

AUSTRALIAN WOOL INDUSTRY — PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

570. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

Given the impact on the Australian wool industry of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' lobbying of wool processors against using Australian wool that has come from mulesed sheep —

- (1) Has the minister inquired about the real outcome of what PETA is trying to achieve?
- (2) What strategies has the government implemented or will it implement to stop PETA from bringing the Australian wool industry to its knees?
- (3) Will both state and federal ministers for agriculture give a guarantee to the wool industry that they will do everything in their power to prevent PETA from continuing to have a detrimental effect on this industry?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank Hon Nigel Hallett for providing notice of his question.

- (1) The honourable member will be aware that PETA's mission statement states categorically —
... animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment.

A national wool industry task force has been established to address the mulesing issue. This task force comprises all the peak bodies that represent the business of the Australian sheep and wool industries. They include LiveCorp, WoolProducers Australia, the Sheepmeat Council of Australia, Australian Wool Innovation, Meat and Livestock Australia, the National Farmers' Federation, the Woolmark company and the Federation of Australian Wool Organisations. The Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food is an associate member of FAWO and is kept informed of the actions of the task force in dealing with the PETA issue via its membership of FAWO. It is important that government work closely with the industry task force in dealing with the threat that PETA's actions pose to the industry.

- (2) The Department of Agriculture and Food is undertaking research on the most effective way of minimising fly strike risk on sheep that are not mulesed. It is important that preparative actions be taken during this season. Mulesing remains a practice covered by the relevant code of practice in Australia.
- (3) I will continue to work with the federal and other state agricultural ministers in supporting the sheep and wool industry task force in this matter. As the honourable member will be aware, the federal Minister for Agriculture has strongly represented the interests of the Australian wool industry to those clothing manufacturers who have been threatened by PETA's standover tactics. The Western Australian government strongly supports the commonwealth's position. The extortion that has been practised by PETA, a foreign-based interest group, is effectively a form of commercial terrorism and will be resisted.