### Phase out of live sheep exports by sea: transition plan

Key points

* It is law that live sheep exports by sea will end on 1 May 2028.
* $139.7 million over 5 years in transition assistance.

Commitment

* Election commitment made to meet Australian community expectations for sheep welfare.

Advice

* Appointment of an independent panel and public consultation.
* The panel undertook an extensive national consultation process:
  + more than 2,000 people attended forums in Western Australian (WA)
  + more than 330 people attended virtual forums
  + almost 100 stakeholder meetings were held
  + 800+ written submissions and 3300+ unique survey responses were received.
* The panel made – in its report to the Australian Government – 28 recommendations focused on individuals, businesses, communities, trade and animal welfare.

Certainty

* The government provided certainty by announcing:
  + the phase out date for Australia’s live sheep exports by sea
  + passage of legislation to implement the phase out
  + the release of the panel report and government response
  + trade may continue without caps or quotas until the trade ceases.

Time

* For those impacted, there is time to plan and adapt
* Early action will support resilience and position individuals, businesses and communities to:
  + plan and alter on-farm practices
  + develop markets for sheep products
  + increase onshore processing
  + secure and train workers
  + access support and funding.

Transition Assistance

* $139.7 million over 5 years available from 2024–25 to assist those impacted:
  + $97.3 million to support sheep producers and the supply chain, particularly in WA
  + $27 million to enhance market demand within Australia and internationally for sheep products, food and fibre
  + $2.6 million to maintain sheep standards during land transport, and international engagement
  + $1.7 million for a Transition Advocate
  + $11.1 million for implementation and engagement.
* Leverage existing whole of government initiatives:
  + ACCC reviews
  + employment programs, including for First Nations people
  + programs to re-skill and up-skill
  + migration, and labour conditions
  + mental health support

Transition Oversight

* Appointment of a Transition Advocate.
* Monitoring of the transition will occur via a stocktake in 2026–27.

Animal Welfare

* Continued regulation of live sheep exports.
* Funding for reviewing the standards and guidelines for land transport of sheep.
* Enhanced engagement in the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Fast Facts

* $77 million: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) value of live sheep exports by sea from Australia in 2022–23.
* $4.5 billion: ABS value of Australian sheep meat exports in 2022–23.
* $3.5 billion: Meat and Livestock Australia value of domestic retail markets of sheep meat 2022.

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Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone 1800 900 090

Web [agriculture.gov.au](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.