



The Hon. Rick Mazza MLC
Member for the Agricultural Region
Parliament of Western Australia

Media Statement

September 10, 2020

Government measures for spring shearing season inadequate

Shooters, Fishers and Farmers MLC Rick Mazza is urging the State Government to provide an exemption for interstate contract shearers to fill a looming shortfall of workers for the spring shearing season.

Mr Mazza recently asked a Parliamentary question to Agriculture Minister Alannah MacTiernan as to how the labour shortage will be addressed.

The Minister said prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government had run shearing programs with Australian Wool Innovation for Aboriginal people in Northampton and Brookton, with “quite a number of those people now working successfully in shearing teams”.

Mr Mazza congratulated those people who had joined shearing teams but highlighted that as the Minister said in her response, shearing programs would not solve the problem immediately.

“Her response was inadequate. The weather is warming up and conditions will be optimal for flystrike which is going to be relentless. Wool has to come off a sheep’s back at the right time of the year, and it has to come off regardless of the current wool price,” Mr Mazza said.

“We cannot wait for a handful of people to graduate from shearing programs. It takes a long time to learn the trade of shearing and we simply need more shearers in the State to do the job this spring.”

To address the problem, Mr Mazza said the shearers from all Australian States, minus Victoria and New South Wales should be allowed entry onto Western Australian farms as an essential service.

“If required, workers should be allowed to quarantine for 14 days on the farm they are working on,” Mr Mazza said.

Ends