

To whom it may concern.

As a small business owner/operator in regional Western Australia, I am concerned that the proposed ban on live sheep exports will have yet another “declining” effect on my community.

I consider the Albanese Government’s proposed live export ban to be misguided. I also believe it is not based on scientific evidence but rather based upon a deal made with a minority group of animal rights activists to secure a preference deal.

I believe the ban will have a negative impact on businesses, schools, events, sporting clubs, and mental health in rural communities.

The ban is a direct attack and has a negative impact on the WA sheep industry. We must ask ourselves, which industry is going to be attacked next for political gain?

I believe that live sheep exports are a vital income stream of sheep farming enterprises across Australia.

I also believe farming enterprises reinvest in their businesses, by maintaining breeding stock, pasture improvements, and sustainable land management practices.

Without this trade, many would be forced to destock, jeopardizing the future of farms, the blood lines of many breeders, soil conditions and the mental health of most.

Sheep production plays an integral role in sustainable crop rotation systems, sheep are grazed on crop stubbles and fallow land to cycle nutrients back into soils.

This natural fertilization reduces reliance on synthetic fertilizers and the wool, meat and live export income supports the entire mixed farming operation. Removing live exports would disrupt this sustainable model, with negative environmental impacts and loss of economic diversity.

I believe farmers have an ethical obligation to ensure the welfare of their animals at all stages of their lives, Surely the better they are, the higher the price obtained.

The live export industry has continually improved practices including strict regulations under Exporter Supply Chain Assurance Scheme governing conditions on ships, in feedlots and processing facilities as well auditing and oversight by Australian personnel to enforce standards, adoption of heat stress risk management plans, ventilation systems and other reforms.

My local community's economy is heavily dependent on live exports and associated supply chains, including farm input suppliers, livestock transporters and farm workers who would lose major income.

Reduced spending power would impact local businesses, schools, hospitals and services and as such, population declines would be inevitable as families are forced to leave the region.

I understand the economic impacts would extend up and down the live export supply chain including feed mills, livestock transporters and exporters would downsize or close, shipping companies would reroute vessels, costing Australian maritime jobs and processing facilities in importing nations would shut down.

Australia has always shown the rest of the world that we can produce clean, green products and this is bourn out in the fact that we have some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world.

The sheep farming and live export industry is also very responsive to community feedback and has repeatedly demonstrated that it is responsive to community criticism. This has been proven through several changes to the way live export is conducted in response to videos highlighting poor welfare standards on export ships in the past.

Live export ships are well-regulated with maximum stocking densities, high quality ventilation, and frequent monitoring of ambient conditions on each deck. Illnesses and mortalities are reported and investigated. Veterinarians are involved throughout the export process in monitoring the health and wellbeing of sheep. Sheep are not allowed to be exported during months where they might be exposed to high temperatures in the Middle East.

I believe the Australian Standard for Export of Livestock mandates the requirements for live export within Australia which includes in feedlots prior to export, at the port, and on the ship.

Additionally, the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance Scheme is also subscribed to by recipient countries, which set out minimum standards for Australia to continue exporting to these countries. Although Australia has no authority within these countries, countries are expected to comply with the ESCAS to continue receiving Australian stock. This control would be lost if Australia relinquished its place in the market.

I request that this live export ban bill be terminated immediately, an apology given to rural communities of Western Australia, and a very clear message of support given to our sheep industry for the world to see that our government does support farmers here.

Michael Dorizzi