

## Australian Government and Meat Industry

### Joint Statement on Workplace Culture in the meat sector

**Vision** – a professional and productive working relationship between the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department) and export meat establishments, resulting in the production of meat and meat products that consistently meets trading partner requirements, supports growth in the meat export processing sector and improves international competitiveness and the sustainability of the industry.

**Background** - The export meat industries are a key sector of the Australian economy. The export meat processing sector will play a key role in realising the aim for the Australian agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector in achieving \$100 billion in farm gate output by 2030.

The department supports industry to meet their commercial goals, by maintaining and expanding market access, by providing a robust regulatory and certification system, and by promoting and facilitating access for Australian products overseas.

The department and leaders of the Australian export meat processing industry are committed to working together to advance opportunities for export meat sectoral success. By embedding a constructive and productive relationship between the department and the export meat processing sector participants it regulates, and by fostering a culture of continuous and forward leaning improvement, the sector and the department will jointly encourage success.

Through a joint industry-department working group, a set of key principles have been agreed, representing how the department and the export meat processing sector will work together:

- **Ensuring workplace health and safety arrangements** support staff in performing their workplace duties in a safe environment. This includes a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment, in addition to the proactive management of unprofessional behaviours.
- **Supporting and encouraging innovation.** Export meat processing establishments are encouraged and incentivised to embed regulatory compliance at the heart of their operations as they seek innovation within their business. In return, the department will actively support and encourage this innovation when regulatory compliance requirements can be maintained and enhanced.
- Both the department and the export meat processing sector will **act in a transparent manner**, proactively sharing data and information, where appropriate, to support the Australian export meat industry.
- The department will focus on **embedding regulatory approaches, that support industry competitiveness and sustainability** to meet trading partner requirements, maximise production, minimise wastage and serve the Australian community through the effective and efficient administration of regulation.

- ***Clear and understandable regulations and rulings*** will provide export meat industry participants with the knowledge needed to comply with regulations.

Examples of two-way positive behaviours can be seen at Appendix 1

To support and embed the above principles across the export meat supply chain, the department has committed to the introduction of a sector-specific complaints management process, the feedback from which will be used to improve its delivery of regulatory activities.

Industry, through peak bodies, will proactively work with its members to ensure identified channels are utilised to provide constructive and balanced feedback supporting a professional and mature workplace culture.

Trends and systemic issues identified through these processes will be reported on an annual basis to the Export Meat Industry Advisory Committee (EMIAC) and will also be communicated across the department's meat program to drive continuous learning and improvement across the network.

**Appendix 1** – the following table provides a non-exhaustive list of two-way positive behaviors. It is intended to illustrate positive workplace culture, applicable to both establishment and government stakeholders.

Cultural theme	Example of positive behaviors (Industry and Department)
<p><b><i>Ensuring workplace health and safety arrangements</i></b> support staff in performing their workplace duties in a safe environment. This includes a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment, in addition to the proactive management of unprofessional behaviours.</p>	<p>All staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are appropriately trained in their WH&amp;S obligations and receive appropriate site inductions.</li> <li>• are made aware of and encouraged to use company and departmental complaint escalation processes and contacts when appropriate.</li> <li>• Conduct their interactions in a constructive and respectful way – A zero tolerance approach to intimidation, harassment, or bullying.</li> <li>• call out unacceptable practices when they occur, seek a constructive resolution and take appropriate action if required.</li> </ul> <p>WHS requirements and developments are actively discussed at the EMIAC consultative committee, enabling proactive to engage on WH&amp;S requirements and developments</p>
<p><b><i>Supporting and encouraging innovation.</i></b> Export meat processing establishments are encouraged and incentivised to embed regulatory compliance at the heart of their operations as they seek innovation within their business. In return, the department will actively support and encourage this innovation when regulatory compliance requirements can be maintained and enhanced.</p>	<p>The market access prioritisation framework is utilised to seek trading partner acceptance of technological innovation as required.</p> <p>Departmental processes are reviewed/updated as technological innovations are accepted and implemented.</p> <p>A transparent alternative technologies approval process is available, to enable consideration of alternate technologies</p>

<p>Both the department and the export meat processing sector will <b><i>act in a transparent manner</i></b>, proactively sharing data and information, where appropriate, to support the Australian export meat industry.</p>	<p>Openly communicates, and empathises with the other party to understand their views/drivers.</p> <p>Staff will actively work to ensure clear, two-way communication (written and verbal) using direct and simple language.</p> <p>Export establishments and the department are encouraged to acknowledge another party for displaying behaviors which affirm positive alignment with broader vision.</p>
<p>The department will focus on <b><i>embedding regulatory approaches, that partner with industry</i></b> to meet trading partner requirements and serve the Australian community through the effective and efficient administration of regulation.</p>	<p>Industry and department staff prioritise OPV weekly meetings. Both groups undertake prior preparation to ensure meetings are productive, with minutes and action items promptly recorded, agreed to and actioned.</p> <p>Timely communication of changes in policy/procedures during weekly meetings</p> <p>Export establishments and the department are encouraged to acknowledge another party for displaying behaviors which affirm positive alignment with broader vision.</p>
<p><b><i>Clear and understandable regulations and rulings</i></b> will provide export meat industry participants with the knowledge needed to comply with regulations.</p>	<p>Regulatory decisions are made fairly, objectively and consistent with legislation and communicated to establishments (including in writing) with support of appropriate evidence, with review pathways clearly outlined.</p> <p>Policies requirements for regulation are accessible and clear.</p>