

LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS ARE COSTING LOCAL JOBS

The RSPCA today warned that every sheep exported overseas for slaughter takes Australian jobs with it.

RSPCA Australia CEO, Heather Neil, said the live sheep trade has taken away opportunities from Australia's meat processors for decades and what's happening in Dubbo is unfortunately, not new.

"Trade distortions have created unfair competition between live sheep exports and sheep meat exports, to the detriment of Australian jobs. As sheep numbers in Australia continue to decline, the problem will only get worse.

"The Mayor of Dubbo, Allan Smith, is right - it doesn't make sense to force local processors to compete with the trade in live sheep. While ever we send live sheep overseas to be slaughtered, Australia will continue to miss out on significant value-adding opportunities."

There is good news for Australian farmers and meat processors. Two economic reports completed this year revealed that ending live sheep exports is not only feasible but it would benefit the economy and create Australian jobs.

"These reports found live sheep exports are a small and declining percentage of the average farm's income and the trade could be phased out over five years. In fact, ending the trade is actually in the long-term interests of farmers and the economy. It's certainly in the interests of the 4 million sheep involved in this cruel trade every year.

"Why are we allowing a trade that is becoming increasingly irrelevant to hurt local jobs? Surely a government interested in nation building and job creation would be more future thinking.

"It's time for a more balanced and accurate discussion about the future of the live sheep trade as well as opportunities to increase our sheep meat exports, which are already four times more valuable to the economy than live sheep exports."

The RSPCA urges the Australian Government and farming groups to join with the RSPCA and processors to put in place a plan to take advantage of new opportunities for the sheep industry.

To view the reports visit: www.rspca.org.au/report