

Dear Committee Members,

I, with my family, own and run a mixed Grain and Sheep farm with the grain component being the main enterprise financially although the sheep component is very important for the sustainability of our land and has flow on effects that impact positively to the grain enterprise. The sheep enterprise also utilises less productive areas or non croppable areas on the farm.

The success of the sheep enterprise is very dependent on competition for the sale animals from the sheep flock.

The live sheep trade is a very important alternative market for our sale animals.

The live export trade of all types provides important benefits to whole farm productivity and also significant flow-on benefits to the associated businesses like Livestock Agencies and Transport companies. These agencies and related companies employ families that live and work in our local communities which are vital for many regional economies. Other regional benefits come from higher farm incomes with less risk arising from access to more markets.

Local processing cannot handle the numbers of livestock that would be available if the live trade was stopped. The cost of local processing would substantially reduce the value of sale animals probably to below cost of production therefore impacting significantly on regional economies and impacting overall on the supply of an important food source.

It has taken many years to improve animal welfare standards in our own country. This includes on farm, transport, in local processing plants and to export. Everyone in the supply chain does their best to follow protocol and adhere to standards formulated by all of the industry participants.

Maintaining live exports gives our relevant industry bodies the best chance to improve animal welfare standards, where needed, in the various export destinations. Improving animal welfare standards in some countries may take some time, as it has in Australia. If our industry is not in these countries then surely animal cruelty will continue unabated.

Robert Beard.