



## Simplistic solution fails to solve actual problem

Queensland peak farm group AgForce says bills introduced to parliament that call for an immediate or gradual ban of live export to Indonesia do not address poor animal welfare standards in the country and reflect a limited understanding of the nature of the Northern Australia cattle industry.

AgForce CEO Robert Walker said the *Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011* introduced by independents Andrew Wilkie and Nick Xenophon and the *Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011* introduced by Greens MP Adam Bandt were simplistic at best.

“AgForce supports Cattle Council Australia and Meat & Livestock Australia’s position that a ban of live export to Indonesia would only lead to worse outcomes overall both in Indonesia and Australia,” Mr Walker said.

“The live export market makes significant employment and economic contributions to the communities of northern Australia. It is the lifeblood for many and a ban, regardless if it is a gradual or a kneejerk one, will stifle northern Australia’s prosperity.

“AgForce encourages Mr Wilkie or Mr Bandt to actually leave their electorates and travel to northern Australia to see the devastating impacts a live export ban would have.”

Mr Walker said a live export ban may also impact Australia’s high biosecurity and land management standards.

“Indonesia is our closest neighbour and our industry has worked hard to rid their market of diseases such as Foot and Mouth to ensure the possibility of disease transfer is eliminated and the biosecurity of Australia is protected,” Mr Walker said.

“If Indonesia imports cattle from other countries where these diseases are still an issue, we put our own reputation of being clean and safe at risk.

“Beef producers across Northern Australia also care for the land and water which they responsibly harness to produce food and fibre and if a live export ban forces them out of business these productive and sustainable land managers will be removed from the environment.

“Profitable agribusiness owners sustainably manage their land because without it, their livelihoods and the communities they live in would hang in the balance. Losing the live export market will have much further reaching impacts than Mr Wilkie, Mr Bandt or Mr Xenophon has anticipated.”

Mr Walker said AgForce urges the federal government to continue negotiations to boost animal welfare standards and reopen live trade.

“There are abattoirs in Indonesia who already meet World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) animal welfare standards, and the Government must continue to work with industry to consider all options that are in the best interests of the animals and the people of this nation, particularly those living in rural and remote Australia.”

**For comment, contact Robert Walker on 0438 363 001.**

**AgForce media and communications: Grace Reck 0427 626 853 or [reckg@agforceqld.org.au](mailto:reckg@agforceqld.org.au)**