

Submission
No 134

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 11 September 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am an Australian food and beverage manufacturer, and I am deeply concerned about the live sheep export trade, which I view as fundamentally at odds with acceptable standards of animal welfare. Despite recent regulatory reforms, the inherent issues persist, underscoring the systemic nature of these welfare problems.

Sheep suffer greatly during the 2-3 week sea voyages to the Middle East, where they are subjected to hot, humid conditions and are forced to stand, lie and sleep in their own waste. The stressors they face are multiple and cumulative, encompassing inanition, lameness, salmonellosis, infection, and respiratory diseases due to the high ammonia levels on board.

Once the sheep arrive in the Middle East, they are slaughtered without stunning, causing them extreme pain, fear, and distress due to the manual restraint, tissue cutting, and experience of exsanguination. In contrast, sheep in Australia are stunned before slaughter, including those destined for Halal accredited slaughter for the meat export trade to the Middle East, sparing them the conscious experience of the neck cut and bleed out process.

Live sheep exports have profoundly damaged Australia's international reputation. To genuinely demonstrate leadership in animal welfare, Australia must transition away from this trade and leverage our scientific and technical expertise to influence international animal welfare standards.

The Australian public overwhelmingly supports ending live sheep exports. This sentiment was reflected in submissions to recent inquiries on the phase out. For instance, 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 items 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 depth of community concern for animal welfare is such that it can affect the psychological wellbeing of people. Research from the University of Queensland found that exposure to images of animal suffering in the live export trade caused considerable emotional distress and feelings of helplessness.

Interstate trade in sheep from Western Australia to Eastern states has been sporadic, with significant volumes recorded only in three of the last 13 years. Even in those high-trade years, the numbers equated to less than 10% of the average annual sheep slaughter volumes in NSW. Furthermore, there was no discernible impact on NSW sheep prices during these periods, as international commodity prices for lamb and mutton, which Australia exports over 65% of, are the most significant factors influencing farm gate sheep prices.

The 2023 report of the Independent Panel on the Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports did not identify any perceived impact on the NSW industry from the phase out. However, the damage to

Australia's international reputation caused by the cruelty of the live sheep export trade has negative ramifications for the entire sheep industry, including NSW.

I urge you to consider these points carefully as the inquiry progresses. This trade is not only abhorrent but also damaging to our reputation and the psychological well-being of our community. It is time for it to be phased out.

Regards,