

**Max Watts**  
**Independent Director**

WA have become very proficient in transporting livestock across Australia in large numbers (approx 250,000 ewes and store lambs this year)

This is also exacerbated with the huge variation in prices paid for slaughter and re-stockers, ewes \$75-\$100 higher and even with the \$25-\$30 freight component it is very attractive.

Lamb skins in the east \$15-\$20 verses WA \$0-\$3, the argument regarding the lower quality in WA is very hollow as we know lambs that cross the border will be sold as locally produced and receive the higher prices.

We are told of the domestic market influences in the east but much of the export lamb production around Australia competes for the same markets.

There are similar differentiations in the live export market with boats loading feed in Fremantle, sailing to Portland paying higher prices in the east and returning to top up in Fremantle with feed & livestock.

We are continually told of the decline in the sheep population in Australia and different ways to arrest it.

Producers should invest to upgrading sheep handling facilities, including the wool harvesting area, adopt and embrace innovation, making the work load less onerous.

If the shipping companies and processors were prepared to pay higher prices this would be arrested immediately, making it far more competitive with other commodities and attractive to the younger generation.