

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Export Control Amendment (Banning Cotton Exports to Ensure Water Security) Bill 2019

It is a sad indictment on those in our society that feel that they had to table this Bill above to parliament to even be debated.

We are a 4th generation family owned farming operation from Wee Waa NSW in the Lower Namoi Valley region, we are just one of the 90% of small irrigation family owned farms that grow cotton out of the 152 communities across Australia, we also grow other crops including wheat, Durum, faba beans and chick peas, season depending. We are proud of what our family does and contributes to our community through volunteering time and money to charities and local events. Over our 30 years of farming experience we have continually tried to improve our farming practices with benchmarking data, cattle care accreditations and **MyBMP (Best Management Practice)**. Australia's Cotton industry has one of the most rigorous farm and environmental management programs in the world. We have managed our farming enterprise through extreme droughts, over these years when faced with limited water allocations we choose to grow Cotton still with the water we have been allocated.

The reason we choose to grow cotton is that it is the crop that is best suited to our area. **Cotton provides the best return, both \$ per megalitre and \$ per hectare, therefore as owner and manager of our land, we make a business decision that is sustainable and profitable for the long term.** We have built our farming enterprise around our main source of income from cotton export sales with millions of dollars spent over the years on infrastructure, plant and equipment that's only use is for Cotton export production. Also, our local community has hundreds of millions of dollars of assets revolved around cotton production, such as cotton gins, freight cartage, storage facilities and seed production, our communities would not be able to be re- purposed. The domestic market for cotton lint is virtually non-existent, if cotton exporting was banned all would be lost, the community would die, those previously employed on farms and in town would have to move to cities as our communities would not be able to recover from such a catastrophic outcome if this bill were to be passed.

We do not rely on Namoi River or Murray Darling river water as we hold groundwater Aquifer water licences on our farms with all bores licenced, metered and monitored regularly.

Australia is an exporting country this is a fact! Senator Rex Patrick's Bill won't save the river system and will only decimate communities. A Bill that suggests a ban on cotton export would ensure water security is ill conceived, as clearly if cotton were not grown, the allocated water would simply be used on the next most valuable annual crop, same water use with less income to farmer and the associated economic effect on the community.

There are laws made in every industry to abide by, water authorities need to rigorously monitor and enforce these to penalise the few perpetrators.

To cripple a \$2.3 billion-dollar world leading industry that has worked extremely hard to build, implement and improve environmental, social and economic practices and establish a viable, productive agriculture industry that relies on a healthy river is criminal in itself.

We would hope common sense and informed decisions prevails when the senate standing committee considers this ridiculous Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Jeffrey and Bernadette Hamblin
Owner Managers

Jefbern Pty Ltd