

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

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

I refer to yesterday's statement by the Minister for Agriculture and Food in relation to the WA government's submission to the independent panel consulting on the phase-out of live sheep exports by sea, in which she stated, in part, the following, according to the uncorrected *Hansard* —

In the absence of increased support to the processing capacity and development of export markets for meat and wool, the size of the WA sheep flock may drastically reduce ...

...

This will have a devastating impact on the broader WA merino wool industry.

- (1) Will the Premier now admit that his government's lack of advocacy is putting the supply chain and the merino sheep industry in jeopardy?
- (2) The Premier said this morning on 6PR that the Prime Minister is the boss and that he always does what the PM wants him to do; has the PM instructed the Premier to not stand in the way and to allow him to shut the industry down?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) The member for Roe references advocacy by the Minister for Agriculture and Food as a preamble to his question about the lack of advocacy!

Mr P.J. Rundle: What have you done?

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: He seems a little bit confused by this. Basically, he uses the statements and the advocacy of the Minister for Agriculture and Food—her strong advocacy for the industry—to inform his question about the lack of advocacy!

Mr P.J. Rundle: Her advocacy?

The SPEAKER: Just a moment, Premier. Member for Roe, you will get the opportunity to ask a supplementary if you do not continually interject.

Mr R.H. COOK: We have made it clear to the public and to the federal government that we believe the measures we have in place are sufficient to protect the welfare of animals involved in live sheep export and that we have taken the appropriate steps to protect that industry, and we have been advocating for that industry. The details the member just quoted were from the Minister for Agriculture and Food, who was quoting our submission to the inquiry with regard to live sheep export. I am not quite sure what he is actually trying to say; is it that we are being too effective, or not effective enough?

We have made it very clear that we stand by our agriculture industry on this particular issue. Our submission makes very clear that this will deliver a \$123 million blow to the WA agriculture industry and cost almost 400 jobs across the supply chain. That is something that we have advocated for to the federal government and we continue to make it aware of the implications of what it is doing. It has undertaken this inquiry because it made an election commitment on this, and it is carrying it out. That may be something that is foreign to the opposition when it is in government, but we in the Labor Party keep our promises. That is why it is going through this process now. We will continue to advocate, and I know that the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Jackie Jarvis, speaks regularly with her federal counterpart to make sure that these issues are heard and to make sure that our concerns for Western Australian farmers are heard. We will continue to advocate for that.

As for my remarks in relation to 6PR, I was simply responding to a question from 6PR about whether I would declare a public holiday in the event that the Matildas won the FIFA Women's World Cup. It is a bit of a different topic, my friend. I said that that is a call for the Prime Minister to make. Obviously, I can discuss that with him next week at the national cabinet in the same forum that I will discuss the issues impacting on WA farmers. But as I said to the media today, I will not make a declaration like that because I do not want to jinx the Matildas. I wish them all the very best for the quarter-final.