

Dear Panel

Previous Liberal governments and the live export industry have always and **WILL** always have the same priority of making money off the backs of animal cruelty. They have condoned years of abuse, violence and torture on our exported voiceless animals! Recent remarks that the ban of live sheep exports was intended to please voters in cities such as Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra is nothing that could be further from the truth. Some politicians conveniently forget this is a vile cruel industry and recent surveys taken Australian wide in metropolitan **and including rural/regional areas** also have 8 out of 10 people who **WANT** this cruel trade banned which should have ended years ago!

Overseas countries have already banned it like New Zealand. Israel is also against live shipments of animals. Recently a ban on Brazilian live cattle exports has been imposed due to the cruelty attached to that industry with further investigation. On the 27/4/23 a Brazilian court banned the export of live cattle from all the country's ports, a ruling hailed as historic was delivered by federal judge Djalma Gomes who said, "Animals are not things. They are sentient living beings, that is, they are individuals who feel hunger, thirst, pain, cold, anguish and fear."

In 2022 the EU moved to regulate live transport of animals more strictly. The changes came after an animal welfare investigation had revealed shocking insights into the industry. Germany, Luxemburg and the Netherlands in 2021 called for live shipments to third world countries to be banned. And the European Commission has announced that the current protection rules for animal transports will be revised. All around the world people are revising and rethinking the way we should treat animals. Abuse and cruelty should NOT be the basis of any industry. Animals are just not commodities to be bought and sold, they are sentient beings. Animals raised for food are no less deserving of the same compassion, moral consideration, and legal protection as other animals in human care. They should be treated humanely. They deserve compassion as to how they are farmed, transported and how they are killed.

The Labor Party promised the electorate an end to the cruel live sheep export trade. Many of us voted for Labor because they made a promise to end this unnecessary cruelty directed towards gentle sheep. We must not waste this opportunity to legislate to end this trade. An Advisory panel has been set up to **report** on how to phase out and end this cruel sheep trade. Industry discussions with the WA state government and farmers is a crucial part of the planning, to ensure an orderly transition to alternative markets for farmers. **The consultation planning phase with WA farmers and a timeframe or roadmap for phasing out live sheep exports as well as legislation with a clear END DATE MUST be determined in this term of government to ensure what follows is an orderly transition process to end this cruel industry.**

The legislated end of this trade in Parliament must be in this current term of government. The phase out because it will be a few years must also begin in this term of government and be as short and finish as soon as possible. Every day of delay sheep will continue to suffer on lengthy voyages and to these imported countries where they are slaughtered cruelly fully conscious. We cannot have a long -protracted phase out period to still have sheep suffer with no end in sight. There must be a clear and legal end date determined in Labor's current term of government.

FOR SHEEP TO BE KILLED HUMANELY IN AUSTRALIA UNDER AUSTRALIAN WELFARE STANDARDS AND TRANSPORTED AS FROZEN MEAT IS THE **ONLY** WAY THIS INDUSTRY CAN NOW PROCEED.

Following are the reasons why live sheep exports must be banned despite a Liberal/National government claiming falsely that it was regulated. The public have followed this industry for years now, and we are utterly astounded as to the excuses made by the outgoing government to justify this trade continuing. The wastage of taxpayer money on reviews with very few recommendations even adopted in full and the ones that were implemented were tokenistic and still saw sheep suffer unbearable heat stress. Red tape bureaucracy within departments and failures to withdraw and suspend licences, investigations taking months and months and export ships still being allowed to take sheep on these ships of death. No compassion whatsoever shown towards the suffering of animals and whistle blowers threatened and in fear of disclosing the real truth behind this industry. This is what the community saw, and we are ashamed that previous governments did not even recognise this cruelty but wanted the industry to continue to operate under a veil of secrecy. The truth exposed the following-

1. Animals spend days or weeks (sometimes months when unloading is refused) in these poor, cruel standards on export ships.
2. **Sanitary and welfare conditions are terrible-** basically, there are virtually no sanitary or welfare precautions. Crowded animals, rocking movement of ships/sea sickness, extreme weather

conditions, excrement, faeces and ammonia fumes make it hard for the sheep to breathe. Food ends up dirty, water is scarce if available and heat stress affects sheep.

3. **Many animals die on the way, others are born-** Many animals suffer from injuries and diseases and die before arriving at the destination, without receiving proper veterinary care. Most are left in their pens to rot or be thrown into the sea. Unfortunately, since there's no control about the animal's pregnancies, investigations have even shown animals being born in these awful conditions and young lambs dying after they are born.
4. **The live sheep export trade is dangerous-** Recently, there was a case of a cargo ship that capsized with 14,000 live sheep off the coast of Romania. In Brazil, a vessel carrying 5,000 cows sank close to the Port of Barbacena and animals drowned.
5. **Importing countries cannot assure the Australian government what techniques or how our animals will be slaughtered-** Importing countries want to import live animals because they want to control how these animals will be killed, to make sure the slaughter will follow some religious precepts. Therefore, it is not possible to assure how our exported animals will be slaughtered, and whether it will be compliant to even the most basic animal welfare standards, such as stunning the animals before cutting their throats.
6. **Huge environmental impacts-** The faeces, excrement, manure by-products from animals produced on live export ships is dumped directly into the sea. Waste accumulated by the cleaning process has its contents discarded directly into our oceans and seas which pollutes these environments even more. This causes water and air pollution.
7. The footprint of animal farming causes the emission of more greenhouse gases than the whole transport of the world combined! In 2016, three of the biggest meat companies in the world — JBS, Cargille and Tyson combined — were accountable for more greenhouse gas emissions than France.
8. **Sheep suffer throughout the whole live export journey,** which can take months, and welfare issues are cumulative and inherent across the supply chain. They're at risk of suffering extreme heat stress, poor conditions and overcrowded stocking densities that increase discomfort, and can limit access to food and water for some animals whilst transported. They're at risk because of the unavoidable reality that live export leads to weeks of stressful circumstances for the sheep including repeated handling by unfamiliar people, standing in their own faeces and urine, unfamiliar environments with loud noises, varied ventilation, high humidity, mistreatment and inhumane slaughter practices once they disembark at their destination.

I remind the Government, the industry, regulator and farmers that this is **the right thing to do, as a people and country. We can no longer justify this cruelty because of the economics involved.** Animals have consistently been shown to be taken out of the Australian approved process chain (ESCAS) which means that they end up being slaughtered outside of the supply chain in ways we cannot control. Undercover investigations have shown that this happens consistently. ESCAS has failed and will continue to fail as monitoring in overseas imported countries by Australian officials is limited and costs too much. Stunning in these countries is not mandatory and is therefore still a substantial animal welfare issue.

There are alternatives that will still yield a robust economic industry without the cruelty attached something I wholeheartedly support. There is more money in the export of chilled sheep meat than in the export of live sheep which is currently a \$92 million industry. There are opportunities to expand domestic processing, give more regional jobs to Australians to process meat in Australia so as to increase sheep meat exports in a chilled market. Australia exported a record \$4.5 billion of sheep meat in 2021–22. The frozen sheep meat trade has established markets in the United States, Australia's largest sheep meat market by value whilst China is Australia's largest sheep meat market by volume. There are expanding markets for frozen sheep meat with recent trade agreements with the UK and India.

RSPCA Australia's senior policy officer, [REDACTED], said domestic processing is the only way to ensure Australian animals' welfare. "Investment in a chilled and frozen meat-only trade would prevent the suffering inherent to live export and save millions of animals from the cruel fate awaiting them at their destination and on-board ship," he said. Despite minor improvements to animal welfare standards, graphic images of welfare breaches, continued suffering of sheep on these ships and poor animal welfare standards in imported countries and at point of

slaughter has meant that most Australians are against the trade continuing. The LIVE SHEEP EXPORT TRADE MUST END, and I welcome finally a stand taken by the Federal government to end this vile trade.

I emphasise to ensure that it does end that the **legislated end of this trade in Parliament must be in this current term of government. The phase out must also begin in this term of government and be as short and finish as soon as possible within a few years. A long phase out period must not occur, in order to end the suffering of sheep. I also caution the government that as air transport of sheep will still continue, this trade must not increase as a substitute because of the end of the live sheep trade by sea.**

Your sincerely

Ruby Hardie