

31 May 2023

Dear Panel and Senator Murray Watt,

Re : Phase-out of live sheep exports by sea.

I make this submission as a concerned Australian citizen. The Labour government's promise to phase-out live sheep exports by sea, was a huge relief for me and my family. Like most Australian citizens we feel traumatised by the terrible distress, barbaric conditions and cruelty inflicted on our sheep. Please do not under-estimate the mental anguish we feel when animals are so mistreated.

I believe the government should be bold and phase-out this terrible trade as quickly as practicable. While this will take time, it is important that the process is not stalled and dragged out by those with loud voices. The majority of Australians have made it clear they do not want our farm animals to be treated so callously.

To achieve the phase-out, a transition pathway needs to be implemented to assist those whose livelihoods will be genuinely impacted, particularly farmers. As a person from a farming background, I know how hard farmers work and that most care for the animals they rear. Many farmers feel stressed by the inherent cruelty of the live sheep trade.

I am concerned that the Agricultural sector continues to support for this terrible trade instead of supporting farmers in ways where animals are not merely 'products' to be peddled, but sentient beings that deserve, at the very least, to be treated with respect and proper care.

I urge the government to invest in options such as humane slaughter onsite in Australia under strict welfare standards to allow farmers to keep their livelihoods and also to increase meat exports.

Importantly it is imperative that Labour legislate the phase-out as soon as possible and strengthen the animal welfare laws that are failing farm animals.

Yours sincerely
Polly Watkins

