

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

413. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:

My question is to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Does somebody else want to go first? Does someone else on your side want to ask a question?

Mr D.A. Templeman: I do not think the bells were rung.

Mr R.S. Love: I will go first then. Sit down; the Premier is not here.

The SPEAKER: I am sure he will be here shortly. I think you can start asking your question now; the Premier is here.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I nearly missed two o'clock myself because there was no little reminder bell that we normally get on a Wednesday. Maybe we will sort that out for next time.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes, I understand that.

Firstly, I acknowledge in the gallery today our concerned sheep producers and supply chain people whose livelihoods are at stake and who are doing a great job in the world of live export. Given the ill-conceived federal Labor government's proposed ban on live sheep export by sea and the potential loss of 3 500 jobs and \$130 million in income to this state —

- (1) Can the Premier tell those in the gallery today what he will do to stand up and be counted on behalf of Western Australian sheep producers and the supply chain?
- (2) When will the Premier meet in person both the Prime Minister and the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on this matter?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I, too, would have benefited from the little reminder bells. I apologise for my lateness.

- (1)–(2) Can I join everyone in acknowledging the members of our primary industry producers here today. It is an important issue and I acknowledge that. That is why the government's position has been steadfast and consistent throughout. Former Premier McGowan and I share a view that the measures that are in place safeguard and benefit the welfare of the sheep that are being exported and that the safeguards that the industry themselves have put in place are sufficient. That is a view we have put to the government. I apologise that I have not met with the Prime Minister yet, Madam Speaker, because I have been in Parliament answering members of Parliament's questions. I am happy to do so but I will have the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister in due course.

We also supported the 2019 changes that were brought in. They made sure we avoid exports in the northern summer. It is interesting to note that, since that time, the number of live sheep that have been exported internationally has increased. We acknowledge that those measures were put in place and they have not been to the detriment of the industry. When I have the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister, I will certainly communicate my support for our farming communities and this particular aspect, although I will say that the federal government has a mandate to undertake this policy. They took it to the last election and I respect the fact it has that mandate. Senator Watt has put in place a panel to investigate this matter. We will, of course, make sure that we engage with the panel to make sure that they are familiar with our views. I encourage everyone else to do so as well. That is important. We have to make sure that the federal government gets the message. The other observation I would make is that the federal government has also committed to not implementing any sort of bans in relation to live sheep exports in this term of Parliament. The opportunity obviously continues to be there for us to make sure that Western Australia gets its views across to the federal government. We will continue to do so.