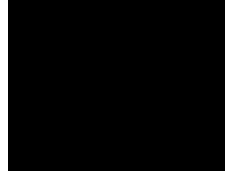




PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Australia



PETA.org.au

**SUBMISSION REGARDING
THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT
TO PHASING OUT LIVE-SHEEP EXPORTS BY SEA**

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A. About PETA Australia

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Australia (hereafter referred to as PETA) is an animal rights organisation opposed to speciesism.

PETA works through public information efforts, research, lobbying, celebrity involvement, and protest campaigns to focus international attention on the exploitation and abuse of animals for experimentation, food, clothing, and entertainment.

B. PETA's comments on the Australian government's commitment to phasing out live-sheep exports by sea

PETA and our members are happy to finally see progress towards ending the live export of sheep from Australia. Consistently, since the first investigations into Australia's live-export industry were publicised in 2006, Australians (and people worldwide) have borne witness to the suffering and deaths of animals on live-export ships, making it clear that our country should have no part in continuing this trade.¹ We're glad that the current Labor government agrees.

As Labor's commitment to ending this trade is a matter of *when* – and not *if* – we urge the government to enact this ban swiftly, during its first term in office. This is due to the following:

- I) Live-export journeys by sea have already resulted in the deaths of sheep.
- II) Sheep stand to suffer as long as the industry continues.

Since 2017, 25,422 sheep have died aboard live-export ships.² The reported causes of death for animals aboard Australian live-export ships include heat stress, starvation, gut and respiratory infections,³ and trampling, especially among lambs.⁴

¹RSPCA. A Timeline of Tragedy. RSPCA.org.au. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

<https://www.rspca.org.au/live-exports-timeline-tragedy>

²Agriculture.gov.au. Reports to Parliament. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/live-animal-export-statistics/reports-to-parliament>

³Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Review of Live Sheep Exports by Sea to, or Through, the Middle East During the Northern Hemisphere Summer. Final Report: September 2022. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/final-report-review-of-live-sheep-exports-by-sea.docx>

⁴Australian Associated Press. 'They Were Put in an Oven.' *Daily Mail*. 8 Apr 2018. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5591131/Footage-shows-sheep-live-export-horror.html>

If export numbers and mortality rates remain consistent with the previous six years, over 12,700 sheep will die at sea during the first three years of Labor's term. Even if there are no deaths, these animals will continue to be at risk of experiencing issues systemic to live export: harsh temperatures, rough seas, restricted access to food and water, injuries, zoonotic illness, and – should they survive the journey – barbaric treatment in destination slaughterhouse abattoirs.⁵ Animals are individuals. One death while the government delays action on this issue, knowing what it knows from previous reviews and eyewitness reports, would be unconscionable.

- III) A second term in government is never guaranteed.
- IV) Australians want certainty that this trade will end.

A consecutive term of government is never guaranteed. Since 1906, Labor has held consecutive terms in power only eight times over 49 elections.⁶ The Australian public cannot be assured that there will be a future term in which this commitment will be kept. Labor must act during this current term in order to ensure the fulfilment of its commitment. Approximately 75% of Australians have indicated that they oppose the live-export trade.⁷ In a 2018 University of Queensland study, a majority (50.9%) of respondents said they felt the live-animal export trade should be ended “immediately” as opposed to “phased out” (49.09%).⁸

- V) Precedent exists to indicate that live export by sea can be tabled in Parliament and enacted within a two-year period.

New Zealand has recently set a precedent for swiftly and decisively ending live export.⁹ A review process into the industry began there in November 2019, with a ban announced in 2021. The Animal Welfare Amendment Act 2022, which implements a ban on the live

⁵PETA. Live Export: ‘Shipping’s Modern Slave Trade’. PETA.org.au. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

<https://www.peta.org.au/issues/live-export-animal-cruelty/>

⁶Wikipedia. Australian Labor Party. Wikipedia.org. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Labor_Party

⁷RSPCA. New Poll Finds 3 in 4 Australians Want Live Export to End, Greatest Concern Over Standards in Rural and Country Areas. RSPCA.org.au. 27 Apr 2018. Retrieved 10 May 2023.

<https://www.rspca.org.au/media-centre/news/2018/new-poll-finds-3-4-australians-want-live-export-end-greatest-concern-over#:~:text=Around%203%20in%204%20Australians.access%20food%20and%20water%20easily>

⁸Sinclair M, Derkley T, Fryer C, Phillips CJC. Australian Public Opinions Regarding the Live Export Trade Before and After an Animal Welfare Media Exposé. *Animals*. 2018; 8(7):106.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ani8070106>

⁹Damien O'Connor. Livestock Exports by Sea to Cease. Beehive.govt.nz. 28 Sept 2022. Retrieved 10 May 2023. <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/livestock-exports-sea-cease>

export of all animals by sea, passed its third and final reading on 28 September 2022. The ban then came into effect 31 April 2023.¹⁰

New Zealand's action raises the bar, proving that an end to this industry can be enacted swiftly and decisively and that it's also possible to ban the live export of all animals – something we would like to see happen in Australia.

In summary, ending the live export of sheep (and all animals) is long overdue. Tens of thousands of sheep have already died on board these ships, and many more will be subjected to suffering, abuse, pain, and too-often, death the longer this trade is permitted to continue. The government made a commitment, supported by the majority of Australians, to end the live export of sheep, which it must now fulfil.

New Zealand's landmark ban proves that ending this trade without delay is possible, and past investigations and reviews indicate that a swift shutdown is necessary to prevent prolonged suffering for animals. We urge Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the Labor government to please set Australia down a kinder path by ending the live export of sheep during this elected term and working towards a future without any live-animal export.

¹⁰Bianka Atlas. Live Animal Export by Sea Consigned to New Zealand's History Books. UIAnet.org. 29 Mar 2023. Retrieved 10 May 2023.
<https://www.uanet.org/en/news/live-animal-export-sea-consigned-new-zealands-history-books#:~:text=The%20Animal%20Welfare%20Amendment%20Act,effect%20on%2030%20April%202023>