

**Submission
No 136**

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

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Date Received: 11 September 2024

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

I am one of the 78 per cent of Australians who support the phase out of live sheep exports by sea. Live sheep export is a cruel and marginal trade that should have been phased out decades ago.

According to Independent Observer data analysed from 2018-2023, exported sheep continue to suffer prolonged heat stress on over 60 per cent of voyages to the Middle East. **Once they arrive, they are slaughtered without stunning.** This is cruel, inhumane, unnecessary, and flies in the face of the standards of animal welfare Australians expect.

Australia already exports chilled and frozen lamb and mutton to the Middle East valued at over eight times that of the live sheep trade (\$632 million v \$77 million, 2022/23, ABS). This trade adds more value to local supply chains and creates more jobs here in Australia.

Nationally, live sheep exports make up less than 0.1% of Australia's agriculture exports. Over the last twenty years, the Australian sheep industry has been moving away from live exports, while sheep meat exports have risen significantly. In 2022/23, Australia exported around 500,000 metric tonnes of sheep meat, worth \$4.5 billion (ABARES 2024). This compares with exports of 652,000 sheep, valued at \$76.9 million, over the same period. As well as the Middle East, export markets for frozen meat include China and the United States.

The Australian Government took the policy of a phase-out of live sheep exports to the last two elections. In March 2023, an Independent Panel was established, which undertook lengthy consultations and put forward 28 recommendations. As a result, there will be a transition period of four years for farmers and others affected, with supporting funding of \$107 million. This is a lengthy adjustment period and appears more than adequate for those involved in this trade to move towards a less cruel and more sustainable future business. NSW farmers and associated workers have a clear date, expanding opportunities for meat exports, financial support and several years to make the transition.

Australian export laws should reflect the values of the Australian community. Almost 80 per cent of Australians support an end to the export of live sheep by sea. They have seen and heard enough of the suffering of sheep from heat, stress, dehydration and illness inflicted by the live export industry and they want to see it gone.

Just as other industries need to adjust to changing times, values and circumstances, the live sheep export business must **respect the views of the overwhelming majority of Australians** and move toward a more humane and sustainable future that respects animal welfare and protects Australia's international reputation.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's consideration of this important issue.