

Submission on the Phase out of live Sheep Export.

Over the years, our hearts have been broken by these shocking images of the cruelty of live animal export that have been circulated around the world.

The phasing of live animal export should also include cattle and other animals should have happened years ago.

The journey by sea for these animals is long (from 1 to 4 weeks) and stressful. The ships are cramped and often the sheep cannot reach their food or water. They also suffer from sea sickness due to rough seas and extreme weather conditions. They are left to sit (if they have room) or stand in their own faeces and urine. These animals face an increased risk of injury, illness and death due to the effect of the transportation.

Deaths result from heat-stress, starvation, infection, serious digestive disorders and traumatic injuries that require euthanasia. Reducing the mortalities on ships is positive but is not a measure of good welfare since animals who arrive live in destination countries may have suffered even more than those that succumbed during the journey.

It is heartbreaking to think that the Australian Government accepts a mortality rate of up to 2% of sheep before an investigation will be conducted. When you put it into numbers, a ship carrying 67,000 live sheep, has 1339 sheep deaths but an investigation into the deaths does not occur until 1340 sheep have died onboard. This is unacceptable.

After arriving in the destination country, animals will have to endure more road transport, different (sometimes extreme) climatic conditions, crowded feedlots and often rough handling before finally being slaughtered, often without pre-stunning, whilst the animal is fully conscious.

The Federal Government promised changes to the live exportation of animals, but these improvements have either not occurred or not enough to protect the animals. One example is the Federal Government's promise in 2020 to give cattle on ships more space to lie down and easier access to food and water, but this has not yet occurred and if it did not much relief to the animals.

The RSPCA has highlighted that the Federal Government has buckled under pressure in the past from live export lobbyists, to allow sheep to travel to the Middle East in June 2020 which is within the prohibited period of the Northern Hemisphere summer due to the high temperatures.

¹ RSPCA website - <https://www.rspcasa.org.au/debunking-australias-live-export-industry/>, viewed 26 April 2023.