

**Submission
No 103**

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

Name: Ms Rita O'Sullivan
Date Received: 18 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Rita O'Sullivan and I am a passionate advocate for animal welfare and environmental protection. I am writing in response to the inquiry into the phase-out of Australian live sheep exports by sea, as I believe it is essential that we consider not only the economic and social implications but also the welfare of the animals involved and the views of our community.

Firstly, the live sheep export trade, in my opinion, is inherently cruel and unnecessary. Historical records, along with current scientific evidence, demonstrate that this trade cannot be carried out in a manner that upholds acceptable animal welfare standards. Merino sheep, a breed native to Australia, struggle to cope with the high levels of humidity they experience on voyages. This results in their suffering from prolonged heat stress on more than half of all journeys, particularly when crossing the humid equatorial region and entering into the extremely hot Red Sea and Persian Gulf areas. With climate change predicted to increase extreme temperatures, the risk of major disasters at sea is likely to increase.

Secondly, we must consider the distressing fate of the sheep once they arrive in the Middle East. The absence of stunning before slaughter causes the animals immense pain, fear, and distress as they are manually restrained and experience the cutting of tissue and bleeding out. In contrast, in Australia, sheep are stunned prior to slaughter, preventing them from consciously experiencing this traumatic process. This includes Halal-accredited slaughter for the meat export trade to the Middle East.

Moreover, it is not necessary for Australia to participate in live sheep exports to promote better animal welfare standards worldwide. We can make significant and lasting improvements to animal welfare by collaborating with international organisations such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and by advocating for higher standards in international trade agreement negotiations.

It is also important to note that the Australian public strongly supports the phase-out of live sheep exports. According to a national survey conducted by McCrindle Research in 2022, 78% of Australians backed the trade's phase out. This sentiment was echoed in a more recent poll from May 2023, showing that 71% of Western Australians, including 69% in rural and regional areas, support the phase-out. We are a nation that deeply cares about the welfare of animals and we recognise there are more humane alternatives to this trade.

Furthermore, the NSW sheep industry has not relied on the live export trade for several years. No sheep from NSW have been sourced for live export since at least 2018, indicating that the phase-out of live sheep exports is unlikely to significantly impact the NSW sheep industry. The 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports also found that an increase in interstate trade between Western Australia and NSW is improbable due to high freight costs.

In conclusion, I believe that the phase-out of live sheep exports is not only necessary for the welfare of the animals but also reflects the views of the Australian community. It's clear that the trade is not sustainable, and I am confident that we can find more humane alternatives that align with our values and respect for animal welfare.

Regards,

Rita O'Sullivan