

28 September 2023

The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP  
Prime Minister of Australia  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

via email: [anthony.albanese.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:anthony.albanese.mp@aph.gov.au)

cc: The Hon Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister  
The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, Treasurer  
Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture  
Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade

Dear Prime Minister

### **Phase-out of live sheep exports by sea**

Live export stakeholders are losing confidence in your government's ability to work in their best interests and those of the Australian agriculture sector, rural and regional communities that depend on the live sheep export trade. The decision to phase out the live export of sheep by sea will not only cause irreversible harm to our sector but also to Australia's trade and diplomatic partnerships in the Middle East.

On 1 March 2023 we wrote to Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, advising that the commitment to phase out live sheep exports was a red line issue for the entire agricultural sector and the only outcome that would be acceptable is a reversal of the policy. This letter was a request for your Government to listen – but we have not been heard.

We urge you to reconsider.

Today, Australia are the world leaders in the export of live sheep by sea. Banning sheep live exports from Australia will alter supply dynamics, however it will not change global demand. To meet religious and cultural requirements, markets will continue to source live sheep from countries that do not have the same animal welfare standards, so if the decision is being made on the grounds of improving animal welfare, the ban will be an abject failure.

Your Government's appointed Independent panel Chair, Mr Phillip Glyde, is quoted as saying: "...clearly this sort of policy change will adversely affect industry, so how do we make the best of it." The simple fact is a phase out will cause significant damage that was not even remotely considered when the Australian Labor Party developed the policy to phase out the live export of sheep by sea. While the panel has only been asked to provide recommendations on how to implement the policy, Mr Glyde's comments highlight the sheer magnitude of adverse effects that the implementation of your government's policy will have.

The stated and likely reversal of this decision by the conservative side of politics should they gain government, will make the ban not only pointless, but a very expensive and disruptive process for no gain.

Middle Eastern countries reliant on Australian live sheep exports are critical to diversify Australia's trading partnerships. They are crucial investors in Australia's future prosperity, and we have seen a twenty-fold increase in two-way investment in the past 20 years. The phase out policy will

jeopardise trade deals Australia is pursuing in the region and will erode our reputation as a reliable economic partner.

Domestically the fallout associated with the policy announcement is already occurring with a devastating collapse in producer confidence and the sheep industry – not just in Western Australia, but nationally. National rural confidence has recently dropped to one of the lowest levels in two decades. More than half of Australian producers expect the agricultural economy to worsen over the next 12 months. Sustainable sheep and wool industries are the cornerstone of many regional economies. If people are forced to leave these industries, regional communities will be devastated.

This policy will cause harm. It will hurt Australian families and damage Australia’s international standing as a reliable supplier of food and fibre and a trusted trading partner.

We simply cannot support or reconcile logic without scientific basis of the phase out of a legitimate world-leading industry for purely domestic political purposes, and therefore cannot accept anything less than a policy reversal.

No doubt there will be activist groups and non-farming interests urging you to stay the course on this policy. An opportunity exists for you to do the right thing and work with Australian agriculture, not against it - as this is the choice you will be making.

The Australian Government must support Australia’s global leadership on animal welfare and at the same time reinforce the point that long standing international friendships in the national interests are important.

We are the voices of Australian Agriculture. We need you and your Government to listen to us.

Yours sincerely



David Galvin  
Chair  
Australian Livestock Exporters' Council



Fiona Simson  
President  
National Farmers' Federation



John Hassell  
President  
WA Farmers



Tony Seabrooke  
President, Pastoralists and Pastoralists and  
Graziers Association of WA (Inc)





Andrew Spencer  
Chair  
Sheep Producers Australia



Steve Harrison  
Independent Chair  
Wool Producers Australia



David Foote  
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John Falkenhagen  
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Barb Madden  
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Australian Lot Feeders' Association



Peter Baldwin  
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Livestock & Property Agents Association Ltd



Geogie Somerset  
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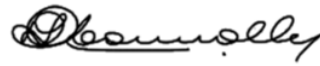


Barry Large  
Chair  
Grain Producers Australia





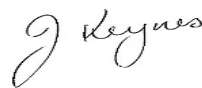
Rick Gladigau  
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