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25/5/2023

To the Australian Labor Government,

My name is Cam Clifton and I'm writing on behalf of my wife, three children, our farm workman and his family.

I am a 6th generation WA sheep farmer and we have developed a farming system that produces its own nitrogen source to grow canola, wheat, wool and sheep meat. We have been on a pasture to cropping rotation for 27 years. This system is highly effective in reducing the need for high amounts of applied chemical and fertiliser, whilst still maximising production.

We can't change our livestock away from sheep because it's simply unviable to use other species as ours is a very typical Mediterranean environment. 90% of our rainfall is between April and October therefore animals with a 5 month gestation and 3 month weaning time are far more suitable in this climate. That's why this is sheep country. No one will change species.

We will, however, go out of sheep completely if you don't change your policy. We will become 100% cropping, increasing our reliance on applied fertiliser and chemical, increasing our carbon footprint and adding to global warming. Many more farmers have committed to do that recently. We will leave the livestock industry because we know there is no way your government is going to facilitate new abattoirs to process the sheep that aren't going on ships anymore. You haven't done that to date and that is the only indication we need to conclude that you are not going to do that in the future.

There hasn't been a reportable incident in the Australian live sheep export industry for over 5 years. The improvements made have been remarkable for the comfort of sheep. We have lifted worldwide animal welfare by being involved in the industry. Animal welfare will plummet if Australia leaves the live sheep export industry.

Every sheep farmer in WA has sheep currently on farm that should have gone safely on ships months ago. Live export numbers have halved as the exporters lack the confidence to invest in the industry because of your governments policy. WA has received less than 20mls of rainfall in the past six weeks. Those extra sheep on farm are heading towards a grim and wasteful end and WA sheep farmers are staring down a massive sheep welfare situation because we cannot get a couple of extra ships in to alleviate the problem. The extra ships is how we have been alleviating the problem for decades.

This problem happens in WA roughly every third year. We are prone to dry starts. Live export has been a terrific tool to fend off many sheep welfare issues on farm. You have already taken that tool away from us and the sheep.

Your decision to phase out the live export sheep industry will have far reaching consequences for all agricultural industries Australia wide. This policy is entirely motivated by pleasing ill-informed city folk and animal activists. This policy has no concern whatsoever for sheep welfare. You have ignored the facts and figures of the last five years.

My farmworkers job is now in jeopardy and both his and my family's future has a dark cloud over it.

I will be part of the class action against the Australian Labor Government for this massive animal welfare problem that will continue to evolve if you don't reverse your policy immediately. Your policy has no credibility without bipartisan support from the Australian Liberal Party. This is clearly a case of a large group of people taking advantage of a smaller group with no grounds to do so. It's unlawful and it's having a negative mental health effect on many people in the farming community. Including me.

Yours Sincerely,

Cambell Waller Clifton

Advanced Diploma in Farm Management, University of Sydney

Husband, Father, Son, Employer, Active Community Member, Bushfire Brigade Captain

Passionate for the well-being and care of All Creatures Great and Small, worldwide.