

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

To Whom It May Concern,

Significant animal welfare issues exist in the live sheep export by sea industry which cannot be ignored or downplayed. Heat stress and related sickness due to the sheep being confined for lengthy periods of time – days, weeks – in hot, humid, cramped and highly unsanitary conditions. Health issues and disease such as infection, pneumonia and salmonellosis. Sudden change in diet bringing about starvation, incapacitation and death. How can this be considered acceptable? Going back 5-6 years I had no awareness of the reality of how the meat that arrived on our plates and to our export destinations is produced. Now, in a position of more knowledge, I find it so troubling. Seeing evidence of these animals experiencing prolonged discomfort and pain, in such profoundly deplorable conditions on live export ships, and then arriving in countries where the slaughtering is frequently carried out without stunning beforehand – without alleviation of the fear and pain of having their throats cut while fully conscious – is very distressing.

It's well-recognised that sheep, amongst many other animals, are sentient beings, feeling pain and experiencing emotion. In Australia, with very few exceptions animals are legally required to be stunned prior to slaughter. In its report 'Review of Stunning and Halal Slaughter', Meat & Livestock Australia concluded that available scientific evidence regarding pain and distress of animals during slaughter, and the availability of technologies that alleviate this suffering, overwhelmingly support the use of pre-slaughter stunning ([https://www.mla.com.au/contentassets/74517c73509148248a4b0b03d3150537/w.liv.0383\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.mla.com.au/contentassets/74517c73509148248a4b0b03d3150537/w.liv.0383_final_report.pdf)). Why would we continue to send our sheep overseas in these horrendous conditions, knowing there's strong likelihood their fate at their destination will not meet our own country's frankly insufficient standards of animal welfare for livestock? The arbitrary differentiation between the welfare standards and rights of farmed animals versus companion animals is simply not right. The live export industry has lost its social license; the public has a distinctly negative perception of the transport, both by sea and land, of sheep and beef cattle and the welfare implications for these animals (Coleman, G. J., Hemsworth, P. H., Hemsworth, L. M., Munoz, C. A., & Rice, M. (2022). Differences in public and producer attitudes toward animal welfare in the red meat industries. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 875221. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.875221>).

In terms of impact on NSW of the legislated phase-out of live export of sheep by sea, this industry represents only a very small proportion of our national meat trade. There is no direct exposure for our state – our producers no longer sell into the live sheep trade. While

there may be occasional impacts in the event of adverse conditions (drought), in terms of interstate sheep transfers, based on historical data that is neither frequent nor substantial. With respect to sheep pricing, the live export trade has very little impact. The Independent Panel's comprehensive investigation, which included meetings with over 2,000 individuals, holding 96 stakeholder meetings, with over 4,000 submissions or surveys, did not identify any impacts in its 'Phase out of live sheep exports by sea' report of the phase-out on the NSW sheep industry.

I ask that the NSW government please consider turning its attention to the excellent development work being done in the area of cruelty-free cultivated meat products, for example by Magic Valley in Victoria (<https://magicvalley.com.au/>), as an alternative, humane source of meat for those who wish to consume animal products. This is where we should be investing time and money: meat production that is free from exploitation, cruelty and slaughter. The production of this meat occurs in a controlled environment, similar to how yoghurt or beer is produced, and the output is identical at a cellular level to the meat produced via traditional methods of animal agriculture. For environmental and ethical reasons, we should be focusing our efforts and investment towards plant-based and cruelty-free food production rather than traditional animal agriculture.

The Australian government has committed to ending live sheep export by sea. The legislation has been passed. It's critical we do not now go back on the commitment to bring an end to this cruel trade. I do not want to see our country's farmers suffering – financially, mentally or in any other respect; we need to provide adequate support to those affected for the transition process. Equally I do not want to see our fellow animals suffering when it is within our means to prevent that. We do not need to continue this cruel, outdated practice of live export of sheep by sea. The phase-out will not have any impact of significance on our state. I respectfully urge the committee to please prioritise animal welfare in this matter.

Yours faithfully,