

We strongly oppose the policy of phasing out live sheep exports by sea. It can not be phased out immediately nor can it be transitioned, both ways are detrimental to far too many Western Australian's livelihoods.

The industry have gone above and beyond, jumping all the hoops to stabilize the live export trade and make it a sustainable, high class business with animal welfare standards the best in the world. Animal husbandry and animal welfare has always been a wide spread focus, from the farmer to the truck driver, freight company, boat loading, overseas transport and right through to destination countries.

It is so disappointing that people wanting our industry phased out, seem to not care about the ramifications of doing so. Farmers will be without an income. Farmers will be forced to move out of sheep, which they have loved working with for possibly generations. The stud breeders, like ourselves will be heavily affected as sheep farmers will not be producing lambs – why would they when there is no market. That in itself is heart breaking and not fair to us ... we have over 100 years of genetics and breeding rams in our enterprise... why should we be forced to just give that up? There is no reasonable reason. If the live export is phased out farmers won't be breeding merino's because there is no market for the wether lambs (because you can't produce only females) so they will stop breeding merino's completely. This will be nothing short of devastating to the merino industry, the best wool producing sheep in our country, Australia and the best natural fibre in the world.

Sheep farmers will be getting out of sheep and moving into cropping only which will have huge negative affects on our agricultural sector. Over supply of grain with which there is currently already an excessive amount of... how is that being transported around our state? Very poorly by road – boy are they already in a mess! Higher amount of chemical being used because sheep are a major component of weed and pest management, sheep being a far more environmentally friendly option than the high chemical rates. The flow on continues to snowball with more controlled burning and higher use of synthetic fertilisers because the lack of sheep won't be encouraging nitrogen fixing legume based pastures.

If farmers are unable to diversify into cropping only they will be forced to leave their farms and say goodbye to their livelihoods and comforts they know. How tragic for them and their families, not great for their mental health and well being. Also not good for the communities they are forced to leave behind, their schools, their sporting groups, their local shops and all local organisations affected. The local communities will not only be losing these farmers and their families but the non existence of the live export trade will also strongly affect other members of a community, diminishing their income and livelihoods and forcing them and their families to make a move from their choice of settlement. Truck drivers, stock agents, shearers, crutchers, shed hands, general farm hands, pregnancy scanners and feed supplement suppliers.

A phase out is an unacceptable outcome and we do not support the policy. The millions of dollars that is going to be spent on this ludicrous phase out plan could be much better spent in other areas. Some suggestions of these areas badly needing this funding are: rural road networks (currently disgraceful), health care, aged care in regional areas, teachers needed in rural areas, education and police force.

The LIVE EXPORT TRADE BY SEA is a legal, extremely well run enterprise with the best regulated animal welfare standards in the world that supplies middle eastern countries with fresh high quality red meat, to keep them fed and thus alive! **This industry should be promoted by our governments and not phased out. A phase out is an unacceptable outcome and we do not support the policy.**

We look forward to a response addressing our issues/concerns, reassuring us that our submission has been read. Thank you on behalf of Merna Farms, 5 generations of farming families.