

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 6 September 2024

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Partially  
Confidential

Dear Inquiry Members

Australia's live animal export trade is anachronistic and does not accord with the values of a modern sophisticated society. Australia regards itself as a humane and compassionate society, however the live export trade is barbaric in its cruelty to animals, and that is why the cessation of the trade has been planned.

The inquiry is looking at the impact of the cessation of the live export trade on farmers. The impact is change of processes. Time (years) has been allowed for those changes and adaptations to be made in preparation for the cessation.

Overseas markets can be supplied with refrigerated meat, and this will expand our Australian abattoir industry and provide jobs.

There will still be the markets for Australian sheep products. Farmers will still grow their sheep and sell them, but instead of the animals having to endure and suffer the horror of the ship journey to countries where Australia has no jurisdiction over their welfare, they will be transported to abattoirs in transport and meat processing systems which operate under Australian standards.

Exporters will argue that the export shipping meets Australian standards. That has repeatedly been proven to be untrue, with multiple breaches of regulations and situations of unspeakable distress and slow death of many animals.

As recently as 2023, 11 years after the implementation of a regulatory system to control where Australian animals exported for slaughter end up, Animals Australia showed film footage from a sheep export to Oman in which sheep were sold to private buyers and stuffed into car boots in the stifling heat. Some had their legs tied and were left lying in the sun, some were killed in makeshift kill floors untrained, ill-equipped slaughterman

Many instances occurred before that and during the time that the regulations were supposedly protecting the welfare of the sheep. For instance 2,400 sheep died of heat exhaustion on the ship to Qatar in 2018; for instance the Awassi Express of which a whistleblower documented thousands of sheep dying from heat; for instance the 3,000 sheep that died on the Al Messilah in 2016 on the journey to the Middle East; for instance the 21,000 Australian sheep on the MV Ocean Drover who were rejected by Bahrain and were subsequently taken to Pakistan where they were bulldozed into pits, many still alive. Before the regulations there were many instances, for instance the 2003 50,000 sheep who were rejected by Saudi Arabia on arrival, then spent 80 further days on the hot cramped ship, very many dying, until they were taken to Eritrea in Africa where they were killed, and there are many other examples of how barbaric the live export of animals is.

The regulations are not the same for exported sheep as for sheep transported and killed in Australia. For the 3,000 sheep deaths on the Al Messilah the death rate was 4.36%. This was considered no cause for concern and within the business plan expectations. One sheep death out of every 100 exported alive being "acceptable". It is not acceptable to the Australian public.

And once the animals are at their destination, Australia has no legal jurisdiction to ensure the standard of treatment. Again the exporters will argue that they only export to suitable abattoirs overseas, however this is not the case. It has only been following photographic and

video exposure of treatment by the Animals Australia group that exporters have been forced to limit some of those destinations.

Until that photographic exposure, the exporters had taken no care in where and how the animals were treated, eg sheep being stuffed into boots of cars in hot Middle Eastern countries, to be taken home to be slaughtered in whatever manner and when ever the purchaser chose. The 2023 Oman example above demonstrates this.

What of the destinations of which Animals Australia has been unable to obtain photographic or video footage? The exporters have never been proactive in welfare for the animals they sell.

Even if there were limits on all the destinations and buyers of the exported animals, and even if the treatment at the destination was perfect, (which it isn't), the journey itself is inhumane.

The sheep stand in their urine and faeces for the whole journey, in crowded situations, nothing of the natural environment they came from, nothing about the animals with whom they are familiar being near, nothing about having space to lie down to sleep, nothing about quiet as the engines roar, nothing about natural food with which they are familiar, nothing about easing of the stress, nothing about easy access to the food and water, nothing about temperature control, nothing about being able to exercise, nothing that makes a life worth living.

Everything about it being a living hell. For weeks, sometimes months.

So what is the alternative? Transporting and killing the animals in Australia.

This has so many advantages for farmers:

- \* Much reduced transport cost, so more profit from each animal
- \* Meat sold to the international market meeting Australian hygiene and quality standards, therefore making it a more sought after commodity internationally
- \* The farmer having more control over the welfare of their animals because they have more choice about the agents involved in the transport and killing.
- \* The farmers having more control over the condition of the meat because they can ensure the animals are in good health when they are sent to slaughter.
- \* Some farmers in Northern Australia have geographic advantage if they set up abattoirs of their own, as they are much closer to the Indonesian market than the rest of Australia.
- \* There will be increased employment opportunities in regional areas as the Australian abattoir industry grows to meet the international demand for Australian sheep products. The international demand will continue, even though the animals will already be slaughtered. The destinations will still need meat.

The main impact will be on the exporters, not the farmers.

The exporters have their massive multi deck corrals for animals, which they will need to replace with refrigeration units. Meat will take a lot less room than live animals, so they will not need the huge ships they currently have.

There may not be a market for the exporters' huge redundant ships because Australia is not alone in stopping live export. Other sophisticated countries such as New Zealand have already

stopped this barbaric trade. Perhaps the government might consider some sort of tax relief for the exporters while they adapt their transport methods to the changed export product.

Australia must continue with the planned cessation of the live export trade. The exporters and farmers have been given a number of years in which to adapt to the changed method of delivering meat.

There are already a number of refrigerated meat products sold to international markets upon which to model the changed sheep meat industry when the live export stops.

The rest of the western world's media reports on the horror and extraordinary number of deaths in our live export trade. It does not go unnoticed and Australia stands out as a pariah in this respect. We can do better and can pull our meat export industry up to international standards by continuing with the planned cessation of the live sheep export trade.

Thank you