

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE PHASE-OUT OF  
AUSTRALIAN LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS BY SEA ON NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Dr Peter Slattery  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Peter Slattery. Even though my grandparents were farmers and livestock owners, I am now deeply concerned about the impact of farming on animal welfare, and with animal suffering more generally. I am therefore writing to you today with regard to the ongoing inquiry into the phase-out of Australian live sheep exports by sea.

It is my firm belief that live sheep exports are fundamentally inhumane and unnecessary. Both historical precedent and current scientific evidence have consistently shown that it is impossible to conduct this trade whilst maintaining acceptable standards of animal welfare.

One of the main issues is that Australian Merino sheep are not suited to high humidity environments. On a significant majority of voyages, approximately 60%, these sheep endure prolonged heat stress as they travel through the hot and humid equatorial region and move onwards to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. These regions are among the hottest on earth and with global temperatures predicted to rise, the risk of disastrous conditions at sea is likely to increase.

Upon arrival in the Middle East, these sheep are then slaughtered without being stunned first. This practice results in extreme pain, fear, and distress due to the manual restraint, physical harm, and the experience of exsanguination. In contrast, in Australia, sheep are stunned before slaughter, sparing them the conscious experience of the neck cut and bleed-out process. This includes Halal accredited slaughter for the meat export trade to the Middle East.

Australia can play a crucial role in improving global animal welfare standards by supporting the work of civil society groups like RSPCA International, the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Compassion in World Farming, and Humane Society International. These organisations actively promote programs in developing regions to support the implementation of WOAHS standards.

It is also important to note that the Australian public overwhelmingly supports the phase-out of live sheep exports. National polling conducted by McCrindle Research in 2022 found that 78% of Australians support a phase-out of the trade. More recent polling in May 2023, found that 71% of Western Australians, including 69% in rural and regional areas, also support the phase-out.

The depth of community concern for animal welfare is such that research has found that knowledge and awareness of animal suffering, including in the live export trade, can affect people's psychological wellbeing. University of Queensland researchers have found that exposure to images of animal suffering in the live export trade caused considerable emotional distress and feelings of helplessness.

The live export trade has not been a significant factor for the NSW sheep industry for many years. No NSW sheep have been sourced for live export since at least 2018 when exports from Port Adelaide ceased, and even then, the numbers were negligible. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest the NSW sheep industry will incur any notable impacts due to the phase-out of live sheep exports. The 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports found that increasing interstate trade between WA and NSW following the phase-out was unlikely due to high freight costs.

In conclusion, it is clear that the phase-out of live sheep exports is a necessary step towards improved animal welfare standards, is supported by a significant majority of Australians, and will have minimal impact on the NSW sheep industry.

Regards,  
Peter Slattery

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