

**Submission
No 127**

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

Name: Ms Monika Janinski

Date Received: 12 September 2024

Dear Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Regional NSW ('Committee'),

Re: Inquiry into the impact of the phase-out of Australian live sheep exports by sea on New South Wales ('NSW')

My name is Monika Janinski, a concerned member of the public and a regulatory affairs professional within the highly-regulated medicinal cannabis industry, with a passion for advocating for the protection of non-human animals who cannot advocate for themselves in this inquiry. I am a Victorian, however given the fact that this inquiry topic is by definition an inter-state matter (given that the live sheep export industry is essentially a Western Australian industry) I look forward to the opportunity to engage with the Committee on this matter, and trust that my submission will be considered seriously alongside NSW submissions.

For the Committee's convenience I have structured my submission according to the Terms of Reference ('TOR'), as follows:

(a) evaluate the economic impact of phasing out live sheep exports on New South Wales sheep producers and related supply chains in regional towns

The NSW sheep industry has minimal exposure to the live sheep export by sea trade; according to the 2023 report of the Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports, Western Australia has been the only export point for all sheep exported from Australia by sea since 2020 (DAFF 2023b) (Independent Panel Report 2023). Even of the WA portion, the value of the live export trade represented only 1% of the total value of Australia's sheep meat and wool exports (Independent Panel Report 2023). The Independent Panel Report did not identify any notable impact on the NSW industry from the phase out in their report, despite having consulted with NSW Farmers (Independent Panel Report 2023).

The phaseout could economically benefit the entire sheep industry more broadly, by strengthening Australia's reputation internationally.

(f) examine reasons used by the Federal Government for the phase-out of Australian live sheep exports by sea.....

As stated in the 2023 report of the Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports, animal welfare is at the heart of the government's policy and should continue to be a focus in the transition away from live exports by sea. This phase-out has been considered by both the community and by numerous reviews, including the 1985 Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare, 2003 Keniry Review, 2011 Farmer Review and 2018 McCarthy and Moss reviews.

(g) examine animal welfare concerns relevant to the determination to cease live sheep export by sea by the Federal Government

The live sheep export trade by sea is fundamentally at odds with what the community considers acceptable standards of animal welfare. The long journeys in cramped conditions in hot and humid equatorial regions lead to multiple and cumulative stressors. The continued use of mortality rates by the industry as a measure of welfare fails to recognise these inherent welfare concerns, and does not recognise and address the recommendations of the 2018 McCarthy Review (following the MV Awassi Express incident) to shift focus from mortality rates to more comprehensive performance measures.

Once Australian sheep arrive at the Middle East they are subject to slaughter without stunning. This results in extreme distress and pain for the sheep, caused by the manual restraint, tissue cutting, and experience of blood loss. In contrast, sheep slaughtered in Australia are given the mercy of being spared the conscious experience of the neck cut and bleed-out process through being stunned prior to slaughter, including those slaughtered under Halal conditions for meat export to the Middle East. This is part of the reason why the Australian public fundamentally do not support this trade.

In case of any concerns regarding the global animal welfare ramifications of Australia removing itself from the trade of live sheep export by sea, it is important to note that Australia can, and should, still be a leader on improved animal welfare standards globally. We have the opportunity to foster long-term, widespread improvements to animal welfare standards by participating in international bodies such as the World Organisation for Animal Health and international trade agreement negotiations.

(n) examine community views in New South Wales of the live export industry

The Australian public overwhelmingly supports the phase-out of this trade, including Western Australians who would be by far the most affected by the phase-out of this trade. National polling conducted by McCrindle Research in 2022 showed that 78% of Australians, *including 69% in rural and regional areas of Western Australia* where the trade is predominantly based, support a phase-out. The depth of community concern for animal welfare is such that awareness of animal suffering, including in the live export trade, can affect the psychological wellbeing of people. It is clear that we, as a nation, do not wish to continue witnessing the suffering and cruelty associated with the trade when more humane alternatives exist.

(o) any other related matters.

The fact that this commitment has been made by the Federal government means that following through on this commitment will be important for retaining public trust in government, which would flow through to state government as well. I am sure that yourselves as Members of Parliament appreciate the importance of public trust in the government, given that it is crucial in trust of politicians such as yourselves as well.

Finally I believe it is important to highlight the *positive* social impacts of this phase-out. This phase-out would mean that we as a society, both NSW'ers and Australians as a whole, have had the strength to thoughtfully consider issues of justice which are bigger than ourselves as individuals, or even as communities or states. It means we have come together to agree on our standards, democratically listened to our communities, and taken initiative to act. Of course the status quo is always easier than any change, but it takes courage and strength to change things for the positive. I foresee that this phase-out will contribute to our culture as a compassionate, progressive nation, which stands for justice and fair treatment for all. That is something to be truly proud of, and it sure does make me proud to be an Australian.

Yours sincerely,

Monika Janinski