

## Ending Live Sheep Exports Submission – [REDACTED]

As a member of the public, I welcome the opportunity of providing input into ending Live Sheep Exports and am pleased this trade will no longer continue. I have followed the history of this trade for many years and know that despite many promises and new regulations and protocols to improve the conditions for live sheep, the inherent cruelty of this trade and suffering of sheep during transport and then processing and slaughter overseas continues.

I understand this Consultation is not about When or If to end the Live Export Trade but How it will occur. However I do want to state the following as I know the live export industry will be opposed and will present many arguments against this happening.

I read that in data presented to the Senate estimates recently, only 11 out of 78 live export voyages between May and December had an Independent Observer and that half of those that did not have an Observer, said they did not have enough space on board for one.

An Independent Observer was an important condition established under the previous Government to address the distress, injury and death of live sheep during transportation.

There have been reports that even with the restriction on the months that live sheep are transported to the Middle East during the summer period, sheep on voyages continue to be subject heat, overcrowding, inadequate access to food and water, and varying degrees of adequate ventilation.

Even with the current ASEL in place there have been reports that these Standards which were another condition established to address cruelty, injury and death of live exports, have not been adhered to during transport or during the processing and slaughter of sheep overseas.

I point this out because I read a very recent article that by 'coincidence' **Saudi Arabia may be considering reopening** its live sheep exports from Australia, after over a decade of not importing our sheep.

I find it frustrating that the Live Export Industry are introducing a potential to increase live sheep exports during this Consultation, when they have not been able to ensure there are Independent Observers during live sheep voyages or ensure that the ASEL standards are met and adhered to.

I understand that all or almost all Live Sheep exports are from Western Australia and it represents only 12% of sheep produced in Western Australia. In this context I am sure the Government and farmers exporting live sheep can work out a transition to exporting chilled meat to other markets or a transition to other farming opportunities.

In some or all instances it may well be that farmers need some **Government assistance** to help them transition. I understand the Government will analyse this during the Consultation process, I would support the Government providing this assistance where necessary.

**To me the timing of ending the live sheep export trade is critical.** I voted for the Labor Government in the last two federal elections on the understanding it would end this trade. Therefore in May 2022 I was very excited in the belief it would end the trade as promised.

**I was extremely disappointed** by what I consider a major back tracking by this Government when it announced live sheep exports would not end in this current term in office. Nothing is guaranteed in politics, this means an end to live sheep exports is now not guaranteed. **Live Sheep Exports need to end in 2025, the Government still has 3 years to bring this about.**

**The delay beyond Labor's current term in office** causes prolonged uncertainty for farmers and trading partners and is giving the live export industry a message that ultimately the issue is still up for grabs. **It also means there is no guarantee** the trade will end and sheep will stop suffering.