

## Phase Out of Live Sheep Exports by Sea

22 April 2023

Dear Panel Members,

I believe that the live sheep export trade by sea should end as soon as possible and that the Labor Government (for which I voted) should remain committed to the promises it made.

I am aware that stocking densities have improved and that exports are suspended during the hottest months of the Middle eastern summer, but I am very concerned that these regulatory changes could be revoked under pressure from livestock producers and exporters, who will cite the need to compete on price.

The live sheep export trade has long relied upon the practice of having as many animals as possible packed on board ships. The tendency to cram is also evident in the large numbers of sheep that I see squeezed into trucks making their way to the port of Fremantle.

A further concern is how these animals are treated at their destination. The ESCAS scheme was instituted to ensure that importing countries maintain certain standards of handling, transport and slaughter and that the livestock exported from Australia is traceable, but I am not confident that there are not cases of sheep being onsold to customers with very low animal welfare standards.

New Zealand ended its live sheep export trade many years ago and I believe that it would improve Australia's reputation for animal welfare if it did the same.

Sheep producers here should be supported to transition away from this trade. I also believe that customers overseas should be encouraged to transition as well, with them investing in meat processing facilities here if that is deemed necessary.

Jennifer Hole

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