



## Report on producer surveys

A total of 123 producers completed 85% of the survey; 28% of participants were from Western Australia, 11% from South Australia, 5% from Tasmania, 21% from Victoria, 29% from New South Wales and 6% from Queensland. Approximately 30% of producers ran self-replacing maternal/composite flocks while the remainder ran self-replacing Merino flocks, with about half of these also producing prime lambs. About 80% of producers lambed in winter, with the remainder lambing in autumn and most of these being in May. Responses to the questions that related to the use of shade or shelter are summarised in Table 1. Most producers utilise shade and shelter within their enterprise for ewes and lambs around the time of lambing, followed by use during unseasonal weather events. Many producers were motivated to use shade / shelter to improve lamb survival. Producers predominately provide shade/shelter predominately using natural topography and vegetation and cultivated trees. The largest barrier to the adoption of shade/shelter was upfront investment costs, followed by interruption to management practices for crop and pasture.

**Table 1. Responses to questions regarding the use of shade and shelter within enterprises from sheep producers surveyed across Australia during 2022.** Producers responded by selecting one or more options.

Question	Response	Percentage of respondents
<b>Do you deliberately utilise shade or shelter within your sheep reproduction enterprise?</b>	Yes, for ewe and lambs around lambing	84%
	Yes, for unseasonal weather events	63%
	Yes, for rams prior to joining	34%
	Yes, for ewes and rams during joining	34%
	Yes, for pregnant ewes	26%
	No, shade and shelter are not a priority during joining, pregnancy or lambing	10%
<b>What is your motivation for using shade/shelter?</b>	Improved lamb survival	86%
	Improved comfort / welfare	66%
	I opportunistically utilise areas that I have planted primarily for ecosystem services such as increased biodiversity, salinity management or carbon	35%
	Through no deliberate action, most of my paddocks offer shade and shelter	26%
	Improved conception rates	25%
	I have revegetated marginal land for biodiversity or salinity management. These paddocks are also used during joining and / or lambing	20%
	Optimise land use - I select paddocks according to crop rotations and other factors, however, this leads to shade and shelter for sheep	17%

	I utilise shelter from shrubs such as saltbush or tagasaste that I have primarily planted for livestock production	12%
	Improved nutrition	11%
<b>Please select the type/s of shade/shelter that you use</b>		
	Only natural topography and vegetation – shrubs, trees, rocks, hills, gullies, logs, etc.	67%
	Cultivated trees	56%
	Perennial grasses	27%
	Cultivated shrubs such as saltbush	19%
	Crops	17%
	Herbaceous forages such as improved legumes or mixed legumes and grasses	10%
<b>I choose not to use shade/shelter because;</b>		
	Upfront investment costs	67%
	Planting shelter will interrupt my crop and pasture management practices	50%
	Lack of time to establish shelter	33%
	Lack of knowledge including design, management and species selection	33%
	Lack of skilled workers or access to resources (seed, shrubs, tree planters, etc.)	17%
	I don't believe that it improves reproduction or will provide return on investment cost	17%
	I have encountered problems when using shelter in the past	0%