

PHASE OUT LIVE EXPORTS BY SEA: Submission for the attention of the Expert Panel

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Date: 16 May 2023

We strongly support the efforts of the Independent Panel charged with determining guidelines for the ending of Australia's live sheep export trade. We have been appalled by this trade for many years and are convinced that the only means of stopping the cruelty involved is to phase out live exports altogether. The industry itself has a long history of broken promises and appears to be incapable of self-regulation. Successive governments have also been ineffectual in putting an end to the cruelty and brutality of this shameful trade. It is time to stop the cruelty. We urge the Expert Panel to push hard for a phase-out to be legislated during this term of government.

For many years now the cruelty of this trade has been demonstrated to us over and over again. Despite meat industry promises that standards will be improved, this has not happened. But even when regulations are adhered to, sheep suffer dreadfully from heat stress, heavy seas and overcrowding during the long voyage, and brutal, un-stunned slaughter in overseas countries.

Multiple media exposes, insider accounts, investigations of cruelty in the Middle East and, most recently, a shipping catastrophe that stunned Australia have done nothing to stop any of it. Internationally, this cannot but affect Australia's reputation as a civilised nation with a commitment to adequate animal welfare standards. It also reflects more widely on our agricultural sector and raises serious questions about our standards as a primary producing nation.

We also believe that farmers providing sheep for export should receive government assistance to assist them with the transition away from this trade. The cruelty involved is unacceptable to the Australian electorate and it is our view that we should be looking to the examples of countries such as New Zealand and Brazil, which have already ended the trade or are in the process of doing so.

Along with a number of friends and colleagues, we feel very strongly about ending live animal exports and specifically voted for the ALP at the last federal election because of its promise to do so. Most decent Australians are sickened by animal cruelty and are ashamed that our country has been a party to this major form of it for so long.

We urge the Expert Panel not to weaken its stance on ending the live sheep export trade or to allow itself to be convinced by the meat industry and its supporters that it is in Australia's economic interests to do so. It is not. The trade is cruel, completely resistant to reform, and reflects badly on this country on many levels. That is why we are ashamed of it and pushing for it to end immediately.

Thank you for considering our submission.

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