of native and pest species.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Speirs', with a horizontal line underneath.

**DAVID SPEIRS MP**  
Minister for Environment and Water

Date: *18/10/2019*

Enclosed: Response to the Natural Resources Committee, Inquiry into Management of Overabundant and Pest Species



## Attachment 1: Response to the Natural Resources Committee, Inquiry into Management of Overabundant and Pest Species

### Summary

The management of overabundant and pest species in South Australia is both an important and challenging issue. This issue has an impact on individuals, organisations and government, who each have a distinct role to play if we are to achieve significant ecological outcomes. .

This response to the Natural Resources Committee (NRC) *Inquiry into Overabundant and Pest Species Report* (the Report) has been prepared collaboratively by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA), with input from Natural Resources Management (NRM) boards. These departments and boards are responsible for implementation of legislation relevant to this inquiry, which are committed to the Minister for Environment and Water. Pieces of legislation which are relevant to this inquiry are the:

- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (the NPW Act), which seeks to conserve fauna whilst making provision for management of native fauna that are causing, or is likely to cause, damage to the environment, crops, stock or property, or poses a health and safety risk.
- *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (the NRM Act), which provides for the prevention or control of impacts caused by pest (i.e. introduced) species of animals and plants that may have an adverse effect on the environment, primary production or the community.
- *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (the AW Act) which seeks to promote animal welfare and details the actions which constitute an offence for the ill treatment of an animal.

Also referenced in this response is the *Landscape South Australia Bill 2019*, which is subject to the parliamentary process and is intended to replace the NRM Act. The response also refers to the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*, which provides for the conservation and management of the aquatic resources of the state. It is noted that this legislation is committed to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development.

The range and diversity of responses to the inquiry are notable, and highlight the complexity associated with the management of native and pest species. The Committee's observation of thematic challenges associated with managing the impacts of these species is consistent with the experience of government agencies that are responsible for these roles. The challenges identified were:

- divergent community opinions, views and values;
- varying levels of understanding of management roles and responsibilities;
- resourcing limitations;
- limitations of current management techniques; and
- the need for more research to inform best practice management approaches.

The government accepts the Committee's recommendation that making information more readily available, and increasing community engagement on management of overabundant and pest species issues, is required. However, it should be recognised that increased engagement and access to the relevant information will not necessarily result in every landholder appropriately managing the impacts of native and pest species, as is their opportunity (for native species) or responsibility (for pest species). Similarly, additional information will not necessarily influence the opinion of every member of the community to support the need for management of impacts caused by native and introduced species.

Beyond the specific recommendations that were made by the Committee, there are broader issues raised in the Report that warrant a brief mention, including the commentary on the requirement to 'shoot and let lie' for carcasses that are shot under a Permit to Destroy Wildlife (PDW). The Report noted that this practice creates waste, 'upsetting scenes' and provides food for pest animals. While carcasses resulting from animals shot under a PDW cannot be used commercially, applicants seeking a PDW for kangaroos can elect to use the kangaroo carcass (i.e. meat and skins) for their own personal use. The carcass must be tagged with a yellow personal use tag before it is moved. The royalty fee payable for the yellow personal use tag is currently \$1.60 per tag per animal. The carcass or skin cannot be sold, traded or given away to any other person, nor can they leave South Australia. There is no plan to allow non-commercial utilisation of carcasses other than kangaroos at this point in time. Alternatively, carcasses can be moved within a property and should be disposed of in accordance with local government guidelines. The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) will make an effort to ensure that this information is conveyed clearly to the community, to assuage community concerns about utilisation and disposal of carcasses.

The Report also raised concerns on behalf of the community about failure to comply with the terms of a PDW, in particular, the requirement to comply with Codes of Practice for humane destruction of wildlife. If destruction of wildlife is not undertaken in accordance with the conditions imposed by a permit, the individual may be subject to prosecution. DEW encourages members of the community to report concerns of non-compliance with the terms of a PDW; all reports of non-compliance are taken seriously and investigated accordingly.

This response addresses each of the Committee's recommendations and discusses broader matters raised in the NRC's report. The government is very open to addressing the issues raised in the report and further detail is provided in the substantive paragraphs below.

***Recommendation 1 - The Minister for Environment and Water should be able to declare a species as 'overabundant', for the purposes of managing its population impacts.***

The government fundamentally agrees with the observations of the Committee that oftentimes, the management of overabundant species does not appear to occur in a timely manner, to achieve the desired ecological impact.

Recommendation 1 of the Report suggests that once the Minister for Environment and Water (MEW) has made a declaration that a particular species is overabundant, it would trigger immediate short-term management responses, including culling and modification of permit-based restrictions for a particular species, impacting on an identified location, for a prescribed period of time. The Report is not explicit as to who would undertake culling, following the proposed Ministerial declaration. Additionally, the Report has recognised that there is not a legislative power which currently exists that would allow the MEW to declare a species as 'overabundant', nor is there a legislative definition of what constitutes an 'overabundant' species.

As stated in the DEW submission to the enquiry, DEW primarily, but not exclusively, manages wildlife and pest plants and animals on land under its care and control (e.g. National Parks, Conservation Parks) for primarily environmental or animal welfare purposes.

While DEW regulates wildlife and enables management by the community in accordance with the NPW Act, managing the impacts of wildlife is the responsibility of landholders, land and resource managers, community and industry. The NRM Act places the responsibility for destroying or controlling declared species on the landowner. Whilst government agencies, and regional NRM

Boards, are involved with coordinating programs to assist with the management of identified priority pests, it is the role of individuals, groups or entities who have an obligation (and a desire) to control the impacts caused by wildlife to acceptable levels, to protect their livelihoods, safety and environmental assets, where it is consistent with the NPW Act and other legislative requirements.

A shift in responsibilities away from these land holders and towards government would represent a fundamental change in the role of government in the management of wildlife and pest species.

There are a number of pieces of legislation which currently operate in a manner which achieves outcomes that are complementary to the intention of recommendation 1. Schedule 10 of the NPW Act lists the level of protection that is afforded to a native species. Adding a species (via legislative amendment) to schedule 10 as specifically 'unprotected', could achieve the intent of this recommendation. The implication of listing a species in schedule 10 would mean that a landholder, a member of their household or an employee or agent does not require a permit to destroy<sup>1</sup> unprotected species, where the animals are causing damage to crops, stock or other property on the land. Destruction of unprotected species must still comply with animal welfare standards outlined in the AW Act, the associated regulations and Codes of Practice (including NPW Act codes) where applicable. Although this process may satisfy elements of this recommendation, it may not achieve the desired outcome.

For example, the little corella has been listed on schedule 10 of the NPW Act since 1972; despite not requiring a permit to destroy the species by shooting (destruction by trapping and carbon dioxide narcosis is another permissible means of killing little corellas, albeit requiring a permit), it remains a species that causes significant impact in the community and has been the focus of ongoing management for a number of decades. This suggests that declaration of a species as unprotected may not practically achieve the intent of this recommendation.

The NPW Act allows for the destruction of protected fauna, subject to obtaining a PDW, pursuant to sections 53(1)(c) or 53(1)(d). Other sections of the NPW Act, relating to declaration of an 'open season' pursuant to section 52 of the Act (traditionally used to permit recreational hunting of protected duck and quail) may also functionally enable the intent of this recommendation. In either instance, it remains desirable to require a permit to ensure any animals destroyed are done so in a manner that satisfies the requirements of the AW Act (by stipulating that killing must be undertaken in accordance with an appropriate Code of Practice); this is consistent with the recurring commentary in the NRC Report regarding the need to ensure any animal is destroyed humanely.

Under Chapter 8 of the NRM Act, pest plants and animals of high potential impact are declared by the Minister for the purposes of particular measures. These measures include preventing their movement, possession and/or sale and/or to legally require their destruction or control by land owners at their cost. In practice pests can be declared and subject to regulatory requirements if they pose a risk to the environment, primary production and or the community. The NRM Act establishes that owners of land are responsible for dealing with declared pest animal and plant species that may spread and cause damage to the landscape. This obligation has been in place since the 1850's.

The broad intention of the policy is to declare and control such species before, or at the early stages of, invasion to stop them from becoming widely established and impacting across the state. Section 174(3) of the NRM Act specifically limits the ability to declare native animals to when the class of native animals is identified in the relevant regional NRM plan. Regional NRM plans are developed

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<sup>1</sup> A permit is required where the destruction of galahs and little corellas involves trapping and carbon dioxide narcosis.

through consultation with the community and other stakeholders, and are subject to approval by the Minister. There are currently no species of native animals declared for destruction or control (other than dingoes, which are unprotected under the NPW Act).

If a native animal were to be declared under the provisions of Chapter 8 of the NRM Act, the current measures available are not fit-for-purpose for the management of native species. For example, if a species of kangaroo were declared under the NRM Act, then under certain circumstances, there would be a legal obligation for owners of land to take action to destroy or control all kangaroos on their land. The obligation to control the species is not triggered by a threshold, rather, the declaration has the effect of requiring all of the declared animals to be destroyed, including destruction of where they live (e.g. warrens, burrows, nests and harbours), with the aim of reducing the extent of infestation across the landscape.

Further consideration would be required to determine whether such a wide ranging and blunt measure for managing native species (even those native species not locally native e.g. koalas) would be accepted by the community.

As the Committee has identified, the government is progressing reform through the *Landscape South Australia Bill 2019*, which recognises that native animals can sometimes adversely impact primary production, people or the natural or built environment. This reform will see the current regional NRM Boards being replaced by Landscape SA Boards, who will have a defined role of facilitating collaborative management of native species that are causing adverse impacts. Importantly, the Landscape SA Boards will be limited to managing the impacts of native species through prescribed activities, including connecting landholders and relevant authorities, education, supporting research and providing information to help manage native species that are causing adverse impacts.

The existing functions of other bodies and people involved in controlling the adverse impact of native species will continue. Permits issued under the NPW Act will continue to be required to destroy any protected native animal where those wildlife are causing, or are likely to cause, damage to the environment, crops, stock or property or poses a health and safety risk. The Minister will continue to be responsible for granting permits, noting that in practice this is undertaken by DEW under a delegation of powers. This ensures native species are protected, state-wide considerations can be assessed as part of the permit process, consistent approaches are applied, current technical advice is provided and relevant Codes of Practice and the highest standards of animal welfare are maintained.

Once the *Landscape South Australia Bill 2019* has been advanced through the parliament, it would be appropriate to undertake a thorough analysis of the legislative and policy framework that exists at that time, with a view to determining whether the framework is adequate to appropriately manage the impact of overabundant and pest species. This analysis should have regard to a variety of factors, including:

- whether existing legislative provisions could be employed to achieve the intent of recommendations 1 (and 2, discussed further below), or whether legislative reform is required;
- whether social licence exists to undertake significant, short-term management actions of certain species;
- existence and availability of technology/methods which would achieve efficient and humane culling of a species (or similar management responses); and
- availability of resources.

With the benefit of this analysis, and the findings of the Committee's report with respect to recommendation 1, it could be used to determine whether additional legislative reform may be required, and be used to inform the development of associated policy shifts.

In considering implementation of recommendation 1 (and 2), the government must ensure that the outcome does not compromise the requirement for a humane destruction, as this is unlikely to be accepted by the South Australian community. As the often-cited paper by Wilson and Edwards<sup>2</sup> reports, increased animal welfare outcomes will be achieved by professional killing<sup>3</sup> and this would be the primary benefit of government-led destruction. However, relaxation of permit-conditions may potentially conflict with the need to achieve appropriate animal welfare outcomes, the maintenance of which were the concern of several submissions to the inquiry.

In this regard, DEW recognises the community desire to simplify the process of applying for permits issued by the agency. A new Wildlife Permits System is currently in development which will be an online platform, streamlining the process of applying for (and issuing) all permits issued by DEW relating to wildlife management. It is anticipated that DEW will commence issuing hunting permits with this new system in early 2020, with PDW and commercial kangaroo harvesting permits to be available online by mid-2020.

***Recommendation 2 - The Minister for Environment and Water should consider immediate declarations in relation to western grey kangaroos, little corellas, long-nosed fur seals, and koalas where populations are having a deleterious impact on an identified landscape.***

The government accepts the recommendation that where a species is identified as having a deleterious impact on an identified landscape, remedial action should occur to manage the impact of that species. Indeed, the government is already taking action to address the impacts of the species identified in recommendation 2.

Consistent with the discussion above in relation to recommendation 1, the state government recognises that no statutory power currently exists to achieve the intention of this recommendation, although it is noted that the various provisions of the NPW Act and the NRM Act may practically achieve the intended outcome of recommendation 1.

Improved management of western grey kangaroos (indeed all macropod species which routinely cause adverse impacts) is currently being progressed through proposed amendments to the South Australian Commercial Kangaroo Management Plan, which will enable commercial harvesting of this species throughout most of the state. Around 170,000 western grey kangaroos are already included in commercial harvest quotas in 2019, and work is being undertaken to help develop the industry (see discussion regarding recommendations 11 and 12). Similarly, recent changes to delegations under the NPW Act will enable more western grey kangaroos to be issued on PDW; it is expected that DEW will permit destruction of around 100,000 kangaroos non-commercially in 2019.

Little corellas are currently listed as an unprotected species in South Australia, and as such, their status comes as close as any native species to fulfilling the intent of recommendations 1 and 2. Despite their

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<sup>2</sup> George R Wilson and Melanie Edwards (2019) Professional kangaroo population control leads to better animal welfare, conservation outcomes and avoids waste. *Australian Zoologist*: 2019, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp. 181-202

<sup>3</sup> Including accredited volunteer groups utilised already by DEW for wildlife management programs: The Sporting Shooter Association of Australia Conservation & Wildlife Management SA Inc and the Australian Deer Association.

unprotected status, whereby no permit has been required to shoot little corellas since at least 1972, this species causes significant issues to many in the community. DEW is receiving feedback on a South Australian Little Corella Management Strategy, underpinned by decades of research into little corellas and bird management techniques, to strategically and humanely address the impacts of little corellas for the long-term.

Further work is underway to address long-nosed fur seal impacts on the Lakes and Coorong Fishery with a joint industry-government research project having recently commenced, which will assess the economic and ecological impacts of seals on the Lakes and Coorong fishery and the ecosystem through the use of GPS tracking, nutrient analysis, monitoring of the seal population, reporting of interactions and ecosystem modelling. This research project will inform future management decisions by evaluating the costs and benefits of mitigating the impact of the seals on the Lakes and Coorong fishery. This project demonstrates the state government's existing commitment to utilise research to provide an evidence base for effective management responses and greater understanding of best practices, in line with recommendation 7.

Regarding koalas, the state government has a strategy to guide the conservation and management of koalas in South Australia. The aim of the strategy is to sustain a healthy koala population through a combination of passive and active conservation and management activities. Management actions include habitat restoration, individual tree guarding, and fertility control of the koalas in areas of high density, including private and public lands across Kangaroo Island and the Adelaide Hills and Mount Lofty Ranges. In 2018/19 DEW treated over 400 koalas on Kangaroo Island with a contraceptive implant to reduce koala fertility. The culling of koalas or the deliberate spread of disease is not government policy in South Australia. This is a long-standing position with agreement across state and federal governments, and reflects the iconic status and public image of the koala.

***Recommendation 3 - The South Australian Government should apply a risk-based and impact-based approach to both native and invasive impact-causing species alike, and to both Crown land and privately-held land.***

The South Australian Government agrees with the recommendation to apply a risk- and impact-based approach to management of impact causing species.

Both formal and informal risk assessment processes, using both quantitative and qualitative data, already apply to the management of native fauna, and invasive pest plants and animals at regional and state levels. These processes inform policies for management of native species and declared species and management actions for each region. The SA Weed Risk Management and Pest Animal Risk Management Guides ensure a consistent, coordinated approach. These guides align with national standards of pest impact (risk) and feasibility of control assessments and have been adopted by other jurisdictions. The Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board has recently invested in a trial to adapt risk management approaches designed for alien species to assessing the risks of native animals expanding to habitats beyond their native range.

***Recommendation 4 - The South Australian Government expedites the development of integrated strategies for priority species where these are not already in place. Integrated strategies should include identification of populations and incorporate short and long-term measures, whether or not a species is presently declared abundant.***

The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation to develop integrated strategies for priority species, which would necessarily require preparation and implementation strategies.



It should be noted that strategy development is typically inexpensive relative to the implementation of the strategy. Short funding cycles and budget constraints result in prioritisation of implementation effort (following risk- and impact-based approaches) and increase the necessity for community delivery of the actions proposed by the strategies. Stakeholder delivery can also pose a challenge to the success of integrated strategies, particularly where stakeholders have not fully delivered their responsibilities and government departments or Boards are relied upon to address implementation gaps.

Strategies for priority native fauna have been, and are being prepared following a general set of principles (e.g. identify the impact; identify the causes of impact; identify the scale of management required; identify community expectations, etc.). The South Australian Koala Conservation and Management Strategy addresses the key conservation and management issues which affect the health and welfare of koalas and their habitat, as well as outlining the actions that will help manage these impacts. Similarly, DEW is currently progressing a South Australian Little Corella Management Strategy (SALCMS) which is underpinned by decades of research into little corellas and bird management techniques. The SALCMS is being co-designed with 22 councils as well as other government agencies, the Local Government Association, and relevant non-governmental organisation and industries to strategically and humanely mitigate the impact of this species on the state, communities and landholders.

For declared pests, integrated management strategies for priority species are prepared using co-investment funding models, including Australian Government funding as available, for implementation with partner organisations - examples of current strategies include all Weeds of National Significance, buffel grass, feral goats, rabbits, wild dogs, feral deer and large feral herbivores such as camels, horses and donkeys in the rangelands.

***Recommendation 5 - The South Australian Government should develop policy and codes of practice for the management of species in partnership with Landscape Boards, Councils, communities including landholders, local Aboriginal communities, industries, and relevant experts.***

The government accepts the Committee's recommendation and acknowledges the benefit of collaboratively developing policy and codes of practice which enable humane, evidence-based and effective management outcomes.

Policies and codes of practice developed under the NPW Act guide management of native fauna, and ensure wildlife are destroyed in a humane manner which satisfy the requirements of the AW Act. For example, DEW recently published a revised *Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Wombats by Shooting in South Australia* (CoP) which was guided in its development by wombat experts, firearms experts, land managers (including destruction permit holders), a wildlife veterinarian, an animal welfare inspector and research scientists. This revised CoP ensures that destruction permit holders have access to (and indeed must abide by the CoP as a condition of permit) practical and contemporary animal welfare, firearms and shooting practices to enable them to humanely and effectively manage wombat impacts.

Similarly, under the NRM Act the government already develops declared plant and animal policies and best practice management approaches with NRM Boards, Councils, and communities including landholders, Aboriginal communities, industries and relevant experts. This approach will continue under the proposed Landscape SA Act.

***Recommendation 6 - The South Australian Government should seek engagement with and advice from local Aboriginal communities in developing management approaches.***

The government accepts the Committee's recommendation. It is well recognised that Aboriginal communities seek stronger partnerships and involvement to help achieve healthy country and the social, economic and wellbeing desired by the First Nation.

A functional example of where this approach already occurs is in the co-management of National Parks in South Australia. Co-management is a partnership between the state government and Aboriginal groups to help manage our national parks. This approach combines Aboriginal knowledge with contemporary park management. There are now 12 co-management agreements in place over 35 of South Australia's 340 parks and reserves, covering 13.5 million hectares or 64% of the reserve system, equating to 13% of the land area of South Australia. Other active examples of the government engaging with Aboriginal communities to develop landscape-scale management approaches include strategies and plans for buffel grass, camels and wild dogs/dingoes.

Improvements in Aboriginal engagement can always be made and we will give this consideration in development of pest management planning initiatives in the future.

***Recommendation 7 - The South Australian Government should continue to monitor research to provide an evidence base for effective management responses and greater understanding of best practices.***

The government agrees with the recommendation that there is a need to monitor relevant research to improve effective management outcomes. It is also recognised that there is value in government contributing funding to support research into managing the impact of native and pest species to benefit the South Australian community where resourcing permits. The focus for any government funding is particularly relevant where native or pest fauna impact public safety, community amenity or the environment, broadly following the principal of government investing where there is a net public benefit described in the Australian Pest Animal Strategy<sup>4</sup>.

For both impact-causing native and pest species, there is an ongoing need for best practice engagement with researchers across the state and country. For pest animals (rabbits, wild dogs, feral deer) and priority weeds, the government is undertaking this with the benefit of funding assistance through the Australian Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. The government is also a member of, and participant in, research programs of the National Centre for Invasive Species Solutions. Best Practice Management Guides are available for selected species – for example, for most of the Weeds of National Significance and wild dogs (through the Biteback Program in SA Arid Lands) – however prioritised investment is required to develop resources and for coordinated implementation of landscape-scale approaches.

The government is likewise supporting research into native fauna. For example, management of koalas will improve through initiatives such as the recently established International Koala Centre for Excellence (IKCE) which sees the government partnering with scientists, business and community organisations, the Australian Government and state and territory governments, fauna rescue groups and others in Australia and around the world to support direct, ground-breaking research into the biology, management and conservation of the koala.

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<sup>4</sup> Invasive Plants and Animals Committee 2016, Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017 to 2027, Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Canberra.

The government further considers that there may be justification for the appointment of a Chief Ecologist in South Australia. A Chief Ecologist would be recognised by the community as an independent expert, with a scientific background and a comprehensive understanding of the South Australian landscape. They would be available to provide opinion with respect to a broad range of issues that are experienced by multiple government agencies, including the management of overabundant and pest species. Further work to determine the scope and relevance of this position will be given consideration by the government.

***Recommendation 8 - The Minister for Environment and Water ensures that the Landscapes South Australia framework should provide appropriate resourcing of Landscape regions to continue the local management of overabundant and pest species.***

The government agrees with the Committees recommendation and reiterates that one of the principles of the Landscape reforms is about getting back to basics, and for boards to focus on their core responsibilities. The reforms also recognise that native animals can sometimes adversely impact primary production, people or the natural or built environment.

The Landscape South Australia Bill 2019, (which is subject to the parliamentary process) includes new provisions to assist in addressing this. The Bill proposes that the Landscape Boards will have a defined role in facilitating the collaborative management of native species that are causing adverse impacts. Helping manage native species that are causing adverse impacts will be through limited prescribed activities such as connecting landholders and relevant authorities, education, supporting research and providing information. The existing functions of other bodies and people involved in controlling the adverse impact of native species will continue. Permits will continue to be required under the NPW Act for the destruction of any protected native animal.

Regional Landscape plans and the associated business plans will identify regional priorities and guide where boards invest funding to meet their responsibilities under the Act. The regional Landscape plans will be developed through consultation with the community and other stakeholders and will be subject to approval by the Minister.

***Recommendation 9 - The South Australian Government should ensure that it participates in negotiation among the states and Commonwealth for longer-term funding, and funding of prevention-based approaches.***

The government accepts the Committee's recommendation and notes that longer-term funding and prevention-based approaches are important priorities for South Australia's negotiations with the Commonwealth and amongst states and territories.

Management of impact-causing native fauna *per se* generally falls outside Commonwealth powers, i.e. the Commonwealth interest in native (or invasive) species management is from an environmental perspective if they are having a demonstrable impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Consequently, current examples of South Australian-Commonwealth cooperation and funding principally relate to management of invasive pests, such as through investment and projects under the Australian Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper and the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions. The government will continue to participate in funding negotiations with the Commonwealth and other states, and seek new opportunities for research and management of impact-causing native species.

***Recommendation 10 - The South Australian Government should provide more education and information to the community about environmental management practices, including the rationale for decisions made in relation to overabundant and pest species.***

The government accepts the Committee's recommendation about the need to provide more community-facing education and information about management of impact causing native and pest species.

Within the capacity of existing funding, DEW is already revising its website to provide relevant and clear information to the community about wildlife management and provide practical advice to landholders impacted by wildlife at rural field days. Landscape-scale management and best practice management approaches are priorities within the Landscape SA reform, including education initiatives and support mechanisms to strengthen the skills, knowledge and capacity of people to sustainably manage natural resources.

Relevant agencies are also working together to ensure the current planning reforms activate improved environmental management practices.

Should the government pursue the appointment of a Chief Ecologist, it is expected that one of their primary roles would be in providing information and update to the community about initiatives that are being undertaken by or on behalf of the government, to implement environmental management policies and strategies.

***Recommendation 11 - Takes urgent action to establish and develop markets for abundant species, particularly kangaroos, including by consulting with industry with the objective of avoiding waste. Measures should include further use of carcasses, broadening the range of areas in which commercial harvesting can be undertaken, allowing harvesting trials in non-commercial zones, and reviewing fee structures associated with harvesting activities.***

The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

The kangaroo industry is currently able to access domestic, and more than 60 overseas markets, with consumer demand and social licence being the greatest barriers to further growth of those markets. The state and federal governments, in partnership with the commercial industry are investing in growing existing markets and developing new markets for kangaroo products. PIRSA and DEW are currently collaborating to explore opportunities to develop and expand the domestic market development.

The South Australian Government has responded to the commercial kangaroo industry and is proposing to allow the commercial harvest of kangaroos across the majority of South Australia (except for metropolitan Adelaide and the Alinytjara Wilurara region) and to allow for additional species of kangaroo and wallaby to be harvested. The South Australian Government has recently completed community consultation on the draft South Australian Commercial Kangaroo Management Plan 2020-2024, which will facilitate these changes to the commercial harvesting of kangaroos.

The government currently subsidises the regulation of the industry. Additionally, DEW has recently increased the number of kangaroos which are permitted to be shot non-commercially under a Permit to Destroy Wildlife. DEW is also working to better promote the availability of the associated 'yellow tags', which enable non-commercial utilisation of carcasses.

***Recommendation 12 - Initiate further inquiry to examine the structures, processes and challenges that prevent the development of a more robust commercial kangaroo products industry.***

The government accepts the recommendation of the Committee and confirms that the commercial kangaroo industry is an emerging industry with high growth potential.

AgriFutures Australia, in partnership with the commercial kangaroo industry, is the lead body involved in supporting research, development and extension (RD&E) to connect with new and expanding markets. The commercial kangaroo industry currently pays a levy of 4¢/kangaroo for human consumption and 3¢/kangaroo for animal consumption, which is matched by the Australian Government. AgriFutures RD&E investment is currently focussed on five strategic areas: animal welfare; sustainability; nutritional value; trade barriers and food safety; and product value.

The Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia (KIAA) is the peak body representing the kangaroo industry nationally. There is significant opportunity for industry participants to inform and influence future RD&E investment to support the development of markets for kangaroo products. The South Australian government would encourage greater participation in KIAA to ensure that investment in market development is targeted to meet the needs of all industry stakeholders.

***Recommendation 13 - Investigate the potential for mining carp within the River Murray system.***

The government accepts the Committee's recommendation and takes the opportunity to note that existing licenses under the *Fisheries Management Act 2007* enable industry to harvest carp within the River Murray system in South Australia, mainly using gill and haul nets.

There are currently six commercial river fishers in the River Murray, from the New South Wales border to Wellington and 36 licence holders in the Lakes and Coorong Fishery are also licensed to take carp. Carp are primarily harvested using traditional gill nets, but a novel method, a carp separation cage<sup>5</sup>, is used at Lock 1 on the Lower Murray River at Blanchetown, which is used to supply retained fish to the fertiliser business, Charlie Carp.

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation are currently drafting the National Carp Control Plan (NCCP), to investigate the potential biological control of carp using the cyprinid herpes virus. Development of this plan is not currently a hindrance to carp harvesting activity. In December 2019 the NCCP will be presented to the Australian Government for consideration on the benefits and feasibility of releasing the carp herpesvirus. The South Australian government is represented in management planning and research under the NCCP, and is well-placed to negotiate ongoing management decisions and approvals to benefit industries, the environment, communities and future generations. If, pending the NCCP contents, there is broad intent by governments to pursue the future release of the virus, then it is likely that formal approval processes under a range of Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation will take a number of years, during which time carp harvesting activity could continue.

On occasion PIRSA receive enquiries regarding opportunities for large-scale harvesting of Carp, including a recent enquiry for a large-scale export fishery for the Asian carp market. In addition to making proponents cognisant of the NCCP, PIRSA seek to actively involve the Lakes and Coorong and River fishers in any discussions, given their existing access rights to the resource.

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<sup>5</sup> Carp separation cages are used at a number of River Murray fishways which allow fish to bypass the weirs as they move upstream. Carp separation cages exploit the innate jumping (and sometimes pushing) behaviour of carp to automatically separate them from large-bodied native fish which don't demonstrate these behaviours.

