

As a concerned member of the community and a veterinarian I am 100% in favour of the ending of the export of live sheep by sea.

If we as a community are going to use animals as a food source then we have a moral obligation to look after them in a humane way at all stages of the food production process. Sheep are sentient beings and deserve to be treated well. Exposing sheep to long sea journeys where there is an increased risk of heat stress and a painful, uncomfortable death is wrong. Once sheep have left our shores and are in a foreign country that carries out un-stunned slaughter we have no control over how these animals are treated. I have watched with horror the footage of sheep under these conditions and am ashamed to live in a country that allows this to happen. It is a measure of how civilised a society is how it treats animals in its care.

The ending of live sheep export by sea was a Labour pledge prior to the last election and it needs to be carried out quickly. Measures do need to be put in place to help those whose livelihood will be affected and alternative markets need to be found but sheep (in fact all animals) should be slaughtered as close as possible to the point of production and should at all stages be handled in a humane way that will cause no suffering to the animal.

Australia does not want to lag behind other developed countries that have already brought in bans on the export of live animals by sea. If Australia does not bring in this ban quickly it will have a damaging effect on Australia's international reputation.

I urge the expert panel to come up with the plan to end the live export trade quickly and thus decrease animal suffering.