

Dear Panel,

Submission – Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports by Sea

I am writing a submission because I am concerned about animal welfare. I strongly believe that the live export sheep trade must be banned immediately for a number of reasons.

Public opinion is strongly against the live export of sheep. I understand that the majority of Australians oppose live export, including those in rural and regional areas. It is cruel and inhumane and no longer has social licence. Like many Australians, I supported the Australian Labor Party at the last election because of its policy to end live sheep export.

The industry is poorly regulated and enforced. Millions of animals suffer during the long and gruelling journeys by ship, including overcrowding, heat stress, illness, injuries and death. There is a lack of adequate vet care, as well as independent observers to monitor compliance with animal welfare legislation. Then after the animals arrive at their destination they have been shown to be subjected to brutal fully conscious slaughter that is not in compliance with animal welfare standards.

Finally, the economic arguments for live export are unsupported and it has been shown to be economically unviable. There has been a continuing decline in live export and it now makes a negligible contribution to Australia's GDP.

New Zealand has banned the live export of sheep by sea on the grounds of animal welfare. New Zealand has shown us how Australia can proceed and Australia should follow New Zealand's lead to end this trade without delay. While we fail to act Australia's reputation is being damaged internationally through our continued involvement in the live export trade.

This should be seen as an opportunity for diversification for farmers and producers. There are other options to live export, including chilled meat export and even plant-based proteins and cell-based meats. Similarly, I fully support farmers to receive government support to assist them during the transition. I believe that this is crucial to its success.

The live sheep export trade should be banned immediately. The phase out must begin and end as soon as possible and it must be decided and legislated in the current term of government. Every delay means that more sheep are subjected to inexcusable and unnecessary suffering and Australian farmers and workers in the industry need certainty so that they can make the change.

Thank you for considering my submission.

29 May 2023