



Dear Minister,

23 September 2016

I am writing to you as members of parliament raising concerns we have about the looming introduction of RFID in Sheep and Goats in Victoria only.

The Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association (ALPA) is the national peak industry body for livestock and property agents.

ALPA represents more than 1,200 agency businesses across Australia. Collectively this group plays an important role in livestock, wool, merchandise and rural property sales and marketing. ALPA Members include Elders, Landmark, Ruralco and private livestock agencies. ALPA Members handle in excess of 97% of rural agency business Australia wide. It is one of the largest organisations of small rural business men and women, relied on to protect the interests of agents and producers nationally.

Agents and livestock producers are frustrated and disappointed with the current government's decision to mandate RFID tags on all sheep and goats born after 1 January 2017 with scanning in Victorian saleyards from July 2017.

This decision goes against the government's commitment prior to the 2014 election to national industry bodies and other state and territories that the government would not mandate RFID tags until a national approach was agreed on and with industry consultation. The total disregard for this commitment and lack of state and national consultation is disappointing and in our opinion will be very costly to producers, processors and agents.

NLIS (Sheep and Goats) is a **National shared** system for the identification of sheep and goats within Australia. Now by Victoria breaking away this has made a **State** Livestock Identification Scheme for Sheep & Goats. This goes against the entire sheep and goat industry position. WoolProducers Australia (WPA), the Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA), the Goat Industry Council of Australia (GICA), the Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association (ALPA) and the Australian Livestock Markets Association (ALMA) have written to the Victorian Agriculture Minister Jaala Pulford numerous times stating our unified position against Mandatory RFID.

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We would like the following questions answered by the Andrews' Government prior to locking all of the industry into the expensive RFID System in Victoria only.

1. Why is Victoria breaking away from the National System when they haven't even fully implemented the current NLIS Mob Based System?
2. Where is the proof and the studies that have been done that the RFID system will work in a commercial environment such as the saleyards in Australia?
3. Where is the Government's cost model on how much implementation will cost and the ongoing costs to every sector along the supply chain?
4. What other technology has been investigated by the Government prior to locking in on this particular RFID?
5. What will be the restrictions to cross border trade both ways, in and out by Victoria introducing a state based system?
6. How will the Victorian Government control the millions of tags that leave Victoria being cleared from the National Database?
7. What will be the action level percentage of correctness of reading RFID tags be under the RFID system in a commercial environment?
8. Who will bear the costs of the extra time and staff needed to do the scanning, the producer?
9. What practical experience in setting up an RFID system in Australian Saleyards have the Government appointed consultants had?
10. What steps have the Government taken to protect producers, transporters, processors and agents from Animal Welfare and Work Health & Safety Issues due to extra time scanning large numbers?

We strongly urge the Andrews' Government to be patient and not race into uncharted waters until they can answer these questions. Without answers to these important questions, we are entering into the unknown and a high risk of a costly mistake.

We believe the current timeline put in place for the implementation of an RFID system is unrealistic and unachievable given the many unanswered questions that industry has at this stage.

We also request that the Andrews' Government work with all of industry and consider a recommendation that one saleyard site be chosen to trial this unknown system over a period of 18 months, so that millions of tax-payers' dollars will not have been spent on an untried system that has no proof that it will deliver the Government's required outcome.

Yours Sincerely,



Andy Madigan  
ALPA Chief Executive Officer.