

Submission
No 53

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

Name: Mrs Ellie Robertson

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Impact of the phase-out of Australian live sheep exports by sea on New South Wales

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Ellie Robertson, a woman living with a significant physical disability and relying on 24-hour care. Despite my personal challenges, there are certain industries and their practices that deeply concern me. It saddens me to dwell on the suffering these innocent creatures undergo, all in the name of profit.

The live sheep export trade, in my view, is fundamentally cruel and unnecessary. Historical precedents and current scientific evidences suggest that the trade cannot be conducted in a manner that meets acceptable standards of animal welfare. Sheep during their voyages endure harsh conditions. They are forced to stand, lie, and sleep in their own waste during the 2-3 week journey to the Middle East. The sheep are exposed to multiple stressors, including inanition, lameness, salmonellosis, infection, and respiratory diseases due to high levels of ammonia on board.

Once Australian sheep arrive in the Middle East they are slaughtered without stunning. This causes the sheep extreme pain, fear and distress due to the manual restraint, cutting of tissue, and experience of exsanguination. In Australia, sheep are stunned before slaughter, saving them from having to consciously experience the neck cut and bleed out process. Importantly, this includes Halal accredited slaughter for the meat export trade to the Middle East.

Australia's international reputation has suffered severely as a result of live sheep exports. The best way for Australia to show leadership in animal welfare is by transitioning away from the trade and using our scientific and technical expertise to influence animal welfare standards internationally.

Most Australians support and end to live sheep exports. This was also reflected in submissions to recent inquiries on the phase out. Of the 800 submissions and 3,300 survey responses received by the 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports, over 80% supported the phase out. And of the 13,000 submissions and items of correspondence received by the House Agriculture Committee Inquiry into the Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea Bill 2024, over 85% expressed support for the Bill.

Such is the depth of community concern for animal welfare that research has found that knowledge and awareness of animal suffering, including in the live export trade, can affect the psychological wellbeing of people. Researchers from the University of Queensland have found that exposure to images of animal suffering in the live export trade caused considerable emotional distress and feelings of helplessness in people. The researchers recommended that future media coverage of animal suffering in the trade should advise the public of contact details for counselling and mental health support.

The NSW sheep industry has not relied on 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, and even then, the numbers were negligible.

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. Indeed, the 200-page report makes almost no mention of NSW. 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 ramifications for the entire sheep industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,

Ellie Robertson

20 September 2024