

Genuine Australian leather

traceability and lifecycle

Key points

- Carbon emissions have halved, and the industry is on track to reach carbon neutral by 2030.
- Traceability facilitates a transparent and accountable industry and empowers customers to shop ethically.
- There are strict regulations around the farming, transporting, and processing of livestock.
- Australian leather processors invest in modern facilities to make the tanning process more efficient and sustainable.

Carbon footprint

There are great strides being made to reduce leather's carbon footprint globally with a range of exciting initiative across the industry. In Australia, the red meat and livestock industry has reduced carbon emissions from 20.8% to 10.4% of its national greenhouse total since 2005 and is set to reach its target to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The industry is working with scientists to identify ways to achieve carbon neutrality including reducing methane emissions in livestock and minimising energy usage in processing plants.

Traceability

The benefit of a traceable system is a transparent and accountable industry where customers have the power to shop ethically.

There are two main stages in Australia where the leather supply chain can be traced - from the paddock to the meatworks, and from the leather processor to export. There is a clear trend worldwide towards increased traceability along the entire length of the leather value chain.



From the paddock to the meatworks

State and national legislation and codes of conduct, strictly regulate and monitor the meat industry in terms of animal welfare and environmental sustainability.

Key points

- **Farmers and feedlots** are responsible for providing appropriate nutrition for animals, reducing any pain and stress, and identifying and managing animal welfare risks early.
- **Transport operators** are responsible for assessing the load on trains and trucks, manoeuvring vehicles smoothly and handling stock appropriately.
- **Meatworks** are responsible for ensuring livestock are assessed by a vet before processing, using low stress handling techniques and reducing pain or distress.
- **Everyone** involved in the farming, transporting and processing of livestock is legally required to meet the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines.
- **Harvesters and meatworks** are regularly audited by state government authorities, and farms, feedlots and meatworks are independently audited by AUS-MEAT.

The kangaroo industry complies with a separate National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes. Every kangaroo harvested for the commercial industry must be tagged and recorded to make sure only animals that were sourced humanely and sustainably are processed at the meatworks.

AHSLEA-accredited leather processors only source tagged skins from approved meatworks with accredited feedlots to guarantee their leather comes from humane sources.



From the leather processor to export

At this stage of the supply chain the focus is around the environmental impact of the leather tanning process.

Ethically sourced hides and skins are processed in Australian tanneries in a variety of ways, and the processing and export of leather is regulated by relevant government and statutory authority requirements, and standards. The regulatory requirements include planning, environmental protection, water supply, drainage, waste disposal, occupational health and safety, and transport.

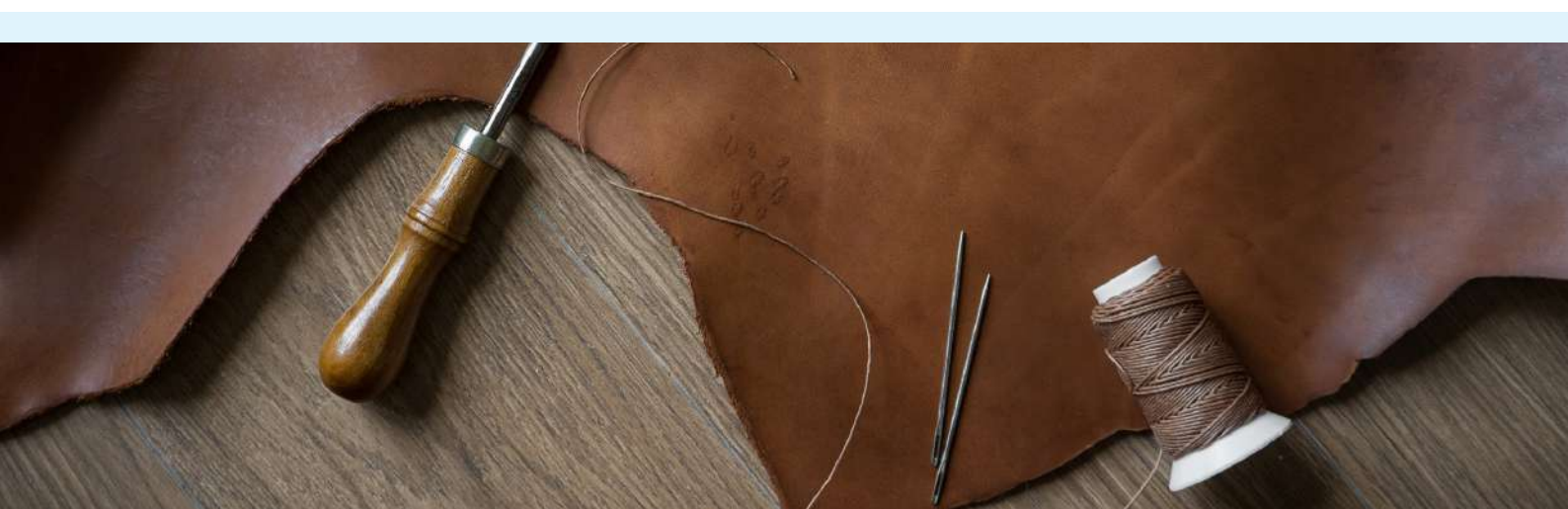
Since the establishment of the Leather Working Group (LWG) accreditation scheme in 2005, environmental impact has become more transparent and measurable for consumers.

The LWG audit has become the most rigorous and widely accepted environmental accreditation scheme for the leather manufacturing industry in the world. LWG audits are carried out by independent auditors and reviewed by a second auditor.

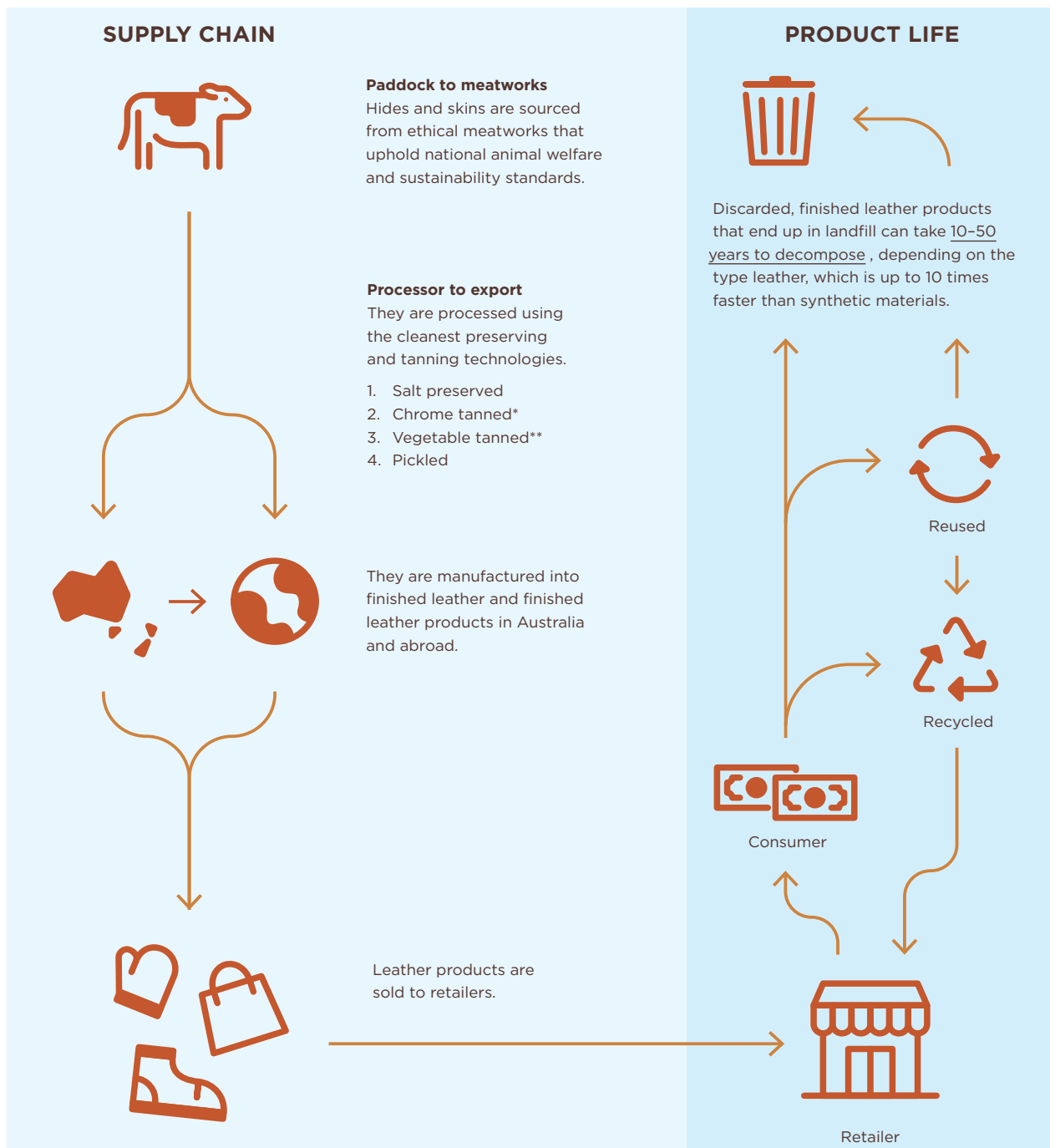
LWG Australian leather processors operate modern facilities ensuring that the tanning process is efficient and sustainable. This includes mandatory environmental reporting into energy consumption, water supply and usage, air and noise emissions, waste treatment, effluent treatment and restricted substances being made public on their websites.

Key Indicators

- Major Australian leather processors have an LWG award and can demonstrate the relevant traceability levels associated with their award level.
- LWG rated tanneries worldwide have seen an average 35% reduction in water consumption, representing an estimated 12 billion litres of water saved each year.
- Leather processors are independently audited for compliance with the Australian Code of Practice for Processing of Hides and Skins for export by third-party provider AUS-MEAT and accredited by AHSLEA.
- Every export consignment of hides, skins and leather from Australia is accompanied by specific permits and documentation that indicate the animal species, quantity, product description and source.



The lifecycle of leather



***Chrome tanning** is a type of mineral tanning using chromium salts that accounts for around 85% of global leather production. It is faster than vegetable tanning, has twice the tensile strength and absorbs less of the tannins. Freshly tanned leather is called wet-blue and is easy to store and transport.

****Vegetable tanning** uses tannins (polyphenols and gallic acid) which are found naturally in plant species such as oak and spruce bark. It is the oldest form of tanning. Vegetable-tanned leather is sometimes called natural leather.

Further information

—Main legislation and standards for meat industry animal welfare: Animal welfare Acts [ACT](#), [NSW](#), [NT](#), [QLD](#), [SA](#), [TAS](#), [VIC](#) and [WA](#), [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines](#), [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines — Land Transport of Livestock](#), [National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme](#), [National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes](#), [Australian Livestock Processing Industry Animal Welfare Certification System](#), [Industry Animal Welfare Standards for Livestock Processing Establishments](#)

—Main legislation and standards for processing and export of leather: [Export Control Act 1982](#), [Australian Code of Practice for Processing of Hides and skins for export](#), [Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Manufacturing Restricted Substances List](#), [Leather Working Group](#)

—Main legislation and standards around mandatory leather processing environmental reporting: [Export Control Act 1982](#), [Australian Code of Practice for Processing of Hides and skins for export](#), [Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Manufacturing Restricted Substances List](#), [Leather Working Group](#)

The Australian Hide Skin & Leather Exporters Association (AHSLEA) is the national membership body representing the interests of the major exporters of Australian cattle and calf hides, sheep and lamb skins, kangaroo skins and goat skins. It is also a member of the International Council of Hides, Skins and Leather Traders Association (ICHSLTA), which promotes, develops and protects the international trade in raw hides, skins and leathers.

www.ahslea.com.au