

LIVE EXPORT — MV *BAHIJAH*

977. Mr R.S. Love to the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

- (1) I refer to the livestock ship, ‘MV Bahijah’ containing about 16,000 sheep and cattle that left Australia on January 5 but was ordered to return to Fremantle by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, and I ask:
 - (a) On what date were you first made aware of the decision by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture to order the vessel back to Fremantle;
 - (b) Have you had any direct communication with the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture in relation to this issue:
 - (i) If so, on what date did you engage in direct communication with the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture in relation to this issue; and
 - (c) Were you made aware of the decision by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture to order the vessel back to Fremantle prior to the public?
- (2) I refer to the Commonwealth Government’s Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry statement on 12 February relating to the MV Bahijah livestock vessel which states “the department, Western Australian Government, exporter, transport companies and appropriate premises continue to work collaboratively to ensure the health and safety of the livestock and staff”, and I ask:
 - (a) Is it the view of the State Government that all parties have worked collaboratively?

Mr D.T. Punch replied:

- (1)–(2) I became aware of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry’s (DAFF) decision to return the MV Bahijah subsequent to media reports on the issue.

On 29 January 2024, I attended an online meeting with my advisors convened by DAFF, which was also attended by Minister Watt and his advisors, upon the arrival of the vessel MV Bahijah off Fremantle Port.

DAFF is the responsible agency for issuing of export permits for livestock and at all times was responsible for the decisions concerning the vessel.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has been cooperating with and supporting DAFF in the facilitation of the onshore arrival of livestock for the exporter.