



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

Media Statement

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Live export exemption vital for trading partners and farmers

Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party MLC Rick Mazza says it is vital the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment, a new Australian Government Department established on February 1, 2020, grant the exporter a permit to allow 56,000 sheep stranded at a Baldvis feedlot to depart for the Middle East.

The sheep were set to depart Fremantle last week on the *Al Kuwait* ahead of a seasonal live shipping ban commenced on June 1. The vessel has remained in port ever since several crew members tested positive for COVID-19.

Mr Mazza said the delay is testing the patience of our key trading partners in the Middle East, and as a consequence will greatly impact upon the livelihoods of Western Australian farmers.

“Given the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been a number of extraordinary measures taken. Among other things, these include a closed State border, regional travel restrictions and a six month moratorium on evictions for residential and commercial tenants. So why can’t the similar extraordinary measures be applied to this shipment?,” Mr Mazza said.

“If our trading partners do not have a reliable source of food they will look elsewhere. I fail to see why a one-off exemption cannot be given in this instance, especially given the serious ramifications facing our State.”

Mr Mazza said Middle Eastern trading partners and primary producers are all in limbo as it remains uncertain how long the sheep will remain in the feedlot, or if they will be loaded onto the vessel at all.

“If the sheep cannot be exported there are limited options for them given they have passed through biosecurity controls and cannot return on farm, therefore their immediate export is the logical welfare outcome especially given the live shipping closed season only started a few days ago. The ramifications for producers and sheep prices are significant,” Mr Mazza said.

“Time is of the essence. I implore the Federal Regulator, with the backing of the State Government, to grant an exceptional circumstances exemption so that this standoff can be resolved.”

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