

Dear Panel,

Thank you for the opportunity to make my submission to the Inquiry.

I was heartened by the federal government's 2022 election announcement of a ban of the live sheep export trade however I now strongly urge the government to announce and legislate an end date and a timeline for the phase-out in this CURRENT term of government. My reasons for this are set out below:

Prime Minister Albanese has stated that he does not expect the live sheep trade to end before 2025 but leaving the end beyond the government's current term condemns **millions** more Australian sheep to weeks-long avoidable suffering on board filthy, hot live export ships and fully conscious slaughter at their destinations.

The live sheep trade from Australia has been in steady decline for decades, with live sheep exports increasingly replaced by "boxed" chilled and frozen meat. Politicians across the political spectrum are recognising that the live sheep trade should be phased out as quickly as possible, with structural adjustment support provided to affected farmers to move into more ethical sectors.

Farmers and exporters have known of this possibility for decades and it certainly comes as no surprise to them. There is no excuse for delaying the inevitable and no excuses if they have not prepared for it. But to assist the immediate transition and opportunity for diversification, the government should provide support for farmers.

Precedents, global reputation and public opinions:

A precedent has been set for a ban by our neighbours, when in September 2022, the New Zealand Parliament passed a bill banning all live export of animals by sea, taking effect from April 2023

As well as the significant animal welfare issues involved with continuing the live export trade, the New Zealand government was concerned about the damage to the country's reputation from its ongoing participation in live export trade. Further, Germany recently announced that it was ending live exports to countries outside the EU, with further restrictions expected.

Australia should certainly be concerned about its image of allowing such cruelty to continue for another day.

Independent opinion polls have found that a clear majority of Australians do **not** support the live export trade and want to see it phased out as soon as possible.

Animal Welfare Concerns

Animal cruelty is inherent in the live export industry.

Despite overwhelming evidence of repeated, systemic animal welfare violations, recurring scandals and disasters, Australia still remains engaged in the live export trade at the expense of countless animals for every day a live sheep export ship

leaves our shores. Most live export ships leave without an independent observer on board to monitor compliance with animal welfare standards.

Sent in crowded multi-deck ships with up to 70,000 animals crammed on board, these animals are subjected to long gruelling voyages under inhumane conditions – high heat and humidity, constant harsh lighting, unfamiliar or inadequate food, lack of accessible food and clean water, little room to lie down, and having to sleep and stand in their own putrid waste for days or weeks. The rolling movement of the live export ships causes distress to these land-based animals, with many experiencing seasickness, often slipping and injuring themselves.

While the live export industry boasts of low mortality rates during these voyages, it completely ignores the stress, illness and suffering the surviving animals endure, only to face rough handling, and terrifying, fully conscious slaughter at their destinations (often in front of their fellow animals). A common very concerning feature of live export destination countries is their lack of animal protection laws.

The cry that 'people have to be fed' is absurd. Food is not slaughtered terrified sentient creatures.

It's now time for the federal government to urgently, in this current term, end the live export trade from Australia and move to develop more humane, ethical alternatives and assistance farmers to transition to these ethical options.

Profits should never trump animal suffering. Australia's period of shameful involvement in this trade has to end as a matter of urgency because its time has come.