

# PASTORAL BOARD GUIDELINE

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## Title

### Pastoral Board Guideline – Seasonal Temporary Increase to Pastoral Lease Stocking Maximum

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#### 1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this guideline is to provide a guide for the Pastoral Board's (the Board) decision-making when considering applications from pastoral lessees for seasonal temporary increases stocking levels above the lease's currently approved stocking maximum (specified on the lease title) due to exceptional seasonal conditions.
  - 1.2 Under section 22(1)(b)(ii) of the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989 (PLMC Act)* it is a lease condition of all pastoral leases that lessees must ensure that numbers of stock on the land or a particular part of the land do not exceed the maximum levels specified in the lease, except with prior approval of the Board. Any approval must be in writing and may be subject to conditions.
  - 1.3 Section 22(6)(b) of the PLMC Act allows the Board to approve a level of stock on the land, or on a particular part of the land, in excess of the maximum levels specified in the lease.
  - 1.4 In making any decision under the PLMC Act, the Board must comply with the statutory duty in section 5 of the PLMC Act to:
    - Act consistently with, and seek to further the objects of the PLMC Act
    - Have regard to plans or guidelines established by Government agencies, regional landscape boards and planning authorities that are applicable to pastoral land; and
    - Have regard to the relevant terms of any Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). The Objects of the PLMC Act are copied below in Appendix 1.
  - 1.5 Depending on the nature of an application, other approvals may also be required under other legislation including but not limited to:
    - 1.5.1 **The Landscape South Australia Act 2019 defines what constitutes a water affecting activity including any requirements in considering of that activity.** Water affecting activities are actions undertaken that interact with or impact on ground and/or surface water. It could include the construction of dams, installations of bores, adjustments to and earthworks involving drainage lines along with many other activities. Landscape Boards are in the best position to advise on what constitutes a water affecting activity along with any considerations that are required.
    - 1.5.2 **The Landscape South Australia Act 2019 regulates the take of water within the Far North Prescribed Wells Area (FNPWA) through the corresponding Water Allocation Plan.** If the pastoral lease lies within the Far North Prescribed Wells Area (FNPWA), assessment of the additional stock water requirements will be required by the South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL) Landscape Board and/or the Department for Environment and Water's (DEW) Water Licensing team for the Pastoral Unit to consider the application.
  - 1.6 All applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
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#### 2. Disclaimer

- 2.1 This Guideline provides a framework for Board decision-making, but it is not a legally enforceable or a binding policy instrument. The Board reserves the right to amend or remove this Guideline at any time.
- 2.2 This Guideline also identifies lessee's obligations under the PLMC Act and informs lessees and other applicants about the information that should be provided in applications to temporarily increase a

leases stocking maximum.

- 2.3 Any person using the information contained in this document does so at their sole risk and is responsible for assessing the accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance of the information for their own purposes. The State of South Australia does not warrant or make any representation, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, reliability, suitability, currency or completeness of the information in this Guideline and accepts no liability arising for any consequences resulting from any use or reliance on the information in this document.

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### 3. Definitions used in this Guideline

- 3.1 **The Board:** Has the same meaning as in the PLMC Act and means the Pastoral Board established under the PLMC Act. References to the Board in this Guideline include a delegate of the Board.
- 3.2 **Pastoral lease:** means a lease granted under the PLMC Act over Crown land for pastoral or other purposes (such as carbon farming or conservation purposes) with the approval of the Board under the PLMC Act.
- 3.3 **Stock:** Has the same meaning as in the PLMC Act and means any species of animal permitted by the terms of a pastoral lease to be pastured by the lessee on the land as part of the commercial enterprise of the lease (section 3, PLMC Act). This currently includes only sheep and/or cattle.
- 3.4 **Stock maximum:** A stocking level specified on the pastoral lease title that represents the maximum number of stock that can be held on the lease under favourable conditions at any one point in time. Stock level numbers are expressed as the number of head of sheep or cattle. A conversion of 5 sheep to 1 cow is used for leases that can carry both stock types.

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### 4. Seasonal temporary increases to stock maximums and the PLMC Act

- 4.1 In managing pastoral leases, the Board encourages all lessees to manage stock at sustainable levels and be mindful that the stock maximum is intended to reflect a maximum stocking rate in generally favourable conditions rather than at all times.
- 4.2 Maximum stocking rates were originally determined at the first assessment under the Pastoral Act, by using the average numbers of stock as reported on annual Stock Returns over the previous 10 years, with adjustments based on district comparisons, and adding 20%. The additional 20% was intended to account for those years of favourable / wet conditions where additional stock numbers could be run over and above the level run in average years.
- 4.3 Assessment of applications for seasonal temporary increases, and notification of the result to lessees, will be undertaken quickly, recognising that lessees often need to act quickly to utilise exceptional feed conditions.
- 4.4 **Section 22(6)(b)** of the PLMC Act provides that *the Board may approve the level of stock on the land, or on a particular part of the land, in excess of the maximum levels specified in the lease.*
- 4.4.1 The Board will consider all written applications in accordance with this Guideline, the Pastoral Act, and advise the applicant in writing whether the increase in the stocking maximum is approved, not approved, or whether further information is needed.
- 4.4.2 Applications must be received using the application form, available here [Application-Form-Seasonal-Temporary-Increase-Stock-Maximums-2025](#)
- 4.4.3 Where a property is comprised of multiple leases, the application form must detail the request for each individual lease.
- 4.4.4 Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be due to favourable seasonal conditions.
- 4.4.5 An application fee *per lease* is payable upon receipt of application in accordance with the

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### **5.1 Pastoral Board**

- 5.1.1 To act consistently with, and to further the Objects of the PLMC Act.
- 5.1.2 Consider seasonal temporary stock maximum applications pursuant to section 22(6)(b) of the PLMC Act.

### **5.2 Pastoral Unit**

- 5.2.1 Support the Board in the decision-making process, or may, under delegation, make decisions under the PLMC Act.
- 5.2.2 Provide lessees any required information regarding applications for change of purpose.

### **5.3 Pastoral Lessee**

- 5.3.1 Must obtain approval from the Board to exceed the maximum stocking figure specified on the lease.
- 5.3.2 Provide the Board with an application in writing, providing all required information as requested in line with this Guideline. An application form will be available on the Board's website.
- 5.3.3 Pay the applicable fee associated with submitting such an application ([Schedule 1 – Fees \(part 5\)](#)).

### **5.4 DEW Water Licensing**

- 5.4.1 If using groundwater in the FNPWA, the lessee will need to contact and get written approval from DEW Water licensing regarding water allocations for stock use.

### **5.5 Landscape Board**

- 5.5.1 If the lessee is undertaking water affecting activities, the lessee must contact and get written confirmation from the Landscape Board of any requirements or approvals prior to undertaking the activities.

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## **6. Minimum information required for application**

### **6.1 The following information will be required as a minimum:**

- The period of time required for the seasonal temporary increased stock maximum (must be no more than 12 months).
- The requested new stocking maximum figure for each individual lease in question (stock maximums will not be assessed at a 'station' level).
- Justification for an increase in the stocking maximum and how increased numbers can be sustained on the lease/s.
- Temporary management strategies and planned stock management actions.
- Evidence of previous 5 years stock levels and compliance history.
- Information on seasonal conditions and feed availability to support increase stock numbers, including photographs.
- Rainfall data from the previous 12 months and any relevant flooding history.
- Information on how seasonal conditions will be monitored and how this will inform destocking regimes.
- Written confirmation from the Landscape Board of any requirements or approvals for water affecting activities.
- Written confirmation from DEW water licensing of any requirements or approvals if using groundwater in the FNPWA.
- Refer to Appendix 2 (in this document) and the application form for more detailed information available here [Application-Form-Seasonal-Temporary-Increase-Stock-Maximums-2025](#)

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## **7. Assessment procedure**

- 7.1 The Board will consider all written applications in accordance with this Guideline, the PLMC Act and advise the applicant in writing whether the temporary increase in the stocking maximum is approved, not approved, or whether further information is needed.
  - 7.2 Applications must be received using the application form - [Application-Form-Seasonal-Temporary-Increase-Stock-Maximums-2025](#) and submitted to [DEW.Pastoral@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.Pastoral@sa.gov.au)
  - 7.3 Applications will be assessed on a base by-case basis.
  - 7.4 An application fee will be payable (further information on the application form).
  - 7.5 If a temporary increase is approved and an extension is sought, further supporting evidence will be required to be submitted.
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## **8. Conditions of approval**

- 8.1 Any approvals and their conditions are at the discretion of the Board.
  - 8.2 If the Board proposes to apply conditions, the Board will consult with the application regarding any proposed conditions prior to make any final approval.
  - 8.3 The Board may request an update from the lessee at any time during the approval period.
  - 8.4 The Board may request written confirmation to ensure stock numbers return to below the permanent maximum stocking rate (per lease).
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## **Appendix 1**

### **1. Selected extracts of provisions from the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989**

#### **Section 4 – Objects**

The objects of this Act are as follows:

- (a) to ensure that all pastoral land in the State is well managed and utilised prudently so that its renewable resources are maintained and its yield sustained; and
- (b) to provide for—
  - i. the effective monitoring of the condition of pastoral land; and
  - ii. the prevention of degradation of the land and its indigenous plant and animal life; and
  - iii. the rehabilitation of the land in cases of damage; and
- (c) to provide a form of tenure of Crown land for pastoral purposes that is conducive to the economic viability of the pastoral industry; and
- (d) to recognise the right of Aboriginal persons to follow traditional pursuits on pastoral land; and
- (e) to provide the community with a system of access to and through pastoral land that finds a proper balance between the interests of the pastoral industry and the interests of the community in enjoying the unique environment of the land; and
- (f) to provide for the operation of renewable energy infrastructure and the undertaking of associated infrastructure activities on pastoral land, concurrently with the land being used for pastoral purposes; and
- (g) to allow pastoral land to be used for conservation purposes; and

- (h) to allow pastoral land that is being used for pastoral or conservation purposes to also be used for other appropriate purposes (such as carbon farming).

#### **Section 5 – Duty of the Minister and the Board**

The Minister and the Board, in administering this Act and in exercising any other power or discharging any other function in relation to pastoral leases—

- (a) must act consistently with and seek to further the objects of this Act; and
- (b) must have regard to plans or guidelines established by Government agencies, regional landscape boards and planning authorities that are applicable to pastoral land; and
- (c) must have regard to the relevant terms of any ILUA.

#### **Section 7 – General duty of pastoral lessees**

It is the duty of a lessee throughout the term of a pastoral lease—

- (a) to carry out the enterprises under the lease in accordance with good land management practices; and
- (b) to prevent degradation of the land; and
- (c) to endeavour, within the limits of financial resources, to improve the condition of the land.

#### **Section 22(1)(b) - Conditions of pastoral leases**

(iii) the lessee's obligation not to use the land for any purpose other than pastoral purposes, except with the prior approval of the Board.

#### **Section 22(6)(b) - Conditions of pastoral leases**

(6) The Board may, at the request or with the consent of the lessee—

- (b) approve a level of stock on the land, or on a particular part of the land, in excess of the maximum levels specified in the lease;

**Appendix 2 – Guideline for application requirements**

Requirement		Rationale & Measure	Source
<b>1</b>	<b>Justification and Request</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lease and lessee details</li> <li>Statement justifying reason for increase</li> <li>Requested stock type and amount (per lease)</li> <li>Requested duration of increase (initial maximum of 12 months)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of each individual lease are required.</li> <li>The lessee is responsible for decisions regarding the placement, numbers and duration of stock on a waterpoint or within a paddock relative to the supply of feed.</li> <li>Numbers to be supplied with supporting evidence of existing numbers (i.e. stock return / trucking notes).</li> <li>Duration to be specified (e.g. 6-12 months) – the Board may consider an extension upon request of the lessee. (*Pastoral Unit will contact applicant at least 6 weeks prior to end of temporary increase to confirm whether the lessee will seek an extension of the temporary increase).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lessee</li> <li>Lessee</li> <li>Lessee</li> <li>Lessee</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Management Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary management strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a simple description of stock management actions to be undertaken during the requested approval period and indicators to be used in determining length of temporary increase. I.e. allowing for varied stocking levels to be carried sustainably.</li> <li>Description of management strategy for returning stocking levels below the leases original stock maximum at conclusion of the requested temporary approval period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lessee</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Compliance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stocking history</li> <li>Declaration of compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of last 5 years stock levels and compliance history.</li> <li>General compliance with the Pastoral Act suggests the lessee's willingness to comply with their statutory requirements.</li> <li>General compliance with all other Acts as referred to in the Pastoral Act suggests the lessee's willingness to comply with their statutory requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral Unit (compliance register or notice, lease file, assessment reports)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Land condition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rainfall</li> <li>Past flooding history</li> <li>Photos</li> <li>Satellite imagery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rainfall data from the previous 12 months and photographic/satellite imagery will indicate seasonal conditions at the time of application.</li> <li>Past flooding history provides context on rainfall and flooding patterns.</li> <li>Photographic evidence of current land condition.</li> <li>Pastoral Unit to undertake a rapid review using appropriate satellite imagery and feed estimation products.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lessee</li> <li>Lessee</li> <li>Lessee</li> <li>Pastoral Unit</li> </ul>

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5	<b>Water affecting activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The lessee has provided written confirmation from the Landscape Board of any requirements or approvals for water affecting activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applicable regional Landscape Board</li></ul>
	<b>Using groundwater in the FNPWA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The lessee has provided written confirmation from DEW water licensing of any requirements or approvals if using groundwater in the FNPWA.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DEW Water Licensing</li></ul>