

Submission
No 77

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

Name: Mrs Tracey Paterson

Date Received: 19 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a member of a farming family, I have been a devoted campaigner against the live sheep export trade for decades. I believe it to be a heartless and redundant industry that should be replaced by a more humane and modern approach, such as the chilled and boxed meat trade.

The live sheep export trade is inherently cruel and unnecessary. Both historical and scientific evidence support the fact that it is impossible for this industry to meet satisfactory animal welfare standards. Australian Merino sheep, the primary breed for this trade, are poorly equipped to handle the extreme humidity they are subjected to during their voyages. These animals suffer prolonged heat stress on these journeys as they pass through the equatorial region and into the Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions.

Sheep are forced to endure unbearable conditions during these 2-3 week long sea voyages to the Middle East. They are loaded into cramped, dirty environments, where they must stand, lie, and sleep in their own waste. They are subjected to numerous cumulative stressors, including a failure to eat, lameness, salmonellosis, infection, and respiratory diseases due to the high levels of ammonia on board.

Despite claims by the live sheep export industry that death rates have fallen, this is an inappropriate measure of animal welfare. Mortality rates overlook the multiple serious animal welfare issues that occur before death and provide no insight into the experience of the surviving animals. The McCarthy Review of 2018 recommended the industry move away from mortality rates as a measure of performance, yet the industry and its supporters continue to rely on these figures to defend the trade, demonstrating a lack of progress.

Upon arrival in the Middle East, Australian sheep are slaughtered without stunning, causing extreme pain, fear, and distress. In contrast, sheep in Australia are stunned before slaughter, significantly reducing their suffering. It is clear that Australia need not participate in live sheep exports to contribute to improved animal welfare standards globally. Instead, we can utilise international platforms like the World Organisation for Animal Health and international trade negotiations to encourage nations to lift their standards.

Australia's international reputation has been significantly tarnished due to the live sheep exports. The most effective way for Australia to demonstrate leadership in animal welfare is by transitioning away from this trade and utilising our scientific and technical expertise to influence global standards.

Public sentiment also supports the phase-out of this trade. National polling by McCrindle Research in 2022 found that 78% of Australians, and 71% of Western Australians in a 2023 poll, supported the phase out, including a significant majority in rural and regional areas.

The NSW sheep industry has been largely unaffected by the live export trade. No NSW sheep have been used for live export since at least 2018, 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. However, the damage to Australia's international reputation caused by this inhumane trade affects NSW, as it has negative implications for the entire sheep industry.

Given that NSW is not affected by the phase out and ending of live sheep export, this is a significant voting issue for me and my family. Australians overwhelmingly support an end to live sheep exports. We no longer wish to witness the suffering and cruelty associated with the trade, especially when more humane alternatives exist.

Regards,

Tracey Paterson