

LIVE SHEEP EXPORT - INDEPENDENT PANEL**23 April 2023**

Dear Panel Members,

I would like to make some brief comments on the policy of phasing out live sheep exports.

I must at the outset say that I am just a member of the public, who has no vested interest in the live export market or indeed no technical knowledge of the business. I write purely as an individual committed to animal welfare, who, along with my family and many friends, has been horrified at the suffering that has been inflicted on sheep, as part of the live export business. The images and publicity given to this over recent years, speak for themselves, so I do not need to linger on the unspeakable cruelty that has been evident. When the Labor party endorsed the policy of ending the live trade in this term of office, we were delighted and gave the party our full support at the last election. As the argument is over on the question of animal welfare and an end to live sheep export, I feel that the war may have been won, but now comes the job, just as important, of making it happen quickly and with as little pain as possible.

Where To From Here

I realise that it is now the task of the Enquiry to implement the phase out the exports in a timely and organised way. With the benefit of my total ignorance, I would think that we could learn from countries that have already gone down this path and in particular NZ, who rely on a primary producing economy. The impediments and difficulties they would have faced would I expect be similar to ours.

I am not sure if some form of financial help or compensation was made available to NZ farmers, but, for those here, that are severely disadvantaged, this may be appropriate – at least until they can move onto some other business model. The emphasis should now be on promoting and expanding the non live export market. This could be both overseas and in particular, the local market.

Again looking at the issue from a position of relative ignorance, it may be that farmers may need help in transitioning from sheep, if they can't find these other alternatives, to some other form of meat production or agriculture. Govt assistance may be needed to assist with this.

I feel a little inadequate in not offering some more original suggestions to help the transition. However, the most important priority for the govt must be to not let this slip into the too hard basket and stop the live exports as soon as possible.