

**Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Rural
and Regional Affairs and Transport inquiry into the
Biosecurity Amendment (Traveller Declarations and
Other Measures) Bill 2020**

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

3 July 2020

Senator Susan McDonald
Chair
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator

Inquiry into the Biosecurity Amendment (Traveller Declarations and Other Measures) Bill 2020

WoolProducers Australia (WoolProducers) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport inquiry into the Biosecurity Amendment (Traveller Declarations and Other Measures) Bill 2020 (hereon referred to as 'the Bill').

WoolProducers is the peak industry council for the wool industry. Our membership is comprised of the industry's commercial, superfine and stud breeding sectors. WoolProducers is nationally representative through our State Farming Organisation members and three democratically elected Independent Directors. Our policy areas include animal health and welfare, biosecurity, sustainability, pest management control, natural resource management, drought policy, emergency animal disease outbreak preparedness, trade and market access, and industry development including research, development, and extension.

As stated in the *National Biosecurity Statement*, biosecurity is protective of Australian livelihoods and vital to strengthening and supporting our environment and economy, including tourism, trade and agriculture. It underpins many aspects of our way of life, and our reputation for producing high-quality, safe, agricultural food and fibre. It is from this that our agricultural industry has built and maintained is strong, trusted international reputation.

In October 2018, WoolProducers wrote to the then Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, the Hon. David Littleproud MP, requesting that the Department of Agriculture review existing enforcement tools and penalties to ensure they were a strong enough deterrent, and were of appropriate consequence, for inadvertent non-compliance and deliberate violations of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

We therefore strongly support the Bill and commend Minister Littleproud for introducing the Bill to Parliament. To support the commencement of amendments on 1 January 2021, WoolProducers recommends that:

- The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment coordinate training of biosecurity officers and Australian Border Force officers to ensure they are prepared to use the amendments in full in their enforcement of Australia's biosecurity status.
- The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment strengthen enforcement messaging in education and awareness campaigns targeting inadvertent non-compliance and deliberate contraventions of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.
- Determined goods within the legislative instrument are clearly communicated on incoming passenger videos prior to arrival at Australian ports and terminals, and throughout ports and terminals before departure from customs.
- An appropriate recording system for non-payment of infringements enables incoming, non-citizen or non-resident passengers who have outstanding infringement notice amounts payable, to be able to be identified and be made to pay any outstanding infringement notice

amounts, or else be denied entry into Australia. This should be communicated to incoming travellers.

- Australian residents and citizens who do not pay infringement notice amounts within the 28 day payment period under the *Regulatory Powers (Standard Provisions) Act 2014* attract more serious penalties for their non-compliance and non-payment under relevant Australian law.

WoolProducers is supportive of the infringement penalties as outlined in the Bill, and we commend the efforts of biosecurity officers who were tracking to double the number of infringement notices issued in 2019-20, prior to COVID-19 travel restrictions. While we want to warmly welcome travellers to Australia with the warmth and friendliness Australians are renowned for, it is essential that incoming passengers are aware of the significant risks that are posed by the introduction of goods and products that could be carrying exotic animal and plant diseases, or pests.

To this point, WoolProducers recommends that an analysis of the number of declarations made by incoming travellers who may be carrying determined goods versus non-compliance (both inadvertent and deliberate) is undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the increased penalties of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Yours Sincerely,

Jo Hall
Chief Executive Officer
WoolProducers Australia

