

**Submission
No 73**

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

Name: Mrs Catherine Cilemanoff

Date Received: 19 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you as a long-term resident of a rural area. Our family, along with many others here, has been in sheep farming for generations. While we understand and appreciate the economic implications of the proposed phase-out of live sheep exports by sea, it is the animal welfare aspect that deeply concerns us.

The current live sheep export trade is, in our view, fundamentally at odds with acceptable standards of animal welfare. Despite recent regulatory reforms, the inherent issues of animal welfare within the trade remain largely unaddressed. In fact, these reforms have only served to underscore the deeply-rooted problems that plague the industry.

The conditions endured by the sheep during these exports are nothing short of appalling. Over the course of their two to three-week long sea voyages to the Middle East, they are forced to stand, sleep and lie in their own waste in hot and humid conditions. This results in multiple and cumulative stressors such as failure to eat, lameness, salmonellosis, infection, and respiratory diseases due to the high ammonia levels on board.

Adding insult to injury, upon arrival in the Middle East, Australian sheep are often slaughtered while fully conscious, a practice that causes considerable pain and distress. Despite the fact that Halal-accredited slaughter in Australia involves stunning, there seems to be little to no chance of this practice being accepted in Middle Eastern abattoirs in the foreseeable future.

The image of Australia on the international stage has been significantly tarnished as a result of these live sheep exports. We believe that the best way for Australia to demonstrate global leadership in animal welfare is by transitioning away from this trade. This will allow us to leverage our scientific and technical knowledge to influence international animal welfare standards.

The sentiment against live sheep exports is not limited to the farming community. The majority of Australians support an end to live sheep exports, a view reflected in submissions to recent inquiries on the phase out. Over 80% of the 800 submissions and 3,300 survey responses to the 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports supported the phase out. Additionally, over 85% of the 13,000 submissions and items of correspondence to the House Agriculture Committee Inquiry into the Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea Bill 2024 expressed support for the Bill.

Moreover, research has shown that community concern for animal welfare is so deep that awareness of animal suffering in the trade can affect people's psychological wellbeing. University of Queensland researchers found that exposure to images of animal suffering in the live export trade resulted in considerable emotional distress and feelings of helplessness. They recommended that future media coverage should provide counselling and mental health support contacts.

Finally, it's worth noting the limited exposure of the NSW sheep industry to the live export trade, with small volumes accounting for less than 3% of annual national turn off and less than 2% of national sheep meat export value. The 2023 report of the Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports did not identify any potential impact on the NSW industry from the phase out. However, the damage to Australia's international reputation caused by the cruelty of the live sheep export trade undeniably affects NSW and the entire sheep industry.

I urge you to consider these points in your deliberations on the future of live sheep exports by sea. The time is ripe for change, for the sake of our animals, our reputation, and our collective conscience.

Regards, Catherine Cilemanoff