

Submission
No 93

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

Name: Mr Daniel Johnson
Date Received: 18 September 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a concerned individual who deeply cares about animals and resolutely stands against their exploitation for profit. I would like to express my strong objection to the continuation of live sheep exports by sea from Australia, and wholeheartedly support the proposed phase-out.

The live sheep export trade, as it currently operates, is fundamentally at odds with acceptable standards of animal welfare. It has become glaringly evident that recent regulatory reforms have failed to address the core animal welfare problems intrinsic to the trade. These reforms have, instead, underscored the deep-seated issues at hand.

The death rate among exported sheep has often been presented as a metric of progress by the live sheep export industry. However, this is a flawed and misleading measure that does not accurately reflect animal welfare. Death is an extreme outcome, and such a metric overlooks the myriad severe welfare issues that precede it. It also offers no insight into the experiences of those animals that do survive. The industry's continued reliance on mortality rates to defend the trade only emphasises their lack of significant change.

Furthermore, Australian sheep exported to the Middle East are still slaughtered while fully conscious, a practice that is starkly contrasted by Halal-accredited slaughter in Australia, which involves stunning. This method of slaughter without stunning inflicts considerable distress and pain on the sheep. Unfortunately, there seems to be little chance of Middle Eastern abattoirs or Halal authorities accepting stunning in the near future.

Australia has a significant opportunity to help improve global animal welfare standards. By supporting the work of civil society groups such as the World Society for the Protection of Animals, Compassion in World Farming, and Humane Society International, we can make a difference. These organisations are actively working to implement WOAHS standards in developing regions.

The overwhelming majority of Australians are in favour of ending live sheep exports. This sentiment is clearly reflected in the responses to recent inquiries on the phase-out. Over 80% of the 800 submissions and 3,300 survey responses received by the 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports supported the phase-out. Additionally, over 85% of the 13,000 submissions to the House Agriculture Committee Inquiry into the Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea Bill 2024 expressed support for the Bill.

The depth of community concern for animal welfare is profound. Research has shown that knowledge and awareness of animal suffering, including in the live export trade, can significantly affect people's psychological well-being. It is therefore crucial that we consider not only the impact on animals but also on our community's mental health.

The impact on the NSW sheep industry of the phase-out is minimal. Interstate trade in sheep from Western Australia to Eastern states is sporadic, and even in years of high trade, the numbers equate to less than 10% of the average annual sheep slaughter volumes in NSW. The biggest determinant for farm gate sheep prices remains international commodity prices for lamb and mutton, given that Australia exports over 65% of the sheep meat it produces.

In contrast, the damage to Australia's international reputation caused by the cruelty of the live sheep export trade could have negative ramifications for the entire sheep industry, including New South Wales.

The suffering endured by animals during long, stressful sea voyages, the potential for ship accidents resulting in the loss of animal and human life, and the exposure of animals to extreme heat, dehydration, and illness are just a few of the many reasons to end live sheep exports. The consistent maintenance of animal welfare standards across borders is challenging, and the banning of live exports would significantly improve our nation's ethical reputation. Moreover, live export is detrimental to the environment and contributes to carbon emissions.

In conclusion, it is clear that the live sheep export trade is in dire need of a rethink. The welfare of animals must be prioritised above profits, and the clear support from the Australian public for the phase-out of live exports should be heeded.

Regards,

Daniel Johnson