

**Submission
No 64**

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

Name: Ms Marie Humphries

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The live sheep export trade MUST end

Dear Committee

I am strongly opposed to the live export of sheep by sea, and I support the government's Bill to phase out live sheep exports. The phase-out of live sheep export delivers on a government commitment supported by the majority of Australians. Australian export laws should reflect the values of the Australian community. Over 78% of Australians support an end to the export of live sheep to the Middle East.

The generous financial assistance package being provided to farmers affected by the phase-out is also supported by the community. This policy to end the trade is based on decades of evidence that live sheep export is inherently cruel and is an unfixable industry. Contrary to industry claims, the trade has not been "fixed."

Independent Observer data confirms sheep still continue to suffer prolonged heat stress on voyages to the Middle East. Sheep suffer at every stage of the journey, at sea and in importing countries where they face fully conscious slaughter. The animal welfare issues inherent to the trade will always continue and can never be minimised or controlled as sheep as a species are unable to regulate their body temperature effectively and with increasing climate change extreme heat conditions in the Middle East will only get worse. Deeply held cultural practices of Middle Eastern countries regarding slaughter methods will remain and will never align with Australian standards and this will never change. These issues are inevitable, ongoing and cannot be managed or overcome.

The live trade does not accord with community expectations for how animals should be treated today because it has been scientifically concluded that animals feel fear, pain, suffering and brutality. The industry needs to move with the times to create a more humane and sustainable future that respects animal welfare and protects Australia's international reputation.

According to Pegasus Economics, the Australian live sheep export industry is in structural decline, with exports down 70 per cent since 2018. Rather than propping up this declining industry, Australia should focus on investing in our onshore processing sector. This is both more humane for livestock and better economically for Australia, with the potential to add jobs and millions of dollars to local farming communities.

This will provide local Australian farming communities the economic benefits of onshore processing. A frozen meat trade without the cruelty and suffering attached, will be more economically viable for Australia. The frozen meat trade is an expanding industry, with projections economically being much higher than the live sheep export trade. Countries that import live animals from Australia now also import our boxed meat. Over the last decade there has been a substantial increase in the export of boxed meat from Australia to the Middle East. In 2009, Australia exported 19.9 million kg of boxed lamb to the Middle East. In 2019, this figure increased to 57.0 million kg, an increase of 187%. Some Australian abattoirs have the capacity to slaughter animals by the methods required for Halal certification, in compliance with Islamic Law. Middle Eastern demand for chilled and frozen beef, veal, lamb and mutton is growing rapidly. It is time to end the live sheep export trade. Better for sheep, the economy, regional jobs and the industry.

Let's not forget that this trade is ending because science and visual footage has shown that it is cruel for the following reasons-

- Animals endure severe suffering during long, stressful sea voyages.
- Ship accidents can result in the drowning of animals and loss of human life.
- Long journeys expose animals to extreme heat, dehydration and illness.

- Consistent animal welfare standards across borders are hard to maintain.
- Live export harms the environment and contributes to carbon emissions.
- Cruel practices, such as rough handling are common.
- Animals are often subjected to extreme conditions and cruel practices in foreign countries.
- Sheep suffer from heat stress, leading to severe health issues or death.
- Ships are not cleaned during voyages, creating unsanitary and harmful conditions.
- Sheep are crammed into tight spaces restricting access to feed and water
- Vet care for illness is non-existent

Consumers increasingly are demanding humane treatment of animals. Banning live exports will improve our nation's ethical reputation worldwide.

I strongly support the government's Bill to phase out the live sheep export trade which must remain in place with the legislated final end date of the trade by 1st May 2028 to remain.

Your sincerely

Marie Humphries