

Submission
No 122

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 14 September 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear NSW Parliament,

I am _____, a resident of rural South Australia, who has been deeply concerned for many years about the welfare conditions of long-distance animal travel within our country and specifically live export.

I was greatly relieved to hear that the Federal Government has decided to phase out this trade, yet I believe the process should be expedited to prevent further unnecessary suffering.

The live sheep export trade is fundamentally cruel and unnecessary. Historical experience and current scientific evidence indicate that it cannot be conducted in a manner that meets acceptable animal welfare standards. The recent regulatory reforms have only highlighted the deeply rooted welfare problems in the trade, as they have not effectively addressed the inherent animal welfare issues.

Australian Merino sheep, the primary breed involved in this trade, struggle in high humidity environments. On at least 60% of voyages, they endure prolonged heat stress, particularly as they cross the hot, humid equatorial region, and enter the Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions. Furthermore, the risks of catastrophic disasters at sea are likely to increase due to climate change and rising temperatures. On these journeys, the sheep are subjected to multiple stressors such as failure to eat, lameness, infection, and respiratory diseases due to high ammonia levels on board.

Upon arriving in the Middle East, Australian sheep are slaughtered without stunning, causing extreme pain, fear, and distress due to the manual restraint, tissue cutting, and exsanguination. In contrast, in Australia, sheep are stunned prior to slaughter, sparing them the conscious experience of the neck cut and bleed out process. This practice includes Halal accredited slaughter for the meat export trade to the Middle East. However, Australian sheep exported to the Middle East still undergo slaughter while fully conscious.

Australia can play a significant role in promoting improved animal welfare standards globally without participating in live sheep exports. Working through international organisations such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), we can encourage nations to raise their standards. Supporting the work of civil society groups such as RSPCA International, the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Compassion in World Farming, and Humane Society International can help implement WOAH standards in developing regions. Transitioning away from live sheep exports and using our scientific and technical expertise to influence animal welfare standards internationally is the best way for Australia to demonstrate leadership in animal welfare.

National polling has shown strong support for phasing out live sheep exports, with 78% of Australians in favour of this move. This sentiment is also echoed in the numerous submissions to recent inquiries on the phase out.

The depth of community concern for animal welfare is such that exposure to images of animal suffering in the live export trade has been found to cause significant emotional distress and feelings of helplessness among the public. I myself have suffered nightmares and nausea from the footage that I have witnessed over many years. No animals should be allowed to suffer such inhumane treatment.

The NSW sheep industry has not been dependent on the live export trade for many years. No sheep have been sourced for live export from NSW since at least 2018, and even then, the

numbers were negligible. The industry's limited exposure to the trade, sporadic interstate trade, and the dominance of international commodity prices for lamb and mutton in determining farm gate sheep prices suggest that the phase-out of live sheep exports will not notably impact the NSW sheep industry.

It is perplexing why the NSW inquiry has been initiated using taxpayers' money when NSW farmers have not been involved with the live sheep export trade for many years. I believe there must be more pressing issues that the NSW Parliament could focus on, particularly considering that taxpayers' money is being used. We are all one country and even though we live in different States we are all united.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse the phasing out of live sheep exports due to the associated animal welfare concerns, public sentiment, and the minor impact on the NSW sheep industry.

Regards,