

Firstly, I thank the Panel for taking the time to read my submission.

There seems to be a political battle with a minority of Australian voters in this country that want to ruin a multibillion-dollar merino industry that not only benefits Australia and overseas markets but more specifically it will ruin Western Australia producers if this minority get to have their way and ban live sheep exports. I strongly oppose the Federal Governments policy to phase out live exports.

I am a member of my families fourth-generation mixed cropping business that relies heavily on also running a merino wool and sheep meat flock in the [REDACTED]. I have deep concerns for my fifth generation and how they will generate income for their future families to survive. The merino side of the business is our failsafe for any crop failures that has always been because of mother nature. Selling our castrated male(wether) merinos to the live export trade over the thirty years since I have been home from secondary school along with there wool clip has provided a positive balance in our income. That is taxable income. I never want to be forced by a minority that we must adhere to a timeframe to phase out this reputable industry.

We employ numerous local people and contractors that help us to run our profitable livestock entity. Pregnancy testers, casual labour during Mulesing for days, shearers and shed staff for weeks, livestock agents, wool brokers with their storekeepers and office staff in Perth, feed lotters, pellet feed suppliers, truckers, sale yard attendants. The list goes on and on, they all rely on us as producers providing sheep for the live sheep export trade for them to earn a healthy living, pay their bills and taxes, along with contributing the Western Australian economy.

The merino industry is the backbone of Western Australia. Overseas customers rely on us to provide this valuable protein along with showing the rest of the world how well the Western Australian industry has improved its stakes in animal welfare. If WA does not, world markets we provide, will call on other countries to supply the live sheep trade, and the unethical treatment of sheep will continue and get a whole lot worse, not better.

If live exports are banned, there will be no sheep left in this state. Merino sheep numbers will diminish. There will be no competition. We will not have a wool selling centre in [REDACTED] because producers will have no wool to export to the world. We recently sent a small draft of our year 2022 born wethers to the trade sale in [REDACTED]. These sheep were perfect for graziers and lot feeders that access the live sheep trade. For a small percentage of the draft, we received \$2.00/head. It cost us more to send them to the sale in transport and selling costs. This was the week that the Federal Minister for Agriculture Murry Watt announced in WA that live export would begin the phase out consultation. A policy the current Federal Government claims won them the last election. And for the likes of the animal activists, for example the RSPCA, to state that these sheep can be slaughtered here in this state is wrong. The abattoirs cannot manage the extra supply now. There's not enough expensive labour available let alone hours in the day to slaughter the massive numbers that even now are being held on properties. Producers have been fortunate up until recently. The eastern states took a lot of the surplus sheep from WA over the last few years to restock the drought ridden states of eastern Australia. To add, another point that was made very clear to me recently, the chairman of WAMMCO, [REDACTED], spoke on local radio recently and stated that in no right mind would a new processor build a new facility to slaughter sheep here in WA because of the massive expense and lack of costly labour. There are two abattoir listings in the real estate section of the Farm Weekly last week. Go figure.

If our business were to continue in keeping things simple and retaining our merino flock, what in the world are we to do with the males? Humanly destroy them at birth because we know they will

become unprofitable for us if we were to keep these sheep and grow them out for any longer? Just imagine the mental health of our rural communities if God forbid it came to having to make this decision.

If our business was to discontinue our merino flock, like most producers would do if the live sheep export trade was banned, then our cropping enterprise needs to be more diverse and must expand. WA has just experienced two massive years of high cropping yields. This state relies on purely exporters to move these crops into world markets, and that there lies the states next problem. This state cannot export our grain quick enough now. We are having to market grain well under world parity. How are we to market our grain profitably when the exporters cannot deliver it to their markets overseas. Our bulk handler does not have the infrastructure to manage our grain if we as producers are all continuously cropping our land.

I finish with there is nothing to gain if we cannot send our sheep to live export. Our already small communities will suffer the horrendous exodus from the country Shires and towns they live in. As a producer I never want to see animals suffer. Dead animals do not pay bills. Help us get it though to the minority that this trade must continue status quo. Revoke the decision to phase out live exports by sea.

Thank you.