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4 June 2024

Committee Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture

PO Box 6021

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretariat

**Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports By Sea) Bill 2024**

Please see attached our submission.

Kind regards

Luke and Caroline O'Shannessy

## **Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports By Sea) Bill 2024**

We consider the Albanese Government's proposed live export ban to be misguided.

We 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.

It is a kick in the guts to the whole Australian Live Sheep Export Industry which has invested huge amounts of time and money to make mammoth improvements since Labor made their pledge.

Australia has world leading standards to ensure the welfare of livestock while at sea.

As livestock producers we care about the welfare of our animals while they are in our care and that care continues all the way to the consumer. We spend many hours every day ensuring that our livestock are healthy, and are happy to know that same care is taken while on their voyage.

Australia's commitment to, and transparency of, the welfare of our stock continues until they are slaughtered.

We consider it is important for Australia to remain in the industry to ensure these animal welfare standards remain and are adhered to as we lead by example.

We think that if Australia leaves the industry that worldwide standards will drop, and animal welfare will cease to be a priority. But perhaps that does not matter to animal rights activists in Australia, as "out of sight, out of mind".

It is a testament to the quality of Australian livestock, that we are able to dictate how the end consumer is able to treat and process our animals.

We believe that the end consumers' traditions and beliefs require a live product, which can not be replaced by a frozen alternative.

Western Australia's processors, even with massive expansion, will not have the capacity to handle the volume of livestock currently exported. Already the processors are oversupplied and therefore the market has fallen with no competition in the market to maintain a fair price. This has left sheep producers like us unable to turn a profit on our livestock.

We run a business and like any business we consider all risks and need to be profitable to continue. We run a mixed farming operation and farm in a marginal area. With the attacks on the livestock industry, currently sheep are not a viable part of our business. In an open market, sheep support our operation and help mitigate losses in years when the cropping operation is affected by weather i.e. drought or frosts. We rely on the live export trade to ensure competition in the market.

With a ban on live sheep exports, the number of sheep in Western Australia will decline and not be able to be replaced. This will have a detrimental impact on our regional communities. We will lose many full-time workers in our rural towns, as full-time staff are supported by the need to care for our sheep. In our district, seasonal workers, who contribute very little to our community, are used by the majority of cropping enterprises.

Without livestock, the number of people in our town, particularly families will decline. This will affect our schools, sporting teams and community groups. As well as our support industries, including transporters and shearers, and local shops.

Giving just one of many examples in Hyden, our two local nurses are wives of workers who are able to be employed full time due to the sheep husbandry side of their employers enterprise. Losing just these two families from our community will have a huge impact, and this will be replicated over and over across Western Australia.

As Western Australia's sheep number decline we are losing generations of diversity of sheep genetics, which will never be able to be replaced.

Without adequate sheep numbers in Western Australia, we will not be able to replenish breeding stock the next time the eastern states have a massive drought.

We are first generation farmers, who are passionate about our sheep. We have built a flock profile of which we are proud. We ensure the welfare of our sheep is our top priority. We want an open market for our sheep. We want a fair go!

Keep the sheep!