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## PGA says Ministers Should Lead, not Blame

The President of Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA (PGAWA), Mr Tony Seabrook has responded to Federal Agriculture Minister David Littleproud's comments in today's West Australian newspaper.

Mr Seabrook said "The live sheep trade is an important and vital part of the WA regional economy, and as such any investigation into the failures of export regulation should be treated seriously. Intemperate remarks such as *'those who do the wrong thing should swing'* are inappropriate to say the least.

"For the Minister to infer that WA farm leaders would ask a Minister of the Crown to circumvent the existing regulatory process over live exports is not true," Mr Seabrook said.

WA farm leaders have not suggested that *'the regulator should ignore evidence of dodgy and deceptive behaviour to protect a particular exporter'* and that the Minister *'should try to break the law by trying to influence the independent regulator'*.

"As a WA farm leader who has had regular contact with Minister Littleproud over the recent suspension of WA live sheep exporter Emanuel Exports' licence, I can attest that our conversations have centred on whether the Minister can grant an exemption order to export the 60,000 sheep that remain stranded in a feedlot while the investigation of historical events runs its course."

"As the Minister has previously stated, an exemption order is not possible, and subsequent appeals to the Department to ensure that the 60,000 stranded sheep can be exported have been in vain.

For the past two months, the PGA has been asking the Minister to travel to WA and meet with the farmers and exporters to find some acceptable resolution to the stalemate that exists, but he seems to be content with making the false claim that exporter LSS 'did not take sheep to the Middle East last year'.

"The Minister should be concentrating all of his efforts on working with WA's live sheep exporters, and the thousands of livestock producers who rely on the continuation of this trade.

"WA's rural and regional sectors deserve certainty, not ambiguity from our political leaders," Mr Seabrook said.

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