

**INQUIRY INTO PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS  
AMENDMENT (RESTRICTIONS ON STOCK ANIMAL  
PROCEDURES) BILL 2019**

**Organisation:** The Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (AASMB)  
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# THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUD MERINO BREEDERS LIMITED

ABN 51 003 352 930



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## SUBMISSION AGAINST THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (RESTRICTIONS ON STOCK ANIMAL PROCEDURES) BILL 2019

### Introduction

Whilst this Bill has been presented to the NSW Parliament only at this point in time, it has the potential to create a precedent for Woolgrowers and sheep farmers across the entire country. Therefore The Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (AASMB) believe it is important to provide a submission to emphasise the impact the proposed amendments will have on the whole of Australia.

### About The Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (AASMB)

AASMB is the peak Merino organisation representing the six state stud Merino associations and some 900 studs in Australia. These studs provide genetics and other services to the Sheep and Wool Industry in Australia and Internationally. Australian Merino sheep are the core of the Wool Industry.

### Submission

AASMB opposes all the proposed amendments set out in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019.

AASMB advocate for Australian Sheep farmers to have the right to choose how they manage their animal husbandry. Care for livestock is well regulated in this country and practices are amongst the best in the world.

In many areas of Australia, it is inhumane not to mules. Given the ideal conditions for flies in Australia, sheep losses would be catastrophic in non mulesed sheep. Flystrike is extremely painful and stressful, leading to a cruel, suffering death.

Mulesing is a quick operation - done once in the sheep's life as a lamb, and takes less than one minute - which helps protect sheep for the rest of its lifetime. Non mulesing requires more chemicals to be used, which causes a range of other issues. The less chemicals used the better.

Even if there were viable alternatives available right now, it is far too sudden to enforce such changes so rapidly. Australian Woolgrowers have spent decades and hard earned dollars developing genetics and building flocks to adapt to the challenging range of conditions across the country, whilst meeting the demands of Australian and International markets.

Attached are two references. The CSIRO publication *Modelling of breech strike risk and protective efficacy of mulesing in adult Merino sheep* demonstrates the efficacy of mulesing compared with the significant increase in health risks to sheep if not mulesed. The AWI publication *2020 Flystrike RD&E Technical Update* demonstrates how the industry is working towards finding solutions, as well as the fact that genetic improvements take time.

Forcing farmers to stop mulesing could draw parallels to the banning of live exports to Indonesia in 2011, which the Federal Court has recently ruled as Unlawful.

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AASMB is gravely concerned about the pressure the proposed changes in this Bill would cause to farmers on top of drought, floods, fires, lack of water in the West of Australia, activist groups trespassing and trying to end all types of animal farming, and Covid19 causing issues with processing of both wool and meat.

This Bill poses a real threat to the existence of the Industry in Australia. Sheep numbers, in particular Merinos, are at a critically low point. The introduction of these amendments will mean a huge loss of sheep, whether it is due to the death of sheep from Flystrike or farmers deciding it's too difficult to work in such an over regulated context, which may well continue on to become even more regulated if this Bill is passed.

The supply chain for sheep and sheep products including the Wool, Meat and Genetics Industries provides for thousands of jobs in Australia, not just farmers, there are shearers, buyers, truck drivers, agents, manufacturers, meat processors, etc. It is critical to ensure this Industry remains viable and animal husbandry practices are not over regulated.

Australia is renowned for the quality of our sheep and the products they produce. Australian Merino wool is considered the world's best. Wool is natural, sustainable, biodegradable and the most recycled fibre in the world. All crucial benefits and opportunities for the future of both our Industry and the environmental issues our planet is facing (Fast fashion, plastics in the ocean, etc) Australian Woolgrowers should be encouraged and supported by governments to continue to produce such important commodities.

### **Recommendation**

AASMB recommends all of the amendments proposed in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019 be rejected. There are no viable alternatives that work across the varying range of factors and conditions involved just yet. It is totally unjust to enforce changes to animal husbandry practices upon farmers within an extremely short time frame, especially at this point in time when there are so many other Industry, environmental and world challenges. This Bill is highly detrimental to the health of sheep, the supply of quality wool and other sheep products to the market, as well as the livelihood of sheep farmers and the entire Industry supply chain. Therefore this Bill should not be passed.

### **References**

CSIRO PUBLISHING | Animal Production Science

<https://www.publish.csiro.au/AN/AN18488?jid=ANv60n8&xhtml=0E6C0DD1-9A22-443C-8C4C-2D94C272E4C9>

Horton B. J., Corkrey R., Smith J., Greeff J., Karlsson L. J. E. (2020) Modelling of breech strike risk and protective efficacy of mulesing in adult Merino sheep. *Animal Production Science* 60, 1051-1060

Australian Wool Industry *2020 Flystrike RD&E Technical Update.*

<https://www.wool.com/globalassets/wool/sheep/research-publications/welfare/2020-rde-update/12.-breeding-and-selection-ind-trends-glindon.pdf>

Geoff Lindon, AWI Program Manager Genetics and Animal Welfare Advocacy

### **Contacts**

Please contact our office if you require further information

P Meyer - President

S Hicks - CEO

Post Office Box 72

Williamstown Vic 3016

Tel:

Email:

Website: [www.merinos.com.au](http://www.merinos.com.au)

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