

## Live Export submission

I am a writer who, increasingly over the last seventeen years, has dedicated himself to advocacy for the rights and conditions of non-human animals. I have followed and written about live export throughout this period. For over a decade I have lived with and helped take care of sheep rescued from or otherwise spared the horrors of industrial farming. I appreciate them as friends and individuals, and appreciate the capacity of every animal subjected to live export to be the same.

There are many reasons why live export should be banned forthwith but you will have heard them all already. The federal government having already committed itself to the termination of this practice, I will restrict myself to just a few, presenting *inter alia* some suggestions concerning the pace and nature of this termination.

**Animal cruelty:** Sheep and cattle have already suffered greatly through cruel and usually un-anaesthetised physical procedures (separation from mothers [deprivation of attachment], removal/cauterizing of horns, castration, etc.) deemed necessary for ease of handling and preparation for slaughter. How on earth can we justify adding to this a long and torturous sea journey before that slaughter occurs? From the first, and at the very least, live export should have been restricted to Spring and Autumn months, to avoid the periods of greatest heat, and exporters penalized for voyages that exceeding certain stipulated – negotiated – time frames.

**Lack of accountability / Administrative hypocrisy:** When Live Export was first banned in Australia the basis, for many, was the unregulated and often cruel/‘barbaric’ slaughter of those animals in the countries to which they were sent. I understand some measures have been taken to improve the standard of such slaughter, but remain deeply skeptical of the standards and reliability of any monitoring thereof, and of the intentions in this regard of a federal government that has as yet done nothing to remove the previous government’s ‘ag-gag’ laws which outlaw and punish any third-party public monitoring of ‘animal processing plants’ in this country (and of course, by extension, any public monitoring of processes aboard live export vessels). Too much to ask, I suppose, that the current government do what it can to suspend or repeal these draconian measures, or at the very least ensure in some manner that, until those voyages cease entirely, there be some form of independent, third-party surveillance of live export voyages

**Complete absence of animal welfare provisions:** The sheep with whom I live require daily care and attention. Such live export regulations as there are appear to require only one veterinarian per shipload of (up to 70,000) sheep, and then only for voyages longer than ten days. It seems that, for voyages of less than ten days, no veterinary presence is required. While I accept that *condition scoring* might still be possible, I think it therefore true to say that sheep subject to live export **at this point** receive no regular individual care or attention at all. What chance, then, that until live export actually ceases, the federal government insist on veterinary presence on *all* live export voyages, and an increased presence on those voyages exceeding ten days?

**Environmental delinquency:**

**Sewage** : It is not unusual for a live export vessel to carry 60,000 sheep. I can vouch, from daily experience, that 10 sheep produce enough solid waste in one day to fill one wheel-barrow; 60,000 sheep, if adequately fed (and the idea of live export is not to deliver starving/under-weight sheep), will therefore produce something like 6,000 wheel-barrow loads of solid/fecal excrement per day. There are no regulations concerning treatment of this biproduct. It, along with vast quantities of accompanying, acidic urea, is washed into the ocean, contributing to its warming and biological decline.

**Air and further water pollution** : A ship capable of carrying 60,000 sheep across the Indian Ocean can only do so by burning huge amounts of oil, the air (and water [bilge, etc.]) pollution from which adds substantially – and unnecessarily – to its environmental price and the crime/delinquency of any government which supports this trade.

**Withdrawal of cultural mandate**: Live export is an immoral, ethically deeply compromised practice. It belongs to an earlier and barbaric, nineteenth-century understanding of our relationship with non-human animals and an institutionalized, willful occlusion of their character, sentience and suffering. This understanding has been changing for some time now, and has begun to accelerate, so rapidly indeed that it is arguable that any social/cultural mandate such a cruel practice may have had is crumbling and may already have been withdrawn. To quote an Australian politician of the 1980s (but so many have used it), even Blind Freddy should be able to see this.

**This matter is beyond urgent and should be dealt with without further delay. Every extra shipment of sheep or cattle to Indonesia or the Middle East means more delinquent and greed-driven damage to the environment through air- and water pollution, more unnecessary wastage of vital resources, and more utterly unnecessary and unconscionable suffering for sentient creatures whose bodies and psyches have already been mauled by the pastoral industries. There will be great opposition and complaint from the pastoral industry, but (my comment about Blind Freddy) the canny within it will have seen this coming for a decade already.**