

My name is Ruth and I am writing this submission as a concerned member of the public. In fact an expose of 4 Corners called 'A Bloody Business' about the live cattle trade to Indonesia changed my life, and made me become an animal advocate. The scenes were heartbreaking as has been the footage of the live sheep export industry. Our reputation regarding animal welfare in Australia is abysmal.

## **Mechanism**

*1) How should the government implement the phase out of live sheep exports by sea? Why should the government use this approach?*

The government should provide incentives for farmers that are going to be affected by the phase out of live sheep exports to move to other markets. This may require the building of more abattoirs in Australia close to where sheep are being raised so that they can be exported as boxed meat.

However, a better solution would be for these farmers to transition to plant-based agriculture to assist us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to provide healthy food for Australians and to export overseas. This must happen as soon as possible so that a practical transition has taken place prior to the next election. This will give farmers financial support and certainty to ensure that the transition actually occurs irrespective of politics. An important benefit is that Australia's reputation internationally will improve on animal welfare grounds.

Just 575,000 sheep were exported live from Australia in 2021, compared with 2 million in 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/mar/03/australia-to-phase-out-live-sheep-export-amid-opposition-from-peak-farmers-body>

We do not need this industry.

## **Timeframe**

*2) What is an appropriate timeframe to phase out live sheep exports by sea? What are your reasons for proposing this timeframe? I*

A report is due by September and should be discussed and implemented as soon as possible. The decision has already been made to transition – let's get on with it. The papers indicated today that it is scheduled to take five years and I wonder why we are being asked to comment if a decision has already been made?

New Zealand banned live export in April 2023. There is no excuse for us not to do the same. I recognise this ban is for sheep only.

*3) Will you or your business be impacted by the phase out of live sheep exports by sea? If so, please provide details of the impact.*

I will not have to attend so many rallies, write emails and lobby politicians and suffer the stress of sleepless nights thinking of the horrendous conditions for sheep on boats. They are particularly vulnerable to heat stress when travelling to the middle east where temperatures are going to reach 45 degrees and where laws are broken on a daily basis with regards to how sheep are handled and killed.

*4) What will the phase out mean to you, your employer or employees, suppliers, customers, friends and family, and/or your community?*

My community is an animal advocacy community. We spend literally dozens of hours trying to get the live export trade stopped. We are in a climate emergency, yet we are still clearing land for animal agriculture and causing the extinction of our wildlife in the process. Introduced species are not supposed to be in Australia and their hooves are not suited to Australian soils.

In addition, the introduction of *Chlamydia pecorum* from domesticated livestock including sheep, cattle and pigs has almost spelt the extinction of koalas in Australia.

<https://bmcbgenomics.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2164-15-667>

*5) What barriers and/or constraints might there be for exporters, farmers, and other participants across the supply chain to transition away from live sheep exports by sea?*

The constraints are mainly financial for the small number of people involved in live export. Most will be able to transition to other industries. The agricultural sector is crying out for more workers.

*6) How should supply chain participants be supported as they transition away from live sheep exports by sea?*

Instead of millions of dollars of subsidies going to support animal agriculture, we should be giving farmers incentives to move to plant-based agriculture. This is better for animals, people and our planet.

*9) What can be learnt from other countries that have ceased live sheep exports? What lessons can be learned from Australian states or territories that no longer export live sheep by sea?*

We learn that we lessen the risk for animals by stopping live export. Thousands of sheep have drowned at sea. In recent years, more than 15,000 drowned after a live export ship sank in Sudan, and 14,000 died in 2020 after their ship capsized. Each sheep is a sentient individual.

Western Australia is going to be affected more than other states in Australia. They have plenty of raw materials which can be exploited instead of sentient animals.

### ***Opportunities***

*10) What opportunities should the government and/or industry pursue in the lead up to and following the transition out of live sheep exports by sea? (e.g., expanding domestic processing and value adding, increasing sheep meat exports, other)*

As stated previously this is an ideal opportunity to transition to plant-based agriculture and move away from animal exploitation especially intensively farmed animals.

*11) What would industry participants need, or need to do, to take advantage of opportunities?*

People need to be open minded and think of alternative opportunities which will lessen global warming and help us to stop irreversible tipping points. This might be in the alternative energy sector or the medical, retail or teaching sectors which are all short of staff.

*12) What are the barriers and/or constraints to pursuing opportunities?*

People who have a rigid mindset.

People who feel they are going to lose out financially and are resistant to change.

Governments that are afraid to act ethically in case it loses votes.

Thank you for this opportunity to have input. My submission is a bit terse! How many more years do we need to write submissions before action is taken?

Ruth Weston

