

**Submission
No 69**

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

Name: Ms Ruby Hardie
Date Received: 19 September 2024

End live sheep exports

Regulation of the live animal export trade has failed animals.

Simply put all animals suffer horrendous levels of pain and suffering during transport and at point of slaughter in overseas countries.

The industry knows this fact but wants to continue this suffering because of monetary benefits. They have failed to protect all animals for over 60 years. Widespread breaches of Australian regulations have seen exporters failing to monitor the animals and follow even the most basic rules. The live animal export trade is a system built on the acceptance of animal suffering and decades of lawlessness, corruption, cover-ups, lack of transparency and cruelty.

Of particular concern is the export of sheep by sea that are prone to extreme heat stress and suffer an agonising death. Workers on these ships know of this suffering and simply allow it to continue, shovelling the dead carcasses of sheep overboard using their shovels. This contaminates our oceans. These sheep because of the 45 degree plus temperatures cannot be distinguished as they have simply boiled from the inside out and have melted away. This is the reality of the live sheep export trade, and this industry wants it to continue. The images of what we do to our exported sheep are truly harrowing.

The community are strongly opposed to this animal cruelty! The backlash from the community will continue until this trade ends.

We will never ever accept gentle sheep being treated as commodities to suffer for monetary gain. The industry should be ashamed of themselves.

Australian export laws should and MUST 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 trade must be shut down!

The Exporter Supply Chain has failed to protect our exported sheep and all other animals for that matter. Endless reviews using tax -payer money will not fix this industry. Hence the industry has continued to systemically abuse exported animals. Exported animals that manage to survive the journey are subjected to abuse and methods of slaughter that are illegal in Australia. There are virtually no laws protecting animals in the overseas countries they're sold to.

OUR legal system denies animals that are raised for food the same compassion, moral consideration, and legal protection as other animals in human care. Animals that are raised for food are no less deserving of care and being treated humanely. They deserve compassion as to how they are farmed, transported and how they are killed. These animals feel fear and pain, they are living, sentient beings. They are not simply just commodities that can be bought and sold, allowed to suffer in silence whilst being transported then be cruelly killed fully conscious in countries where no animal welfare standards even exist.

The live sheep export trade by sea has particular specific animal welfare issues inherent to the trade that will always continue and can never be minimised or controlled, because-

1. the physiology of sheep and their inability to regulate heat stress will never change,
2. climate change and extreme heat conditions in the Middle East has increased and will get worse causing even more heat stress for sheep as they cannot regulate their body temperatures effectively like other animals, and
3. deeply held cultural practices of Middle Eastern countries regarding slaughter methods that do not align with Australian standards will never change.

These issues are inevitable, ongoing and cannot be managed or overcome- never.

Continual breaches outside approved supply chains in in the Middle East continue like-

- In suffocating heat of 40+ degree temperatures, multiple sheep stuffed into car boots or on the back of utes or tied on roof racks are transported regularly for private home slaughter.
- In the streets and outside slaughterhouses, frightened sheep suffer more heat stress and endure rough handling (dragged, pulled, stomped on, kicked, prodded) as all their legs are tied onto makeshift kill floors.
- In May our sheep are still being transported from Australia by sea to experience a Middle East summer that starts early and always has extreme high temperatures. Images of sheep in the sun of 40+ degrees Celsius panting, suffering extreme heat stress, waiting their turn on the street in full sun to be dragged in to be consciously killed.
- Every sheep sold in private sale is a live export law broken and exposes the animal to extended suffering right up until they are killed by untrained, inexperienced, and ill-equipped slaughtermen, many who use blunt knives with a 'sawing motion' to prolong the pain, suffering and agony of a fully conscious slaughter as the sheep's throat is finally severed. Blunt knives mean the suffering is prolonged. Unbelievable cruelty.

This live sheep export industry is unfixable and is not accepted by the community.

It is incomprehensible how we have permitted and allowed this industry to continue so long.

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.

A frozen chilled meat is the future for this industry now with a financial package to support farmers.

A frozen meat trade for sheep farmers will decrease the cruelty and suffering, as sheep will be slaughtered in Australia. The live sheep export trade by sea is a declining industry whereas the frozen meat trade is an expanding industry, with projections economically being much higher than the live sheep export trade. More regional jobs for Australians because sheep can be processed in Australia in Australian abattoirs.

The markets are there for our farmers now to move to the chilled meat sector. 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%. Middle Eastern demand for chilled and frozen beef, veal, lamb and mutton is growing rapidly. With the government's transition package now is the time to move to an exported frozen sheep market.

I strongly support the government's Bill into Parliament to phase out the live sheep export trade with their legislated final end date on the 1st of May 2028. The transition phase out must begin as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time

Ruby Hardie