

In Regard to the Phase out of Live Sheep Exports by Sea

Twenty years have come and gone since I first witnessed the video footage of the suffering inflicted on sheep by the live sheep export trade by sea. That footage left me horrified and ashamed to be Australian. It drove me to write to those in government who might advocate to end the suffering of 'our sheep' and relieve us of our collective national shame.

The more I learned of the live sheep export trade, the more it shaped my life: I gave up eating meat, I sought out ways to advocate for an end to this inhumane trade and it impacted how I voted. I voted Labor in the last election because Labor provided a better hope of ending this trade.

It has been twenty years but I, and many of my friends and colleagues, are still hopeful that this trade will end; that this term of government will legislate to commence the phase-out of this shameful trade that blemishes Australia's character internationally. New Zealand has shown the way, having already put an end to live export. And Australia's continued perpetration of this trade also blemishes our agricultural sector. While our livestock farmers may raise stock ethically, their work and image are tarnished by association: as the animals they raised humanely are assigned to the horrors of live export. I am sure that many livestock farmers more than regret that their animals are consigned to such a brutal end-of life.

As a taxpayer, I am all for the government providing whatever support is needed to farmers, to help them to transition to a post live export Australia and livelihood.

Since the cruelty of the live sheep export trade was exposed two decades ago – and the collective outrage of so many Australians proved difficult to ignore – the trade became more regulated; however, it still remains that the trade is inherently cruel, regulations or not. Despite the regulations, sheep exported by sea inevitably suffer extreme heat stress and, if they survive that horror, are met with the painful and lingering death of an un-stunned slaughter at journey's end.

I ask one question of those into whose hands I place this submission: could you bear travelling with our sheep on a live export ship, constantly experiencing their conditions along-side them?

If your answer is 'No' then you must, in all conscience – and to end our collective Australian shame – say 'No' to the interests of the live sheep export trade and commence to phase it out during this government's term.

Ever hopeful of the current government being able to rid us of this shameful blemish,

Bridget K Hogan