

Submission to Phase Out Live Sheep Exports by Sea

29 May 2023

Attention: The Panel
Phase Out Live Sheep Export by Sea

Re: Submission to Phase Out Live Sheep Export by Sea

My name is Amelia and I am an animal lover and long-time animal rights advocate. I am writing this submission to voice my concern regarding the delayed response by the Albanese government to phase out live sheep export by sea due to animal welfare concerns.

The Albanese government made a commitment to phase out live sheep export by sea, however, a date has yet to be set for this phase out to start. I would like to see a commitment implemented to start this phase out (including an end date) as soon as possible and within this term of government to end the unnecessary suffering of millions of Australian sheep that endure long and arduous journeys to countries that have little or no animal welfare standards.

Australian sheep are subjected to inhumane treatment and horrific conditions on live export vessels including extreme temperatures, overcrowding and filthy conditions with sheep often having to stand/lay in their own faeces for weeks at a time. Stress, injury, suffering and even death prior to reaching their destination is only a small part of what these sentient beings must endure on these death ships. The animals that are lucky enough to survive these horrendous journeys are met with horrific and painful deaths by being slaughtered while fully conscious, often in front of one another. One point to stress is that the journey and then slaughter in destination countries causes excessive suffering to animals that would be against the law in Australia. Our animal welfare laws require animals to be stunned prior to slaughter, however, most destinations that Australia export to slaughter our livestock fully conscious.

In 2012 Four Corners horrified viewers with “Another Bloody Business”. This 43-minute broadcast documents how 22,000 Australian sheep were brutally slaughtered in Pakistan, after being denied entry into Bahrain. Sheep had their throats slit by frenzied men and were thrown into a pit while fully conscious. The Australian government were powerless to stop this horrific event and all 22,000 sheep perished.

In 2018 A Current Affair shocks viewers with Sheep, Ships and Videotapes. A Pakistani whistle-blower captures footage and documents events over multiple voyages which shows the severity of suffering and cruelty that these animals endure on board these live export vessels. Sheep are crushed to death under the feet of others and lambs have their throats slit by crew and are thrown overboard. On the Awassi Express in August 2017, 2,400 sheep died with 880 dropping dead in one day, and another 550 the following day due to heat stress. Horrifying footage shows the crew collecting bodies of dead sheep that are quite literally falling apart. These animals have systematically been cooked alive in these floating ovens. Crew collect the bodies of these poor souls and toss them over the side of the ship like garbage.

In September 2020 the MV Gulf Livestock 1 was struck by a typhoon and capsized whilst on route to China from New Zealand. All but two of the 43 crew and all 5,867 heifers on board perished. Whilst this vessel was not carrying sheep, the event demonstrates how dangerous live export is for humans and animals alike. The event was a large contributing factor in New Zealand’s decision to ban all live exports by sea which came in effect in April 2023. Agriculture Minister Damien O’Connor states that the decision to ban all live exports by sea is part of New Zealand’s wider effort to promote animal welfare and reduce the environmental impact of the livestock industry.

The live export industry states that it has cleaned up its act with regarding to animal welfare with better ventilations on vessels, less densely packed vessels and a ban on export during the summer months, however, the Australian government will never be able to ensure animal welfare standards are met once these animals

reach their destination location. I continue to read and view horrendous footage of animals suffering immensely once they have reached location.

I believe that the Australian economy will benefit immensely once we ban live export of sheep by sea. By investing more funds into expanding domestic processing facilities, we will ensure we can keep up with the demand of Australian farmers. This will keep jobs local, contribute overall to the economy, and ensure that Australian livestock are treated as humanely as possible. There is also the option of exporting frozen or chilled meats overseas.

Thank you for allowing me to include my Submission and I hope to have a favourable response at the end of this inquiry. Putting an end date on live export of sheep by sea in this term of government is not only the right thing to do for animal welfare, but the right way forward for the Australian economy.

Amelia Natoli

