

Submission
No 112

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

Name: Ayanthi De Silva
Date Received: 15 September 2024

Dear NSW Parliament,

My name is Ayanthi De Silva, a registered psychologist with a passionate interest in the welfare of all sentient beings. My aim is to advocate for the dismantling of systems that rely on violence and oppression, which I firmly believe includes the live sheep export industry.

The live sheep export trade, in my view, is fundamentally cruel and unnecessary. Both historical experience and current scientific evidence overwhelmingly indicate that this trade cannot meet acceptable animal welfare standards.

Sheep are subjected to incredibly harsh conditions during their 2-3 week long sea voyages to the Middle East. The heat and humidity, coupled with being forced to stand, lie, and sleep in their own waste, leads to multiple and cumulative stressors. These stressors include failure to eat, lameness, infection, respiratory diseases due to high ammonia levels, and salmonellosis.

On arrival in the Middle East, Australian sheep are subjected to slaughter without prior stunning. This process inflicts severe pain, fear, and distress on the animals due to the manual restraint, cutting of tissue, and exsanguination. In contrast, Australian regulations stipulate that sheep must be stunned before slaughter, including those intended for Halal-accredited meat exports to the Middle East, thus sparing them from consciously experiencing the neck cut and bleed-out process.

The live sheep export trade has had a detrimental effect on Australia's international reputation. I believe the most effective way for Australia to demonstrate leadership in animal welfare is to transition away from this trade, utilising our scientific and technical expertise to positively influence international animal welfare standards.

It is worth noting that there is significant public support in Australia for the cessation of live sheep exports. This sentiment has been mirrored in submissions to recent inquiries on the topic. 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. Moreover, over 85% of the 13,000 submissions and pieces of correspondence received by the House Agriculture Committee Inquiry into the Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea Bill 2024, expressed support for the Bill.

The prevailing sentiment among Australians is clear: we do not want to continue witnessing the suffering and cruelty associated with live sheep exports, especially when more humane alternatives are available.

In terms of economic impact, the NSW sheep industry has limited exposure to the live sheep export trade, with small volumes constituting less than 3% of the annual national turnover and less than 2% of national sheep meat export value. Therefore, there's no compelling evidence to suggest that the NSW sheep industry would suffer any significant impact due to the phase-out of live sheep exports.

The 2023 Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports found it unlikely that interstate trade between WA and NSW would increase following the phase-out. The barrier of high freight costs would not make it a sustainable or reliable market for WA producers.

In light of these considerations, I urge you to take a stand for animal welfare, public sentiment and our international reputation by supporting the phase-out of live sheep exports by sea.

Regards,

Ayanthi De Silva