

**Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Phase out of live sheep exports by sea**

I submit that live animal export should be phased out in favour of an increased trade in boxed and chilled meat from animals that have been humanely slaughtered here in Australia. Further, independent research shows that this more humane alternative will protect Australian farmers, the economy and create new jobs. Both the weight of animal welfare evidence and public opinion are against the trade.

I note that the type of support farmers receive while the transition happens is crucial to the success of this phase-out. Careful consideration must be given with respect to compensation and assistance for farmers to adjust their flocks towards local processing systems for chilled and frozen meats.

It is critical that phase-out begin and end as soon as possible. Every delay means more sheep subjected to inexcusable suffering – from the daily stresses of sea transport to fully conscious slaughter in importing countries. There is always the danger that Labor may not be re-elected and if a coalition government should resurface, this would be a significant setback. The phase-out should therefore be legislated and commence in this term of parliament.

Aside from the obvious unfixable animal welfare issues of live export, the trade has been in considerable decline since the horrific deaths of over 2,000 Australian sheep on the Awassi Express in 2018. It will only continue to decline as the popularity of plant-based agriculture grows.

I commend the Labor Government for recognising that the live sheep export trade is no longer acceptable in today's society, and for taking the first step to bring an end to this cruel and inhumane practice. Australians want certainty that this trade will end. New Zealand's recent ban is an example of how a civilised country should behave toward animals and respect the views of the general public over a few vested interests. Defending this trade undermines public trust in Australia's agricultural sector. It is time to end live export.

Sincerely
Erin Sleeth