

Submission
No 123

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

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Many concerned citizens including myself have been advocating and campaigning towards the banning of live sheep export for many, many years.

Earlier this year in March, the Federal Government passed a bill successfully in both houses under the then Federal MP Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture for a phasing out of Live sheep export by 2028.

Why is it that we now have another inquiry into a law that has already been passed thru both lower and upper houses when the submissions and public opinion showed clearly that moving forwards, a progressive Australia, which is made up of the voting public have clearly indicated they want this awful industry to finish.

This is ridiculous and clearly a waste of tax payers money to have another inquiry.

Federal Labor first made a commitment back in 2018 after footage emerged of dead and dying sheep on board a ship bound for the Middle East. Further cruelty exposed in this shocking industry was evident early this year when the MV Bahijah was turned around in the Red Sea and the sheep endured over a month on that vessel during the heat of summer in unbearable conditions, floating in limbo back in the port of Fremantle. In June 2022, another ship crammed with thousands of sheep sank in Sudan's Red Sea port drowning most of these poor creatures.

Australia's live export industry claim they have some of the most rigorous standards in the world yet these incidents and others are instead attracting world-wide media attention. Such events serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need for policy reform in animal welfare and the immediate cessation of live sheep export.

The Federal Opposition leader, Peter Dutton and the Nationals David Littleproud stood up at a farmers rally in Canberra only today and said if they were returned to power they would overturn this ruling. I spoke to many WA and NSW farmers at this rally who actually abhor the live export industry and what happens to their sheep at the other end.

Live export has little to do with farmers ie they have no control over what happens to these sheep once they leave the farm gate. Under their control at least their sheep might have been stunned under more humane conditions rather than being sent thousands of kilometers and enduring weeks at sea only to have their throats cut whilst fully conscious. Industry states they have improved conditions due to the low mortality rate but a low mortality rate does not equal low morbidity and good animal welfare. Heat stress is still observed on over 60% of voyages. Sheep and Independent Observers (IOs) aboard and in every month of the year 80% of IO reports refer to sheep dying from inanition (starvation), and ASEL breaches were observed on 75% of voyages including poor quality, mouldy feed, dirty drinking water, withholding feed, withholding water, insufficient space, incompetent, incomplete or absent euthanasia. lambing- late stage pregnant ewes should not ever have been loaded.

Live sheep export by sea is responsible for a net animal welfare loss and any "farmer" who says they care about their animals should be opposing it as well.

A report commissioned at the last inquiry has shown that the modelling indicates only a 15% drop in the WA sheep flock and a loss of approx 387 jobs . NSW is hardly involved as sheep are exported out of Fremantle. Compared to the thousands of sheep that suffer an arduous journey to die a terrible death overseas this is something that with support and resources

these farmers can overcome. This long transition time to 2028 ensures that the potential risks from the cessation of live export are minimised and that the WA farming systems remain diversified and sustainable, this report states. WA and any NSW farmers involved, could also adjust and adapt by moving to different crops and products.

I call on the newly appointed Minister for Agriculture, Ms Julie Collins, to do the right thing, disregard the antics of the opposition, and continue the good works taken on by Labor to end the suffering of millions of our sheep.

Catherine Pisani

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