

Phillip Blight

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22/05/2023

Phillip Glyde.

Live Export Panel

Canberra

Dear Phillip Glyde.,

Thank you for bringing the Panel to Wagin . Even though we had very little notice of this, I'm confident that you would have found our position on this matter honest and forthright.

Whilst I realize that your Panel are only flack catchers for a government too weak to face the people they are crucifying and too weak to resist the emotional argument of animal activists, surely you understand that this same government will feed you to the wolves if it suits them.

I anticipate that your findings and Report will contain all the facts and truths that have been put before you. That:

Live Export is essential to uphold the market price of WA sheep.

There is limited domestic market for sheep meat in WA.

High Labor costs mean that local processing devalues the product internationally. Any push to process those sheep locally should not be subsidized by farmers.

There is limited domestic capacity to process these sheep. COVID outbreaks and staff shortages have created an oversupply right now that combined with the Federal Government Policy announcement has seen the market value of sheep decline markedly.

There is a need for major investment in meat processing and it remains essential that the processing costs are driven down to remain competitive. However, no viable business case could be written is such a collapsing industry. The government MUST restore faith.

We have consistently performed above the regulator's standards and yet the animal activists continue to use outdated information and dubious footage of a voyage that is now essentially discredited.

The industry has been damaged by what can only be described as industrial sabotage. There are many more sheep available for Live Export than there is shipping capacity. The exporting companies have taken their ships and trade elsewhere to countries with much lower standards.

Those who remove Australian sheep from the trade will be responsible for the welfare of millions of sheep that will be exported from other countries to fill the need. These countries have less animal welfare scruples.

The importing countries will continue to do so with or without Australia.

Saudi Arabia are about to re-enter the market in Australia after some years out. They have realized the quality of our product and want it times a million sheep.

Meanwhile the immediate effects in rural WA are real. Right now the confidence in the sheep industry has collapsed. Your unannounced tour smelt of a clandestine operation to kill off the industry. Could not have scripted a worse strategy if you tried.

Good people with nothing to hide and no responsibility for this action are finding their business, life and family are devastated and the mention mental health impact is rising. With minimal rain and overstocking due to market failure induced by the Federal Government interference, farmers are likely to suffer most.

That this enquiry is accepting submissions from non-industry spectators is concerning. Without anything to lose these individuals are dictating policy based on nothing more than emotion and old data. The industry is far better than these people would have you believe, and they continue to misrepresent the truth. Any such submissions should be required to be accompanied by a direct debit facility on their income. Growers should not bear the cost of their morality or the lack thereof.

The science is clear that the industry now has extraordinarily good results of shipments in recent times. Animal welfare organizations including the RSPCA should be applauding that however, it is well known that that organization has been infiltrated by the Animal Activists. The RSPCA itself has the very dubious record of euthanasia of poorly treated pets on an unprecedented scale.

From their website:

"14 April 2023

RSPCA WA has shared heartbreaking images of emaciated dogs currently in care, as it grapples with a record number of cruelty reports about starving pets.

The animal charity has fielded, on average, five calls a day so far this year about pets without adequate food or water. A huge 454 reports have come in since 1 January, which is a five-year high and a 24 per cent jump on the same period last year."

Any reasonable person would be disgusted by that. It is fair to suggest that a reasonable Government should ban the keeping of pets to be consistent with its own animal welfare stance and the RSPCA can only be described as hypocrites for not calling for a ban on Australia's worst animal welfare outcomes in the family homes. Your panelist will dispute this but has such conflict of interest that she should not be a member of the Panel.

That there is no move to BAN PETS is proof of the statement by Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association president David Connolly blasting Agriculture Minister Murray Watt at a conference in Darwin on Recently.

"It is my belief that the ban of sheep exports has little to do with sheep, but more the culture of this government. One that says it is OK to close down the income streams of law-abiding citizens of the bush," Mr Connolly said.

I believe the Panel were surprised by the extent of the issue.

There is no justification for the proposed ban on Live Export.

A panel such as yours will only have credibility if it reports that the Government Policy is flawed, and the Terms of Reference applied to the task are not compatible with a high standard of governance that such a panel should aspire to.

Sincerely,

Phillip Blight