

**Submission
No 100**

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

Name: Mrs Nicole Ferrara
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LIVE EXPORT SUBMISSION

1. The industry has been in decline since 2018 (from 1,118,499 sheep exported by sea in 2019 to 650,717 in 2023). In 2022, 502,758 live sheep were exported by sea which is less than half of those exported in 2019. Looks like a dying industry to me.
2. Sheep endure long journeys onboard crowded ships. This can cause great suffering due to heat stress, starvation and dehydration. Sheep are often ill and die possibly due to the filthy conditions onboard. Some journeys by sea last up to 3 weeks. That is 3 weeks standing in their own waste.

It is not uncommon for sheep to suffer hoof damage, abrasions and lameness, due to laying on the rough ship floor. Sheep suffer eye infections, salmonellosis and pneumonia from the crowded and unsanitary conditions. Because of the inadequate drainage onboard, some animals slip and are unable to get back up. Untreated open wounds can become infected which causes immense pain. Feed troughs can become contaminated with urine and faeces.

Ships are so very different from the paddocks these sheep came from. Imagine being forced onto a truck, the entire journey with no food or water, to then be forced onto a ship, crammed in with thousands of other sheep. The movement of the ship is unsettling, the smell of the ship is unfamiliar, the food is different, the noises are different.

On 5 January 2024, 15,000 sheep were kept on board the MV Bahijah for just over two and a half months due to security concerns in the Red Sea. After disembarking briefly back in Australia they were re-loaded, arriving in Israel in early April. 15,000 poor souls stuck on a ship for the better part of 3 months because of security concerns. These concerns were known prior to this ship setting sail.

Interestingly, government regulations allow a mortality rate of 1% of sheep on every voyage. On a shipment of 15,000 (as above), 150 sheep can die without an investigation into the cause of death.

3. Thousands of sheep die on ships each year. The survivors have a brutal death to look forward to in countries that have little to no animal welfare standards. Sheep are handled roughly and brutally killed, many while fully conscious.

Even though we are led to believe that we have a say in how our sheep are treated in other countries, we don't. Time and time again, investigations by Australian animal welfare groups have proven that sheep are brutally killed when they arrive at their destination. Cruel practices in other countries are common.

In 2023, investigators in Oman witnessed terrified sheep being sold to private buyers and stuffed into car boots in the stifling heat. Sheep had their legs tied together and were left lying on the scorching ground in the streets. If this occurrence of animal abuse had not been reported by an animal welfare investigator, it would have been business as usual. It would appear that the live export industry is not policed by the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) as it should be, instead we must rely on donations by regular people to organisations such as Animals Australia so they can have people on the ground to uncover what is actually happening.

To further prove that Australia has no control over how animals that are exported overseas are treated, in 2019 dairy cattle exported to Sri Lanka were found to be starving, sick, dying and dead. They were also pregnant when they left Australia. The chairman of the exporting company blamed the farm management practices at the destination. This highlights that Australia has no control once the animals leave the ship.

In 2017, thousands of sheep cooked from the inside out due to the severe heat. Interestingly the Department of Agriculture decided it would not release footage of the onboard conditions.

2012 was the year that Bahrain rejected a shipment of 21,000 sheep. After being stranded at sea for 2 weeks, they were shipped to Pakistan. Footage shows sheep having their necks sawed before being tossed in a pit. Sheep were bulldozed into a pit with some still breathing the next day.

There are many more instances of this kind of abuse. It will only end when the live export industry ends.

4. On 30 May 2011, ABC Four Corners broadcast 'A Bloody Business' live export expose. This was footage taken from an investigation by Animals Australia in Indonesia. Since this aired, more and more Australians have called for the industry to end. This footage showed Australians the truth about live export. Prior to that we only knew the lies we were being told by the government and the industry.
5. Time and time again the industry will tell us that Australia have the highest animal welfare standards in the world. The truth does not paint the same picture. There should have always been an Independent Office to oversee the industry.
6. One reason (or excuse) behind the continuation of live export is that countries that Australia export to do not have refrigeration and therefore cannot accept packaged meat. Is this true?

Qatar: gas and oil reserves are the third largest in the world. Has been investing in renewable energy since 2008 and have set the goal of attaining 20% of its

energy from solar power by 2030. In 2012, Qatar retained its title of richest country in the world.

Kuwait: fifth richest country in the world. Has a wealthy petroleum-based economy.

Malaysia: oil and natural gas reserves are fourth largest in Asia-Pacific region. In 2013, total power generation capacity was over 29,728 megawatts. Total electricity generation was 140,985.01 GWh.

Jordan: use a natural gas pipeline from Sinai as well as heavy fuel oils to generate electricity.

United Arab Emirates: oil and natural gas reserves are the world's sixth and seventh largest.

Oman: twenty-fifth largest reserves of petroleum in the world. Twenty-eighth in the world for natural gas reserves.

Saudi Arabia: petroleum reserves second largest in the world, is the largest exporter of petroleum. Has the world's second largest oil reserves and the sixth largest natural gas reserves. Saudi Arabia is considered an 'energy superpower'. Saudi Arabia is considered self-sufficient in numerous foodstuffs including meat, milk and eggs.

I urge the committee to prioritise the welfare of animals by considering the severe impact live export conditions have on their health and well-being.

Like New Zealand before us, we can set an example to the rest of the world and end the live export of animals from this country.

Having viewed footage on ships as well as arrival at destinations, the stress and suffering that sheep endure during live export is deeply troubling and highlights the urgent need to put a stop to it. The live export of animals has had too many issues, issues that have never been fixed despite promises from the government and industry to do so.

Dr Lynn Simpson served as the on-board vet for some 57 live export voyages. In her words 'this industry entails unnecessary pain and suffering for all the animals involved within it. Anyone who tells you different is either ill-informed, they're a liar or they're staying silent for fear of losing their job'.

The export of live sheep will stop in 2028 and should never return.