



Accommodation issues raised with Premier

By Sherryl Chilcott

THE issue of adequate accommodation for workers was raised with Premier Colin Barnett when he visited the Western Australian Meat Marketing Co-operative Katanning abattoir last week.

WAMMCO Katanning general manager Tony Bessell and chairperson Dawson Bradford said suitable accommodation in the region was insufficient.

The plant draws workers from all around the region, with some living in Katanning and others commuting from neighbouring towns like Wagin and Dumbleyung.

However, Mr Bradford said they had ongoing vacancies for workers and had seen a drop off in the amount of Australian workers willing to do the

work required at the plant.

"We have to bring in employees that are willing to do the work required and then housing them and their families becomes a large issue," he said.

"The current housing is not sufficient for the influx of employees into the town, we need the workers but also need to supply them with suitable housing to live in during a long term stay.

"At the moment we have workers from New Zealand who come here for short term employment these we can house in single accommodation as their stay is short.

"In the case of the long term employees, like those from China who come to Australia with their families, we need houses and this is a big

problem in the region." Mr Barnett said he was keen to investigate the issue of accommodation.

Mr Barnett toured the plant, where he witnessed first hand the improvements made to the plant to improve production facilities for the export market of sheep meat.

The new facility has state of the art robot technology packing both boned and regular cuts of meat in hygienic conditions for the export market.

The availability of the sheep product for processing was also raised.

The majority of sheep purchased for production by WAMMCO were purchased from members of WAMMCO, with sheep coming directly from the saleyards accounting for around four per cent of

the total processing demand.

The quality and numbers of sheep for production had increased recently with a good numbers of sheep being processed on a daily basis at the plant.

Mr Barnett spoke with Mr Bessell and Mr Bradford about his keen interest in increasing export markets into countries like China and Japan.

"On my recent trip to Japan I was interested to find out that in Japan consumers are becoming more concerned about the quality of raw product that they are buying and becoming more concerned about their current suppliers which gives Australia a big opportunity to increase its market share with Japan," Mr Barnett said.



PLEASED WITH THE PRODUCTION: Premier Colin Barnett and Agricultural Region MLC Jim Chown during their tour of Western Australian Meat Marketing Co-operative's Katanning abattoir boning room.



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TOUR: Western Australian Meat Marketing Co-operative general manager Tony Bessell, chairperson and producer director Dawson Bradford, Agricultural Region MLCs Brian Ellis and Jim Chown and West Australian Premier Colin Barnett.