

Minister David Littleproud
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email only: Minister.Littleproud@agriculture.gov.au

23 March, 2020

Dear Minister Littleproud

RE: Classification of the Australian Wool Industry as an Essential Industry

As representatives of the Australian Wool Industry supply chain, we are writing to implore both State and Federal Governments to classify our industry as essential in regard to the evolving COVID-19 situation.

Our organisations, including WoolProducers Australia, Sheep Producers Australia, National Council of Wool Selling Brokers of Australia, Australian Council of Wool Exporters and Processors, Australian Wool Handlers, Wool Industries Australia, Australian Wool Testing Authority and the Australian Wool Exchange, hold membership of the wool value chain, from growers through to the point of export.

Whilst understanding that the response to COVID-19 is ensuring that the food supply-chain is continued, we are seeking a firm commitment that containment and response arrangements will not hinder the transaction of wool within in Australia, including the movement of product between state jurisdictions.

The wool industry must be able to continue to trade for a number of reasons, including:

- The wool industry is a significant industry in Australia, generating \$3.82 billion in exports and employing around 200,000 people Australia wide.
- The industry needs to be able to pay the proceeds to wool growers from the weekly sale of \$50 million of wool.
- Many of wool growers have been dealing with drought and in some cases, bushfires, which has reduced their incomes, putting their financial position under severe stress.
- The wool industry underpins many regional economies across the country
- There are potential catastrophic animal welfare impacts if sheep are not shorn. For example, the inability to shear pregnant ewes could result in large lamb and ewe mortalities.

Please find attached a briefing paper outlining the key issues regarding the importance of ensuring the continuity of wool trade in Australia.

If you require clarification on any of the issues raised, please contact WoolProducers CEO, Ms Jo Hall on 0488 5548 11 or jhall@woolproducers.com.au, who can then direct you to the appropriate organisation.

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

