



**SHEEP  
PRODUCERS  
AUSTRALIA**

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### **Statement I Victorian restrictions have national ramifications for sheep**

Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) Sheep Producers Australia (SPA) has become increasingly concerned by the unchanging situation for abattoirs in Victoria. The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) and Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) have both identified the inconsistencies in placing harsher conditions on a vital agricultural and manufacturing industry compared with the rest of the economy. Sheep producers and abattoirs are asking for a common sense set of parameters to be applied for the abattoirs and the regions in which they operate - having had little or no COVID-19 cases.

Protocols are currently in place to ensure that the workforce is not placed at risk. It is time to see the industry operating at an acceptable level, with continuation of the appropriate precautions in place. Victorian abattoirs are not just for Victorians, nor do any abattoirs see themselves as just catering for an area within state boundaries. Victoria is a powerhouse for the processing of spring lambs.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) has launched a campaign to raise the profile of lamb again in the domestic market. This is vital as there has been a softening of some export markets that rely on the food service industry, so we will be seeing an increase in different cuts, as well as volumes available to the local market. We must have the lambs processed at the right time to suit the local markets.

The Victorian plants are an essential part of the program for Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales. While these states have processing facilities, they do not all specialise in the same market or type of sheep, and those abattoirs will source sheep and lambs from Victoria to suit their requirements.

VFF have rightly pointed out the issues if lambs need to be held longer than what the market requires. Sheep producers have finally seen some relief from drought and are now facing the impacts of COVID-19 on our markets. The industry and supply chain has worked out a sensible, risk-based approach only to be hit with processing restrictions that in part seem unnecessary and inequitable.

The inability to work out exactly what is required by the Victorian regulators to meet the very reasonable request and methods industry has proposed to get to 80 percent capacity is of the greatest concern. The Federal Government talks about the impact Victoria's continuing restrictions are having on the Australian economy. In the case of sheep and lamb processing, it is having a real effect on the ability of a national industry to effectively operate as an essential service to feed the nation.

### **Further media inquiries and the above statements can be attributed to**

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