

## Submission for the consultation process for the Australian Government commitment to phase out live sheep exports by sea

Dear panel members,

My name is [REDACTED] and I wish to congratulate the Australian Government's commitment to phasing out live sheep exports by sea during the 2022 election campaign as part of its Plan for Strengthening Animal Welfare thus providing Australians with the opportunity to engage with you by submitting our views on the phase out of live sheep exports by sea.

I desire to be heard and write to you because I am very concerned and deeply care for the welfare of the Australian sheep aboard the live export ships at sea. It deeply upsets and stresses me to know the sheep endure extreme suffering and death from prolonged heat stress and cramped conditions on the ships at sea. I am deeply disturbed at the prospect of a prolonged phase out of live sheep exports by sea as the extreme suffering and deaths of a colossal number of Australian sheep will not diminish during this time. Like most Australians, I do not support the continuation of exporting live Australian sheep by sea and it is my personal wish that during my lifetime the Australian Government commits to a timely end date for the live sheep trade and legislation to effect it, and an expedient transition to more ethical alternatives.

I would like to address the following terms of reference:

☐ potential **mechanisms** to phase out live sheep exports by sea

1. To give certainty to Australian farmers the phase out of live sheep exports by sea should commence as soon as possible so the changes that operate within the new policy can work effectively for all affected.

☐ a suggested **timeframe** and options for implementation

2. The federal government could commence implementation of the phase out of live sheep exports by sea by setting a date, as soon as possible. The phase out actions could commence 1 July 2024 with the full ban commencing 1 July 2026. The period between commencement of phase out and total ban would allow for transitional business adjustments for Australian farmers.

During this period the Australian Government could ensure the highest standard of the best possible welfare of Australian sheep exported by sea by scrupulously monitoring and enforcing the trade during the entire phase out period.

If the phase out date for live sheep export is not legislated before the next federal election, a future government could choose not to go ahead with the plans. Like many Australians, I supported the Labor government at the last election because of this election promise. To not fulfill or break this promise

will compromise the credibility of this government and will be remembered by voters at the next election. It is therefore imperative that robust legislation to phase out live sheep exports by sea be put in place during this term of Parliament.

□ potential ways to support the **transition**, including but not limited to consideration of markets, processing facilities and other opportunities

3. I do not conduct a business that will be impacted by the phase out of live sheep exports by sea.
4. The phase out will enable myself, my family, friends, and community to sleep better at night knowing that Australia no longer participates in a live sheep export by sea trade that we have been ashamed of and have condemned for decades. The phase out and subsequent ban is the right thing to do and a decision we support. Australia will no longer incur further damage to its international reputation by subjecting countless sheep to the unacceptable risks and harm during the sea voyage and ensuing destination.
5. Farmers and other supply chain participants will be minimally impacted given that most of the sheep currently produced for live export by sea will continue to be managed and processed within Australia. Most of the live sheep exports by sea from Australia are run through two foreign-owned companies that operate out of Western Australia.  
Live sheep exports by sea can be phased out and banned as soon as possible with little disruption to farmers, employers, and the live export industry in general as the small numbers of animals bred for this industry is negligible and will continue to be processed here in Australia with jobs created associated within the sheep industry.
6. Affected farmers can be supported during the transition by way of education to enable the progression to alternate farming products or other means of income. There has never been more of a demand in Australia for plant-based foods and this is the opportunity for Australians to produce products in Australia for Australians and for overseas markets, creating jobs in Australia for Australians. Currently, most plant-based foods available in Australia are produced overseas or ingredients are produced overseas.
7. As a member of the Australian community, I believe the community expects robust government policy and legislation to ensure the expedient phase out of live sheep exports by sea.
8. A transition period from implementation of the policy on 1 January 2024 would provide ample time for all those involved in the supply chain in Australia to transition away from live sheep exports by sea. A Bill could be put forward to

parliament in early 2024 for the phase out of live sheep export by sea with a timeline of 1 July 2026 for the ban to be established.

9. Following the death of 6,000 livestock and 43 people at sea after a typhoon capsized an export ship during September 2020, the NZ government waited twelve months for a report to explain the tragic loss of life. The tragedy caused the people of New Zealand to realise that the live export of animals by sea was untenable.

During September 2021 the New Zealand (NZ) Government introduced a Bill to ban live exports by sea of some livestock (including sheep) under the *Animal Welfare Act Amendment Bill 1999*. The Bill included the phase out of live export by sea of cattle, deer, sheep, and goats by prohibiting the issuing of these certificates, therefore a full ban on the export by sea of livestock by 30 April 2023.

The transition period by the NZ government allowed farmers and exporters time to plan and adjust their businesses to operate with the new rules before the ban came into force on 30 April 2023.

The Australian Government should set policy in place for the phase out and subsequent ban of live sheep export by sea as expediently as possible. I fear that the impact of this trade on Australia's international reputation as a fair and compassionate nation (like NZ) would be at risk if the Australian Government were to delay or potentially not implement legislation should another government be elected in the next term of Parliament.

10. The Australian Government and industry could pursue further education and further opportunities, just as Australia's automotive manufacturing and allied industries sector was forced to do during the previous decade. The former manufacturing workers took up new opportunities in the workforce as best practice was examined to support workers into new jobs.

For example, Australian farmers could pursue plant based and cell-based meats that will deliver many benefits to Australia. The development and production of these foods will create employment opportunities, generate income, and tax revenue, deliver improved health and animal welfare outcomes, and significantly contribute to Australia's commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

11. Industry participants will require support in the form of guidance and education, not financial assistance, through the transition to assist them and other Australian employees find opportunities in other streams.
12. The only barrier I see is a resistance to change if no support to transition is provided.

☐ **other** matters as appropriate

The animal welfare issue is a serious and important issue for Australians that does matter as we do not want our sheep to suffer cruelty, yet the live export trade of sheep by sea is inherently cruel and even when all regulations are followed, sheep still suffer and die from prolonged heat stress and cramped conditions at sea. Australians are also horrified that the Australian sheep exported by sea endure painful un-stunned and un-regulated slaughter at their destination. The Australian Government must acknowledge that as a nation, Australians do care that we are judged by how we treat our animals, and this is evident by our shock and revulsion of the suffering of our sheep on live export ships at sea and their suffering at their ensuing destination.

As a member of the Australian community that has held long term serious concerns about the welfare of Australian sheep exported by sea, I would really like to be selected for further involvement in engagement with the consultation process including any virtual forums or other opportunities for engagement to further discuss my views as a community member on this extremely important policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to this consultation.

Sincerely,

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