# Project factsheet

## Mandatory eID - NLIS Compliance

### Background

Electronic tagging of sheep and goats is now mandatory as of January 2025. The reasoning behind this rule is to improve Australia's biosecurity and traceability and embed access to overseas markets for our exported red meat products. Electronic identification (eID) allows authorities and producers to quickly identify and respond to disease outbreaks, minimizing economic and animal welfare impacts.

### Why is eID becoming mandatory?

Australia is implementing electronic identification (eID) for sheep and goats to strengthen biosecurity and traceability in response to rising disease threats, such as the recent Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in Bali. The current visual tag system lacks the accuracy and reliability needed for rapid individual animal tracking, which is essential during disease outbreaks or food safety incidents. eID offers faster, more precise traceability, helping to protect market access, support trade and meet national standards. This transition is part of a nationwide plan, with phased implementation and support to help producers adapt.

### FAQs

**Can I sell my old ewes and wethers as they are with their visual tags?**

Yes, until 1 July 2026. After that date, they need to be tagged with an NLIS-approved yellow eID tag if they were bred on your property, or a pink eID tag if they were bought in.

**How can you tell if a tag is NLIS approved?**

Firstly, the tag needs to have the NLIS logo stamped somewhere onto it. Secondly, the tag needs to be printed with a unique 16-character NLIS ID. The first eight characters are your property PIC. The following three characters denote the manufacturer, device type and the year the tag was made. The final five characters are a unique within-farm serial number.

**Do I need to be able to access the NLIS database?**

You will need to access the NLIS database to transfer animals onto your PIC if you buy in stock. Most producers with a self-replacing flock who only buy in rams at a public auction will not need to access the database, as stock movements will be recorded for you. However, if you buy in lines of sheep, buy rams privately or move stock between your own PICs, you will need to access the database to perform tag transfers. This can be done via myMLA (mla.com.au/mymla).

National Livestock Identification System

Image 1: NLIS Logo which is printed on all approved NLIS tags

**Do I need equipment to perform tag transfers?**

If you receive animals onto your PIC, you will need to start scanning tags and performing transfers from 1 July 2026. This may involve using a panel reader or stick reader which can be purchased or hired through many rural retailers and grower groups. If scanning the tags and transferring them yourself is not an option for you, there may be local contractors who can perform the transfer for you, or your stock agent may be able to carry out the transfer as part of their contract of sale. Regardless of who performs the transfer itself, it is up to you as the receiver of the stock to ultimately ensure it is completed.



Image 2: NLIS accredited tag in a sheep's ear

**How will pink post-breeder tags be used in the new system?**

Pink post-breeder tags identify that an animal was tagged on a property on which it was not born. Once the eID system is fully implemented, pink tags will only be necessary if the previous eID tag has fallen out and the animal has moved off its property of birth. There should only ever be one eID tag per animal at any time.

**Do I have to use eID for lambs going directly to slaughter?**

Yes. It is not always possible to determine at marking if lambs will eventually go direct to slaughter or not, as many lambs bred for sheep meat are finished via a feedlot. Electronic tagging is especially important in the event of chemical residue detections, as eID allows authorities to quickly trace affected animals back to their property of origin. This helps limit the impact of investigations, avoiding unnecessary disruptions for other producers and protecting market access. With eID, only directly linked animals are investigated, reducing downtime, reputational damage, and potential financial loss for producers.

**Can I reuse electronic tags?**

Once an eID tag has been applied to the ear, it cannot be removed and applied to another animal. However, if you have surplus tags, these can be retained and applied the next time that colour is in use. The same goes for yellow eID tags purchased to tag older stock during the phase-in period – these can be reused in 2029 as a year of birth tag.

## Further support

If you need more support with the transition to eID, please contact the DPIRD team at 1300 926 547 or email eIDTeam@dpird.wa.gov.au.

You can also contact NLIS customer support directly by calling 1300 WA NLIS (1300 926 547) or emailing nlis@dpird.wa.gov.au.

**For further information:** Maeve O'Brien, AgPro Management **M** 0426 206 608 **E** maeve@agpromanagement.com

Any recommendations, suggestions or opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily represent the policy or views of Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA). No person should act on the basis of the contents of this publication without first obtaining specific, independent professional advice. MLA takes no responsibility, in any way whatsoever, to any person in respect to the document, including any errors or omissions therein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused. © Meat & Livestock Australia 2025. ABN 39 081 678 364 This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, all rights are expressly reserved. Requests for further authorisation should be directed to the Corporate Communications Manager, PO Box 1961, North Sydney, NSW 2059 or info@mla.com.au.