

Livestock exporters welcome Federal Budget commitment for LGAP implementation

AUSTRALIAN livestock exporters have welcomed confirmation in the 2017/18 Federal Budget of \$8.3 million over four years in Commonwealth funding to support the future implementation of the Livestock Global Assurance Program (LGAP).

LGAP is a proposed global conformity assessment program for livestock exports that protects the welfare of animals, fosters continual improvement and the attainment of best practice. The first-tranche in Commonwealth funding support for LGAP follows an election commitment made by the Coalition last year.

ALEC CEO Simon Westaway said the funds from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) would help progress the implementation process.

“The Australian livestock export industry, which delivers \$2 billion in annual exports, welcomes the Australian Government’s commitment towards LGAP, which we believe can further strengthen and drive improvements across global supply chains,” Mr Westaway said.

“Australian livestock exporters are committed to delivering and demonstrating enhanced compliance with Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) standards as well as driving animal welfare improvements across global livestock supply chains. Our industry continues to back our world leading approach to animal welfare outcomes in the international livestock trade.

“This first-tranche funding allocation confirms the Australian Government shares that vision and commitment to improved animal welfare outcomes and a more resilient livestock export trade.”

Mr Westaway said ALEC members have provided in-principle support for LGAP, and its initial implementation and success is reliant on a series of factors currently being considered in full consultation with key producer groups within the Australian red meat supply chain alongside LiveCorp and the MLA.

He said industry understood both first and ongoing tranches of funds from DAWR were predicated on the approved implementation of LGAP.

“Under LGAP, the Australian Government will still remain the regulator of the Australian livestock export industry. The trade has never self-regulated and that won’t change under LGAP,” Mr Westaway said.

“LGAP will be a regulatory enabler at arms-length from industry, run by a program owner under a mixed-membership model.

“We do however believe LGAP offers an improved and strengthened system which has been conceptually designed to provide assurances that animals are treated in accordance with the ESCAS standards from discharge to the point of slaughter.

“ALEC and our members thank the Australian Government for its support thus far and look forward to progressing the LGAP implementation process further in the coming months,” he said.