

To the Panel,

Thank you for the opportunity to present my concerns regarding the live export by sea of Sheep.

I am a citizen who is very concerned about the animal welfare issues associated with the live exporting of Sheep. As someone who grew up in regional NSW, I have for a long time felt that the live export of Sheep should stop, and that Farmers do not want animals they have raised being treated so inhumanely.

The issues around animal welfare have been well documented for many years, we have seen 4 Corners reports that horrified most Australians, documentation provided by Animals Australia, commentary from Vets, the RSPCA and other Animal Welfare organisations who have also shared imagery and documentation of the terrible conditions faced on ships and when the Sheep get to their destination.

Animals face heat stress, illness, injury, and death aboard these ships. These animals do not deserve to be treated with such disrespect. These animals have the same feelings and emotions as household pets and not one person would be o.k. with having their dog or cat treated in the same manner. We know better, we know more about animal welfare than ever before and in many sectors are changing practices to reflect this. The live export industry is falling well behind community expectations.

I do not believe this live Sheep export Industry has a social licence to operate. After the reports exposed the cruel conditions these animals endure, most Australians wanted the live exports of sheep to stop. This was many years ago.

The economics of this industry do not stack up. We must consider the environmental economic costs also of these death ships when considering the overall costs of operating this business model. It is inefficient and outdated. Live export volumes are decreasing and with the increasing costs of operating the ships, it is becoming less viable to operate and meet all of the required conditions e.g., safety, maintenance.

When other Countries are banning live exports via sea due to animal cruelty issues, Australia is lagging behind and this also impacts our international reputation. New Zealand has implemented a ban on live sheep exports by sea providing a model of how it can be done.

Our Official ranking in terms of World Animal Protection is embarrassing. We are better than this. No wonder we have so many issues protecting animals in general when this is the best, we seem to be able to do.

Having any pause over the 'summer months' is not sufficient. What will this look like as Climate Change continues to impact the temperatures faced? Live export by sea is not sustainable.

The phasing out must commence as soon as possible. That means in this term of Government. The Government made a commitment to phase out live sheep exports and there is no guarantee they will get a second term in office, so it must be done in this term.

Delaying implementation means more Sheep who must be so traumatised - I cannot even imagine how frightened and uncomfortable they would be, are inexcusably subjected to these conditions.

We need to have a transition plan being documented now.

This plan needs to address the options for those who currently participate in the live sheep export industry.

There are opportunities to

- expand domestic processing
- invest in alternative industries such as the growth in plant-based products
- invest in alternative agricultural products.

Alternative options will place the Australian agricultural industry in a better position for the future. We should be taking notice of changing consumer sentiment, changing attitudes of other countries we trade with that are banning or have banned live sheep export and the best economic options for Australia into the future.

Thank you for your time.

Regards

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