

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY — MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATIONS

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

I refer to statements by the Minister for Agriculture and Food that the federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Murray Watt, has confirmed his commitment to end live sheep exports by sea and that the horse has bolted on any backflip. I note that freedom of information requests have revealed no formal communication between Hon Jackie Jarvis or her office and the federal agricultural minister over a six-week period while the consultation was running, and further note that the WA state government has now dropped the charges in the Emanuel Exports case.

- (1) Will the Premier now give his full support to the WA sheep producers and the 3 500 people involved in this \$100 million WA industry?
- (2) Will the Premier now instruct the Minister for Agriculture and Food to get on board and start advocating to the federal agriculture minister in favour of continuing this industry?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) The Minister for Agriculture and Food is one of the best ministers for agriculture we have seen in many years. She is doing a fantastic job stewarding an industry into the modern age and making sure that our primary industries, and in particular our livestock industries, are equipped to meet the challenges of the future so that we can maintain our status as a competitive primary producer. That is one of the sectors we have identified in our Diversify WA strategy as we continue to look at how we can add value to products to produce agrifoods as a great export-oriented industry. The minister is doing an amazing job as part of that important body of work.

The minister has a very strong working relationship with her federal counterpart. One of the things that distinguishes WA Labor in government compared with the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA when they were in government is that we actually talk to and work with the federal government to make sure that it understands what the opportunities in Western Australia are, particularly the funding opportunities around major transport infrastructure and particularly for the GST. That deal has significantly put us on a great pathway to making sure that Western Australians continue to receive their fair share of the national GST pie.

The Minister for Agriculture and Food has a very strong working relationship with the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry at the federal level. I know that those opposite have done FOIs to see what written communications exist between the federal and state ministers. As they would be aware, the state minister has taken a number of opportunities, both through our fulsome submission to the review of live animal exports and, of course, in other correspondence. The WA Minister for Agriculture and Food has been in constant dialogue with Minister Murray Watts to make sure that he is aware of the challenges WA farmers face in relation to that potential decision. It is because of that that we have been able to equip the federal government with all the facts it needs to guide it on those deliberations. That stands in stark contrast to the sorry mob opposite. When they were in government, they did not talk to anyone else. The Liberals and Nationals hardly talk to each other, let alone with other levels of government. The federal government is well aware of our view on those pending decisions and we have made that very clear.