



28<sup>th</sup> May 2023

*The Panel*

*Phase out of live sheep exports by sea*

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter as my submission to the panel for the Phasing out of live sheep exports by sea.

I am extremely excited to hear that we will be phasing out the live export of sheep and would like this to commence as soon as possible and for the whole industry of exporting of sheep to end now.

For every moment we allow sheep to go onto the ships means more of them suffer needlessly and quite often they are subjected to horrible sea conditions, heat, terrible weather, crowding, sickness and everything from the daily stresses of sea transport to the fully conscious slaughter in importing countries. This must end now.

In my opinion during the transition phase, we must consider the support our sheep farmers will receive as it is highly important to the success of this phase out process.

There are many alternative industries out there which our farmers could look to invest in & they would need some guidance, help & encouragement to move away from the horrors of sheep export. Change is hard but often it comes with great rewards and one of the potential options to consider is the booming plant-based market and as a mental health first aid officer myself we all know there are many mental health challenges faced by farmers living/working on the tough Australian land and moving away from sheep exporting could only improve their mental health.

We must ensure we provide many ways & means for the Farmers to get access to mental health support during & after the phase out process. We also should try to bring in plant-based industry specialists to show them the potential for the plant-based markets, allow the farmers to be able to interact and liaise with the specialists and to also put forward their ideas for how they might see a successful transition happening asap. If we include those farmers in the process, they are more likely to feel valued & will pivot to change their future goals more readily & easily.

Australia needs to think about its international reputation for our treatment of animals and we need to improve on the World Animal Protection's official rankings of 49 which is disgusting. Even New Zealand has started to move away from live export as they are also intelligent & empathic humans who understand that not everything is about making large sums of cash all the time at the expense of innocent sentient animals. More than happy for people to make large sums of cash just not at the expense of sentient animals who did not choose to be born into this world only to be loaded onto ships to suffer, die on those ships or die in the unethical manners which international buyers do inflict upon them.

Australians want certainty that this trade will end. Many people have been campaigning to end the live export trade for a very long time and it is only by becoming a more ethical & empathic country that we can be leaders moving towards a more sustainable & healthy country in the future.

We need the live export of sheep to be phased out via legislation now and that it commences in this term of parliament. Every moment of delay is another day of suffering for those sheep.

I am so looking forward to seeing the panel's report. Really excited to see the steps forward Australia can make for the lives of sheep & the Farmers who have held on for so long because they simply are so scared of change.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Ball