

## **SUBMISSION**

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PHASE OUT OF LIVE EXPORTS BY SEA**

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## **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**

- The need for an **immediate ban** on all live exports in this term of government
- Historical context and failure to modernise
- Impact of sheep on the environment, ecology, biodiversity, hydrology, flora and fauna
- Creating opportunities and compensating farmers
- Legislating a tax on environmental emissions
- Australia's international reputation

## **Introduction**

Australia used to ride on the sheep's back. The wool industry began when the colony was only just being established and, by the early 1800s, wool was a major export commodity. However, those days have gone. Even though, alternatives to wool have become popular and the health benefits of a meat-free diet are acknowledged, farmers continue to produce the same product. That *product* is a living, sentient being – a mammal - with feelings and emotions no different from ours. Unfortunately, in order to continue what they have always done, farmers sell their live flocks knowing that they will be sent offshore, still alive, on export ships to distant locations.

As we live in an era of rapid change, we must all learn to adapt. Accordingly, Australian agriculture must change too. Livestock producers are not untouchables. The out of proportion government support they receive must cease. Clearly, we need to wind down the scope and magnitude of sheep breeding; over production should not be allowed to continue. Our landscape, environment, bushland, soil, waterways, blue skies, clean air, unique flora and fauna should not continue to deteriorate at the expense of an introduced species that is raised for international consumption. We must value and preserve our natural resources.

Jobs should remain here in Australia. This country should not be dictated to by nations that will only accept our breathing livestock with blood-pumping hearts to undergo their barbaric rituals.

Over decades, the Australian Government has spent millions of taxpayer dollars reviewing and admonishing an industry that abuses animals on a massive scale. Despite this, the barbarity continues. The government has had ample opportunity to crack down on this cruel industry, yet the abhorrent suffering continues. We must not allow any more animals to endure this agony. **The Albanese Government must stand by its word and ban live sheep export - not in the next term but right now.**

## **Environmental Impact**

As sheep are ruminant animals, they have a detrimental effect on the atmosphere and reduce air quality by producing greenhouse gases. (Their burps emit the powerful greenhouse gas, methane.) They emit carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide as well as producing ammonia which is related to acid rain. Extensive sheep grazing destroys and degrades the soil, pollutes water and affects hydrology and ecology as well as diminishing wildlife habitat. Sheep hooves cause compaction of the soil which weakens soil structure, increases water run-off and causes erosion. Vegetation struggles to grow because roots cannot break through the soil.

In addition to the environmental damage caused in Australia, the long-distance transportation of sheep by sea consumes substantial amounts of fossil fuels, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation.

## **Biodiversity**

A great deal of our fauna is on the edge of extinction because of land clearing for livestock. Additionally, pollution, competition for resources, changed vegetation and introduced disease has had a detrimental effect on fauna. Sheep farming can be directly related to the destruction of the dingo and the endangered kangaroo. Dingoes are regarded as pests because they prey on lambs and, similarly, kangaroos compete for resources. Native species should be prized above all else and not seen as pests.



## **Opportunities**

As Australia transitions away from the sheep industry, new industries and jobs can be created to meet the demand for ethically sourced products and plant-based production. This country has unique fauna and flora that can be marketed in an environmentally friendly way. We must preserve, not kill and destroy, our natural resources.

The Federal Government needs to consider **alternative land uses** that could provide fresh employment for farmers. (Phasing out live export by sea aligns with Australia's goals to combat climate change, reduce carbon footprint, and transition to more sustainable industries.)

There needs to be a focus on products of nature that are environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Here are some practical suggestions:

- Reduce flock and diversify.
- Burial sites for humans and animals under a newly planted indigenous tree using minimal cardboard caskets.
- Clean energy production such as solar and wind farms.
- Greening/regeneration, of previously sheep-farmed areas, by planting/reinstating indigenous flora and fauna. Farmers could be paid to rehabilitate the land and to value the native fauna – once seen as an enemy to their flocks.
- Native flora farms to supply local and international markets.
- Sustainable crops that don't sacrifice the environment.
- Tourism opportunities such as farm stay and eco-tourism where native fauna is valued and not regarded as an enemy to sheep farmers.
- The development of culturally appropriate businesses such as   using locally sourced seasonal and wild harvested produce including native fruits, oils, nuts, seeds, flowers and spices. First Nations people should be employed to manage and care for the land.
- Distinctive Aboriginal art, culture, music and history to be better promoted and include exhibitions and educational workshops.

The newly created **opportunities** may not be as lucrative for farmers or associated businesses currently involved in the live sheep trade. However, they would be ethical, more humane, better for the sheep, better for the Australian environment, less costly to the taxpayer and in keeping with public sentiment.

Sheep farming needs to be strictly limited in the future and should not be a guaranteed industry. The Federal Government might like to consider redundancy payments to farmers wishing to leave sheep farming or buy-back of sheep farming land.

## **TAX**

A tax on agricultural emissions should be legislated. Farmers should pay a tax based on the number of animals they keep, the size of their farm, the type of fertilizer used and the steps they take to reduce their emissions. Denmark will become the second country in the world to introduce such a tax after New Zealand announced it would put a price on agricultural greenhouse gases from 2025. Recently, San Francisco's board of supervisors unanimously passed a resolution that declared animal agriculture a climate and public health threat as well as an abuse of animals' rights.

Sheep farmers cannot continue to vandalise the environment and contribute to global warming without paying a levy for the damage they cause.

## **SUMMARY**

I support the rapid phase out of the live sheep export trade and would like farmers to receive some government help during this transition. (This, despite the fact, that farmers have no empathy for the animals in their care, have totally disregarded the environment and have failed to move with the times.) The live export trade has had a negative impact on Australia's international reputation as a fair and compassionate nation. At the last election, I voted for a government that would end live export in this term of parliament. Live sheep export is a profitable business that many powerful people have become dependent upon. Similarities between this and the slave trade of previous centuries can be drawn. **The phase out must be legislated and commence in this term of parliament.** The last live export ship has left New Zealand. (Agriculture made up half of New Zealand's greenhouse emissions.) Why is Australia taking so long to follow suit? Decisive action is needed now. The costly, unnecessary consultation process only prolongs suffering. Violence towards animals always diminishes us as human beings. All lives matter. Until live exports end, we cannot call ourselves a civilised nation. The vile trade in all animals should finish now.