



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

# **Phase out of live sheep exports by sea: consultation paper**





**Australian Government**

**Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry**

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This publication (and any material sourced from it) should be attributed as: DAFF 2023, *Consultation paper: phase out of live sheep exports by sea*, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra, February. CC BY 4.0.

This publication is available at [haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/Live-Sheep-Phase-Out](https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/Live-Sheep-Phase-Out).

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**Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.



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# Purpose

This paper has been developed as part of a consultation process to assist the Australian Government to implement its election commitment to phase out live sheep exports by sea.

Information received through this consultation process will help the government better determine how and when these exports should be phased out, including the practical adjustment required for those in the live sheep exports supply chain and related industries.

In doing so, this information will help the government establish an appropriate mechanism and timeframe for phasing out live sheep exports by sea.

Consultation will not consider the merits or otherwise of the government's policy to phase out live sheep exports by sea.

This paper is one component of a broader consultation process that will also include face-to-face meetings, virtual forums, and other opportunities to engage with the government on this matter.

# Australian Government commitment to phase out live sheep exports by sea

The Australian Government committed to phasing out live sheep exports by sea during the 2022 election campaign as part of its *Plan for Strengthening Animal Welfare*.

This is in recognition of community concern about the treatment of sheep during the export process.

It also follows numerous incidents and subsequent inquiries into, and reviews of, the trade including the 2003 Keniry Review, 2011 Farmer Review, and 2018 McCarthy and Moss reviews.<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>

The government recognises the phase out will impact individuals, businesses and communities that rely on the trade.

The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt have therefore stated the phase out will not take place during the current term of the Australian Parliament.

This will allow for appropriate consideration of options and give those affected by the phase out the time to prepare for, adjust and transition away from the trade.

Government consideration of how and when to give effect to the phase out will be undertaken during this term of the Australian Parliament, with a view to informing an implementation plan.

The phase out does not apply to other livestock export industries, such as live cattle exports, nor does it apply to live sheep exports by air.

<sup>1</sup> Keniry, J (2003), [Livestock Export Review: Final Report](#), report to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra]

<sup>2</sup> Farmer, B (2011) [Independent review of Australia's livestock export trade](#), report to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra].

<sup>3</sup> McCarthy, M (2018) [Independent review of conditions for the export of sheep to the Middle East during the northern hemisphere summer](#), report to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, [Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Canberra]

<sup>4</sup> Moss, P (2018) [Review of the Regulatory Capability and Culture of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources in the Regulation of Live Animal Exports](#), report to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, [Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Canberra]

# Consultation process

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt has appointed an independent, four-person panel to undertake a consultation process to provide advice on how and when the government will phase out live sheep exports by sea. The panel is comprised of Mr Phillip Glyde (Chair), the Hon Warren Snowdon, Ms Sue Middleton, and Ms Heather Neil.

The panel has been asked to consider:

- potential mechanisms to phase out live sheep exports by sea
- a suggested timeframe and options for implementation
- potential ways to support the transition, including but not limited to consideration of markets, processing facilities and other opportunities
- other matters as appropriate.

All interested parties are invited to make a written submission to the consultation process, utilising this consultation paper as a guide.

The panel will also undertake face-to-face meetings across Australia, particularly in Western Australia given the impact of this policy to the agriculture sector in that state. Other opportunities to participate may include virtual forums.

In doing so, the panel will engage with all relevant stakeholders, including live sheep exporters, farmers, supply chain participants, communities, trading partners, animal welfare organisations, Indigenous Australians, state and territory governments, academics, and other relevant parties.

The 30 September 2023 timeline has been extended and the panel will provide its report to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry by 25 October 2023.

# Consultation questions

The panel is seeking information and input from all interested stakeholders to inform its report to the Australian Government. In providing input to the consultation process, you may wish to consider the following questions:

## Mechanism

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

## Timeframe

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

## Impact and adjustment

- 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.
- 4) What will the phase out mean to you, your employer or employees, suppliers, customers, friends and family, and/or your community?
- 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?
- 6) How should supply chain participants be supported as they transition away from live sheep exports by sea?
- 7) What would you or your business and/or other supply chain participants need to do to transition away from live sheep exports by sea?
- 8) How long do you think it will take for you and/or other supply chain participants to transition away from live sheep exports by sea?
- 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?

## 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)
- 11) What would industry participants need, or need to do, to take advantage of opportunities?
- 12) What are the barriers and/or constraints to pursuing opportunities?

# Make a submission

We invite anyone that will be impacted by or has an interest in the Australian Government's policy to phase out live sheep exports by sea to make a submission into the consultation process.

Questions raised in this consultation paper are intended as a guide only. You are invited to cover all questions or only some, depending on your interests. You may also provide more general comments.

To join the conversation, please go to [haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/Live-Sheep-Phase-Out](https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/Live-Sheep-Phase-Out).

## Have your say

Submissions may be completed using the [online form](#) or by uploading your own document. If you are uploading a written submission on behalf of an organisation, it must be on an official letterhead.

Your submission may be as short or as long as you like. Written submissions longer than 3 pages should include a summary of key points.

Submissions close at 10:00pm AEST Wednesday 31 May 2023.

## Confidentiality

You may provide public or confidential submissions to this consultation process. If you do provide a confidential submission, your de-identified feedback may be included in a published summary report of submissions. Please note that a request may be made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* for access to a submission, including a submission marked 'confidential'. Such requests, including determining whether information is exempt from release, will be handled in accordance with provisions of the Act.

## Next steps

This paper and consideration of submissions are one component of the consultation process, which will also include face-to-face meetings, virtual forums, and other activities.

As part of the written process, the independent panel will consider all submissions. Your ideas will help them prepare recommendations to inform how and when the government will phase out live sheep exports by sea.

The 30 September 2023 timeline has been extended and the panel will provide its report to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry by 25 October 2023.

## Contacts

For more information about the government's commitment to phase out live sheep exports by sea, including how to participate in the consultation process, please visit [haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/Live-Sheep-Phase-Out](https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/Live-Sheep-Phase-Out).

To request a meeting with the panel, please email [livesheep.phaseout@aff.gov.au](mailto:livesheep.phaseout@aff.gov.au).