

**Submission  
No 35**

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

**Name:** Cheryl Forrest-Smith

**Date Received:** 20 September 2024

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Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge my submission to this Inquiry.

I have been a volunteer in the animal advocacy movement for 45 years. Professionally, I am an arts recordings producer in television, film, & sound. I have extensive involvement in the live export trade from the very beginning, including supporting the Australian Federation of Animal Societies (AFAS), now Animals Australia, in preparing and lodging volumes of submissions to Australia's first Senate Select Committee of Inquiry into Animal Welfare in 1985. On the issue of live export, the Committee concluded that on animal welfare grounds alone, live export should end.

I firmly believe that the live sheep export trade is fundamentally cruel and unnecessary, a view backed by historical experience and current scientific evidence. Acceptable animal welfare standards cannot be met within this trade, as the entire live export business model is built on animal cruelty, i.e. The only way it can be financially viable. In the case of sheep, they endure weeks of hot, humid conditions during sea voyages to the Middle East. The ships are not cleaned, so the sheep are forced to exist/stand/lie in their own faeces. They are exposed to multiple stressors, including failure to eat, lameness, and diseases such as salmonellosis due to the high ammonia levels on board.

There are always births on board, and deaths of adults and newborns. Their deaths are slow and painful. Those who do survive are perhaps the unlucky ones. Upon arrival in the Middle East, Australian sheep are slaughtered without stunning, causing terror and extreme pain, and in full view of those next in the kill line. In contrast, in Australia, regulations demand sheep be stunned before slaughter, sparing them the conscious experience of the neck cut and bleed out process. This practice also includes Halal accredited slaughter for the meat export trade to the Middle East.

Australia has the potential to aid in improving global animal welfare standards. We can do this by supporting 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 pursue programmes in developing regions to support the implementation of World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) standards.

It is important to note that most Australians also support an end to live sheep exports. This sentiment was reflected in submissions to recent inquiries on the phase out. Over 80% of submissions and survey responses received by the 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports supported the phase out.

Further, it is also worth acknowledging the depth of community concern for animal welfare. Research indicates that knowledge and awareness of animal suffering, including in the live export trade, can affect people's psychological wellbeing. Researchers from the University of Queensland found that exposure to images of animal suffering in the live export trade caused considerable emotional distress and feelings of helplessness in people.

The NSW sheep industry has been independent of the live export trade for many years. No NSW sheep have been sourced for live export since at least 2018 when exports from Port Adelaide ceased.

The 2023 report of the Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports did not identify any perceived impact on the NSW industry from the phase out. However, the damage to Australia's international reputation caused by the cruelty of the live sheep export trade does affect NSW, as it has negative implications for the entire sheep industry.

I have researched, prepared, and lodged countless submissions on live export. I would urge you to please take a moment to read my latest submission to the 'Inquiry into Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024' - My covering letter, 09.06.24 and its attached Submission, 'Phase out of live sheep export by sea', 30.05.23. – See attachment.

Yours faithfully,

Cheryl Forrest-Smith