

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 17 September 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a member of the public, I am deeply concerned with the unnecessary cruelty caused by live exports. It is my fervent wish to see an end to this disturbing practice in all countries.

The live sheep export trade is fundamentally at odds with acceptable animal welfare standards. The inherent issues with this industry have not been mitigated by recent regulatory reforms. On the contrary, these reforms have only accentuated the deep-rooted welfare problems within the trade.

Sheep are forced to endure sweltering, humid conditions during their 2-3 week long sea voyages to the Middle East, often standing, lying and sleeping in their own faeces. They are subjected to multiple and cumulative stressors, including inanition (failure to eat), lameness, salmonellosis, infection, and respiratory diseases due to high ammonia levels on board. The live sheep export industry claims that death rates have decreased, but this is not a scientifically valid measure of animal welfare. Mortality is an extreme measure that overlooks the serious animal welfare issues that precede death and tells us nothing about the experience of the animals that survive.

Australian sheep exported to the Middle East are still slaughtered while fully conscious, yet Halal-accredited slaughter in Australia, including for lamb and mutton exports to the Middle East, involves stunning. Slaughter without stunning causes significant pain and distress in sheep, and there are no reasonable prospects for Middle Eastern abattoirs and Halal authorities to alter this practice and accept stunning in the foreseeable future.

Australia's international reputation has been severely impacted as a result of live sheep exports. The most effective way for Australia to demonstrate leadership in animal welfare is by transitioning away from the trade and leveraging our scientific and technical expertise to influence animal welfare standards internationally.

National polling conducted by McCrindle Research in 2022 found that 78% of Australians supported a phase out of the trade, including 71% of Western Australians in a May 2023 poll. The depth of community concern for animal welfare is such that research has found that knowledge and awareness of animal suffering, including in the live export trade, can affect the psychological wellbeing of people. The researchers recommended that future media coverage of animal suffering in the trade should advise the public of contact details for counselling and mental health support.

The NSW sheep industry has not relied on the live export trade for many years, and there is no evidence to suggest the NSW sheep industry will incur any notable impacts due to the phase out of live sheep exports. The 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports found that increasing interstate trade between WA and NSW following the phase out was unlikely due to the barrier of high freight costs.

However, the damage to Australia's international reputation caused by the cruelty of the live sheep export trade does affect NSW, as it has negative ramifications for the entire sheep industry. A ban on live exports needs to be implemented swiftly, and not be allowed to drag on for years, which would allow hundreds of thousands more animals to suffer under these appalling conditions.

In conclusion, it is clear that the majority of Australians, including myself, support an end to live sheep exports. We do not wish to continue witnessing the suffering and cruelty associated with the trade, particularly when more humane alternatives exist.

Regards,