

**Submission
No 71**

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

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NSW Inquiry by SFF into the impact of the live export ban

The outcome of this inquiry is expected to have little impact on farmers' livelihoods, contrary to what is being suggested by the NSW Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party (SFF).

I support wholeheartedly the legislated ban to end this blatantly cruel industry on 1st May 2028. The Bill "The Export Control Amendment (Ending Live sheep Exports by Sea) Act 2024" passed both the lower and upper house in July.

The community have watched in horror video footage over many years now to see how our voiceless sheep suffer. This industry is corrupt and heartless. The industry has promised to fix itself many times and has failed!

Therefore, LIVE SHEEP EXPORT MUST END because of the inability and failure of government regulations to protect animals. Monetary industry profit is the priority and will always be the priority meaning animal suffering will always continue. The industry is non-compliant when it comes to addressing animal welfare issues. Sheep still suffer on these transport ships and at point of slaughter.

Review after review with many chances given to the industry using our tax-payer money has proven this industry cannot be trusted. It has lost its social license to operate, therefore it must be shut down.

The community are shocked time and time again with what they see and hear about this disgusting industry. No animal deserves this treatment. All animals including farmed animals have a right to be shown compassion as to how they are farmed and how they are slaughtered. This industry had failed gentle sheep on multiple occasions.

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 ***animal welfare issues inherent to the trade 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, 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.

A just government transition package has been extended to farmers to make this change which the community support through their taxes.

Farmers will still make money off their sheep, but sheep will not have to endure long sea voyages in extreme heat and suffer the effects of prolonged heat stress and in many cases a cruel slow death. Independent Observer data confirms sheep continue to suffer heat stress on voyages to the Middle East.

Contrary, to industry claims, the trade has not been 'fixed' and will never improve as higher standards of animal welfare can never be guaranteed in the overseas markets.

Most Australians, including most people in WA, support an end to live sheep export. Almost 70% of Australians want an end to the live sheep export trade. We have seen the cruelty continue for

decades; we have advocated the end of this cruel industry. Promises that the industry will change, with so-called promised reforms have failed time and time again. The extreme cruelty has to end.

1. Animal Welfare Concerns related to Live Sheep Export

Sheep suffer cumulative inherent stress and pain whilst enduring long sea voyages. Sheep are overcrowded into pens with limited access to fresh food and clean drinking water. They are provided no proper care during transport. The risks of heat stress, overcrowding, and inadequate care are well-documented and remain a significant concern. I urge the committee to prioritise the welfare of these animals by considering the severe impact these conditions have on their health and well-being.

Animals exported from Australia face extended periods at sea, which increases their exposure to heat stress and other welfare risks. Even with stringent regulatory measures, the long voyages, particularly through tropical regions, pose significant challenges that cannot be fully mitigated. The weather cannot be controlled and with escalating climate change these Middle Eastern countries will only get hotter. More sheep will suffer heat stress causing more financial loss to the industry. I am opposed to my taxes bailing out this industry to keep it afloat.

Many in my community are incredibly concerned about the live export practices, particularly how sheep suffer from extreme heat and long journeys. The distress they endure for such extended periods is heart-wrenching. I support humane alternatives that aligns better with our values, where sheep are spared from suffering.

Seeing animals in such distress is deeply troubling and highlights the urgent need for practices that ensure exported sheep are supported in their well-being, while we transition away from the export of live sheep completely within the next 3 ½ years.

2. Exploring Alternative Markets

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 will make more money for farmers without the cruelty and same level of suffering attached, as sheep will be slaughtered in Australia. As the live sheep export trade by sea is a declining industry, the frozen meat trade is an expanding industry, with projections economically being much higher. Domestically processed sheep are worth 20 percent more to the Australian economy than sheep exported live, due to the value that will be added to the Australian meat processing sector.

The expansion of chilled and frozen export markets exists now. A chilled exported meat market can benefit both animal welfare and the economy, supporting a transition for farmers and associated industries.

Further research is strongly advised into and development of alternative industries that do not rely on animal exploitation. This could include plant-based agriculture, which could offer new economic opportunities for communities. Developing lab-grown meat and other animal products as humane alternatives to live export is another suggestion.

To address animal welfare concerns while transitioning from live exports, we should consider advancing the production of lab-grown meat and other animal products. This method not only

circumvents the ethical issues associated with live animal transport but also offers a way to meet demand sustainably.

Alternatives like plant-based agriculture and lab-grown meat has an expanding future and offers a more ethical solution to live exports.

3. Case Studies of Successful Transitions from Live Export

New Zealand our neighbour has phased out live exports and has improved animal welfare through alternative practices in many parts of animal agriculture- their piggeries for example reflect higher standards of animal welfare than what we practice in Australia- another industry that must be reformed.

Countries have successfully phased out live exports by investing in local processing and other humane alternatives. For instance, New Zealand's move to end live exports by sea has been met with positive outcomes for animal welfare and the industry alike. We can learn from these examples and develop strategies that both protect animal welfare and support our farmers.

The New Zealand industry has responded gratefully to the shift from a purely economic value to a focus on sustainability and animal welfare, ensuring that no suffering for any animal is involved in their operations.

In December, the United Kingdom also put forward legislation to ban live exports for slaughter and fattening. The issue continues to gain momentum across the entire European Union. The European Union has commenced a major review of live animal transport regulations, which is expected to lead to significant reforms to live export laws within its 27 member nations.

In conclusion, to have an Inquiry by the NSW SFF Party as an effort to save the trade is disheartening and shows the greed of this industry. This industry is unfixable. It is incomprehensible how we have permitted and allowed this industry to continue so long.

Australia's image internationally has been tarnished by the cruel live sheep export trade that reflects extremely poor non-existent animal welfare standards for our animals. The industry has ignored the community and has ignored animal cruelty for decades.

I do not support this cruel industry continuing. Australia can do better and MUST do better.

Farmers will be compensated in their transition to a frozen meat trade.

It's time this cruelty ends. Enough is enough. END THE CRUELTY!

Again, I reiterate I support the government's Bill to phase out the live sheep export trade with their legislated end date on the 1st May 2028.

Thank you

Martin Derby