

Submission
No 87

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

Name: Ms Karen Spinks
Date Received: 19 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you as a citizen deeply concerned about the welfare of animals, particularly in relation to the live export of sheep. It distresses me greatly to know that animals are suffering needlessly, and I believe that as a prosperous nation, Australia should be leading the way in humane treatment and care of all beings. The practice of live exports, unfortunately, contradicts this sentiment.

The ongoing live sheep export trade is fundamentally at odds with acceptable standards of animal welfare. Despite recent regulatory reforms, the inherent issues concerning animal welfare within this trade have not been mitigated. In fact, these reforms have only served to underscore the deeply rooted welfare problems within the industry.

Sheep are subjected to extreme conditions during their two to three-week sea voyages to the Middle East, forced to endure hot, humid environments while standing, lying and sleeping in their own waste. They are confronted with multiple stressors including failure to eat, lameness, salmonellosis, infection, and respiratory illnesses due to high onboard ammonia levels.

Upon arrival in the Middle East, Australian sheep are slaughtered without stunning, causing them immense pain, fear and distress. This contrasts sharply with the Australian practice of stunning sheep before slaughter, which spares them the conscious experience of the neck cut and bleed out process. This also extends to Halal accredited slaughter for meat exports to the Middle East.

Australia has the potential to improve global animal welfare standards without participating in live sheep exports. Through international platforms, such as the World Organisation for Animal Health and international trade negotiations, we can encourage other nations to elevate their standards, reaping substantial and far-reaching benefits for animal welfare.

Australians are overwhelmingly supportive of phasing out the live sheep export trade, as evidenced by national polling conducted by McCrindle Research in 2022, which found that 78% of Australians supported such a move. This sentiment was also echoed in Western Australia, where the trade takes place, with 71% of Western Australians supporting the phase-out in a May 2023 poll.

The live sheep export trade has not been a significant factor for the NSW sheep industry in many years. No NSW sheep have been used for live export since at least 2018, and the numbers prior to that were negligible. Evidence from the 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports further suggests that the NSW sheep industry is unlikely to experience significant impacts due to the phase-out of live sheep exports.

The practice of live sheep export should have ceased a long time ago. Each animal exported endures suffering to varying degrees during their journey, culminating in an inhumane slaughter process that Australia cannot control. Our country's animals deserve far better than this.

I implore you to consider these points and the unnecessary suffering that this practice causes. There are more humane alternatives available, and as a nation, we should strive towards those.

Sincerely,
Karen Spinks