

**Submission
No 131**

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

Name: Mr Shreshtha Jain
Date Received: 11 September 2024

Submission to Parliament: Phase-Out of Australian Live Sheep Exports by Sea

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my deep concern and provide evidence-based arguments regarding the ongoing inquiry into the phase-out of Australian live sheep exports by sea. As an individual with a profound commitment to animal welfare, I believe it is imperative that we critically examine this trade and its implications.

Fundamental Welfare Concerns:

The live sheep export trade is inherently incompatible with acceptable animal welfare standards. Despite regulatory reforms, the industry has failed to address core welfare issues:

1. Mortality rates are an inadequate measure: The industry's focus on reduced death rates neglects the suffering experienced by surviving animals. As recommended by the McCarthy Review following the 2018 MV Awassi Express incident, we must move beyond mortality as a performance indicator.
2. Extreme environmental conditions: Long-haul sea voyages expose sheep to heat stress, overcrowding, and poor air quality, causing significant physiological and psychological distress.
3. Destination slaughter practices: Upon arrival in the Middle East, many Australian sheep face non-stunned slaughter, causing severe pain, fear, and distress. This contrasts sharply with Australian practices, including Halal-accredited slaughter for meat exports, where stunning is standard.

Global Animal Welfare Leadership:

Australia can promote improved global animal welfare standards without participating in live exports:

- Engage with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) to elevate international standards.
- Leverage international trade agreement negotiations to encourage adoption of higher welfare practices.

- Showcase Australia's high-quality, chilled meat export industry as a more humane alternative.

Public Opinion and Psychological Impact:

There is overwhelming public support for ending live sheep exports:

- Over 80% of submissions to the 2023 Independent Panel supported the phase-out.
- More than 85% of responses to the House Agriculture Committee Inquiry into the Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea Bill 2024 expressed support.

Moreover, research from the University of Queensland has shown that exposure to images of animal suffering in the live export trade can significantly impact public mental health, highlighting the deep emotional resonance of this issue.

Economic Considerations:

The phase-out of live sheep exports is unlikely to significantly impact the NSW sheep industry:

- Live exports constitute less than 3% of annual national turn-off and less than 2% of national sheep meat export value.
- The 2023 Independent Panel concluded that increased interstate trade between WA and NSW is improbable due to high freight costs.

Conclusion:

The phase-out of live sheep exports by sea represents a crucial step towards aligning Australia's agricultural practices with contemporary ethical standards and public expectations. By transitioning to more humane alternatives, such as chilled meat exports, Australia can maintain its economic interests while demonstrating global leadership in animal welfare.

I urge the committee to prioritize the welfare of animals, the concerns of the Australian public, and our nation's reputation as a responsible global citizen. The phase-out of live sheep exports is not just ethically imperative but also economically viable and publicly supported.

Thank you for your consideration of these critical issues.

Yours sincerely,

Shreshtha Jain