

Unconfined stock in the Hills and Fleurieu

What land managers need to know

Unconfined Stock

Unconfined stock are livestock that have escaped or are no longer contained within your property. This includes animals found wandering on roads, neighbouring land or public spaces.

Keeping stock properly contained is a legal responsibility. When animals escape, they can cause serious risks to road users, damage to neighbouring properties and create biosecurity impacts.

It can be assumed that all unconfined stock incidents will pose some level of biosecurity risk or potential safety or primary production impact.

Registration of stock

All South Australian properties must have a Property Identification Code (PIC) if one or more of the species listed below are kept on the property, including animals kept as pets. Registration of stock on a PIC mean stock owners can be notified quickly should their stock become unconfined.

The species that must be registered on a PIC include:

- Horses, donkeys, mules
- Cattle, buffalo, bison
- Sheep
- Pigs
- Goats
- Deer
- Alpacas, llamas, camels
- Commercial poultry

Your legal responsibility

Under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019, it is an offence to allow stock to go at large.

This includes situations where fencing or containment is not adequate and animals are able to escape.

If stock become unconfined, you are expected to act quickly to recover them and secure your property. You may also be directed to take specific actions to ensure animals are properly contained.

You may be liable for costs. If animals are captured, contained or controlled by others, the costs may be recovered from you as the owner.

Stock must be identifiable. Stock transported on public roads must be identifiable with a tag linked to your property through your PIC. In some cases, an eID tag may be required. We recommend tagging all stock, including animals kept as pets, to help quickly identify owners and support timely recovery of escaped animals.

What happens if your stock escape?

The response will vary dependent on the level of risk the animals pose.

In higher-risk situations, particularly involving pigs, goats or deer, stock may need to be located and contained quickly to prevent them establishing feral populations. If an owner cannot be found within a short timeframe, these animals may be treated as feral and destroyed.

For other livestock such as cattle, sheep and horses, the focus is on quickly identifying the owner and returning the animals. However, urgent action will still be taken if there is a risk to public safety, particularly on roads. In all cases, damaged fencing must be inspected and repaired immediately to prevent further escapes.

What should I do if I find unconfined stock?

- If you find roaming livestock causing an immediate road hazard contact SA Police on 131 444 or the Traffic Management Centre on 1800 018 313.
- Contact the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board as soon as possible so we can take follow-up action.
- Sightings of feral deer, goats and pigs should be reported immediately via feralscan.org.au
- If livestock enter your property and are not causing an immediate danger it is best to secure them safely if you are able and attempt to locate the owner.
- If you cannot identify or contact the owner, report the unconfined stock to the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board on 8391 7500 or by emailing Hf.LandscapeBoard@sa.gov.au so the matter can be assessed and managed appropriately.
- If livestock enter your property and pose a biosecurity risk, you may be able to detain them under the [Biosecurity Act 2025](#). You must still take reasonable steps to identify and contact the owner.

Penalties for unconfined stock

Penalties can apply where livestock are not properly contained, but the response depends on the situation and level of risk.

Under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*, it is an offence to release an animal or allow it to go at large (section 189). This can include situations where stock are not adequately confined and are able to escape.

A breach of section 189 is considered a serious offence. If the matter is prosecuted through the courts, the maximum penalty is \$125,000 or two years imprisonment. There is no expiation (on-the-spot fine) option for this offence.

In some situations, an Authorised Officer from the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board may instead issue a formal direction requiring a landholder to take specific actions to properly contain or manage

their stock (section 191(1)). This option is not available to all stock types but is typically used where there is an opportunity to correct the issue.

Failing to comply with a direction under section 191(1) is also an offence. This can result in an expiation fee of \$600, or a maximum court-imposed penalty of \$12,500.

In addition to fines, any reasonable costs associated with capturing, containing or controlling unconfined stock may be recovered from the owner.

Further information

- [Landscape South Australia Act 2019](#)
- [Hills and Fleurieu Regional Pest Plant and Animal Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Property Identification Code - PIRSA](#)
- [eID for sheep and goat owners - PIRSA](#)
- [Declared Animal Policy for Feral Pigs](#)
- [Declared Animal Policy for Feral Deer](#)
- [Declared Animal Policy of Feral Goats](#)