

LIVE EXPORT SUBMISSION

I am writing this submission to encourage you to reconsider your policy of banning live export. I am a sheep and crop producer in the midwest of Western Australia, turning off around 8000 sheep per year.

I find it very concerning that the Government is trying to shut down an industry which is leading the world when it comes to animal welfare outcomes. We should be promoting and growing our industry as leaders in the trade, providing prosperity and opportunities for many Australians. Decisions such as these, spearheaded by a small minority of mostly uninformed voters, are detrimental to Australian society as a whole. It also seems unjust to decide that an industry has lost its "social license" (who decides this?), when we have undergone massive investment in changing the way we do things in order to improve animal welfare outcomes. It is obvious that if Australia ends its live export, there will be a significant reduction in animal welfare standards worldwide as more animals are shipped from countries with much lesser standards. Countries importing our animals have said that they will not simply switch to boxed meat.

The live export industry provides a very important market for our sheep each year and without it, we are forced to sell to a smaller pool of buyers in the local abattoirs, meaning less competition and inevitably lower prices for our product. The processing capacity of the local abattoirs is also well below what is required to process all animals locally. This leads to animal welfare issues in itself as animals have to be held longer on farm, often in situations where there is insufficient feed available. The obvious answer to this is to encourage investment in local abattoirs to boost capacity, however labour is the main issue here. Something which can't be fixed by increasing the size of abattoirs.

Another issue to be considered with regard to live export, is the wool industry. The wool industry, a natural product known for its ability to sequester carbon, indirectly relies on live export. This is due to the fact all local abattoirs prefer to slaughter crossbred sheep, rather than merinos. Merinos are typically sold into the live export market, as export destinations like these animals. To breed merinos for the wool industry, we therefore need a profitable market for the wether lambs. This market has been hit the hardest in recent months since the announcement of the Government's policy.

To close I strongly urge you to reconsider this policy as it is to the detriment of Australia as a whole and sets a poor precedent in that Governments can simply shut down a successful industry due to "Social License".

