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To the Independent Panel

Consultation on the Phase Out of Live Exports

I write as a member of the public to express my views on the phase out of live export from Australia.

I first became aware of what sheep endure during live export, when the expose came out in 2018 showing video footage of sheep in appalling conditions, baking to death and lying in a bed of faeces and urine. Even pregnant sheep were boarded. I was horrified at what I saw, and really believed it would bring about change at the time, but other than reducing the hot summer months voyages, it seemed like things pretty much got back to 'business as usual' for the trade. I have campaigned ever since.

I am delighted that we have got to this point where it is finally acknowledged that the live export trade is inherently cruel and continues to cause horrendous suffering to millions of animals. My reason for voting for the Labor Party at the last election was because of their commitment to phase out live exports.

My greatest concern is that the phased approach commences during the first term of parliament to ensure that it happens, irrespective of the outcome of the next election. This means it is vitally important that it is legislated, and that it begins and ends as soon as possible.

Whilst I am no expert, I have read that there is a lot of demand overseas for Australian meat (frozen) and so I see this as a way forward for our farmers. There is a better chance we can ensure the rules around animal welfare are followed if Australia manage the whole process from beginning to end. Perhaps government can provide financial support to farmers during the transition.

I was pleased to read that New Zealand has committed to ending live export. It is very important for Australia to follow in their footsteps if we are to be seen as a fair and compassionate nation.

I am very grateful that the government has committed to ending live export and thank the independent panel for their role in laying out the path to a kinder future for sheep.

Yours faithfully

Colleen Pearson