

Dear Panel

Phase out of the live export of sheep by sea

I have read the consultation paper released by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and provide my submission supporting the phase out of the live export of sheep by sea, with my comments on this below.

I have been writing to the government for over 20 years asking to ban the live export industry. An industry that causes untold suffering to those animals not only on board the ships that transport them but also at the receiving country that have no laws against brutally slaughtering livestock.

Back when I first started writing it was pen to paper – there was no emailing. Now with the internet, and email and form letters it is easier to protest against this cruel industry. It also helps people who are not good at letter writing stand up for the rights of these poor animals.

Although this phase out only applies to sheep exports by sea, it needs to apply to all livestock exports including that of cattle and of sheep exported by air. As it is also the brutal slaughtering of these animals in the receiving country that is an animal welfare issue. And while ever the government allows live exports we are condoning this cruelty.

Cattle suffer on these ships as well, and Australia is unable to control the way these animals are brutally slaughtered at their destination. I am still haunted by the vision on the Four Corners report presented by Animals Australia showing the horrible brutality inflicted upon the cattle by Indonesians in the slaughter houses. The video of “Tommy” the steer shaking in fear while he waits his turn to be slaughtered while watching his mates suffer a painful death.

The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt have stated the phase out of live sheep exports by sea will not take place during the current term of the Australian Parliament, because of its impact on those that rely on the trade.

All I can say is that once again the government is stalling to phase out this industry. People have been protesting against this industry for years so all governments have had time to consider how to phase out live export. Australians want certainty that this trade will end. The phase out needs to be legislated and commence as soon as possible. And that the live export of sheep by sea ends as soon as possible. What happens if Labor loses the next election?? Any delay will cause thousands and thousands of sheep to suffer.

As I have been protesting against this industry for so long when Labor put forward the policy to end this industry my decision to vote for Labor was a done deal.

In many of the letters I have written in the past I have suggested re-opening up abattoirs in Australia that have previously been closed. At least in Australia we have animal welfare standards when slaughtering livestock.

The governments in the past should have been sourcing markets to sell our processed meat. If that has not yet been done then this is a priority to the support the phase out.

Farmers can still farm livestock but that livestock should be processed here in Australia and sent as boxed meat. Abattoirs could be reopened or new ones built and has it been considered that these abattoirs be set up as a farmers cooperative instead of being owned by large companies, so more profit goes to the farmers. The government could assist farmers with education and support on how to do this.

Farmers may be encouraged and financially supported by government to grow more crops suitable to Australia's climate. Although there is still demand for meat the number of people becoming vegetarians has grown substantially and continues to do so.

Environmentally sheep and cattle contribute immensely to greenhouse gases. Therefore perhaps another reason to grow less meat and grow more crops. Although I understand that crops may require fertilizers which are also not environmentally friendly, however, the demand for organically produced crops is increasing and as a developed country Australia should be moving in that direction as well.

It should be noted that New Zealand has ended live export and yet our Australian government continues to dilly dally on this issue. This does not prove favourable to our international reputation as a fair and compassionate nation. Animal welfare has become an important issue to so many Australians and this can be seen by increases in donations to animal welfare groups and membership growth of the Animal Justice Party in Australia.

Finally, the live export industry is inherently cruel, submitting animals to painful deaths, slaughtered while conscious. It brings tears to my eyes knowing the Australian government has power to stop this industry. While continuing to defend this industry, you are undermining the trust in Australia's agricultural industry.

Yours sincerely

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