

I support the setting up an Inspector-General of Animal Welfare.

I am concerned, however, that this 'will be achieved by expanding the current office of the Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports (IGLAE)' within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

This is of great concern because I thought Labor was setting up an independent animal welfare body. In May 2022 I received an email from the ALP that a new Labor government would:

Provide \$1 million a year to establish the office of the independent Inspector-General for Animal Welfare and increase accountability and transparency for reporting of animal welfare breaches.

However in the consultation paper the word 'independent' has been dropped and it appears the new body will deal with live export animal welfare issues and be within the Dept of Agriculture with all the inherent conflicts associated with animal welfare and live export.

Although it will be a statutory position, this does not adequately address my concerns as listed below that the new Inspector-General for Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports (IGAWLAE) will be sufficiently independent as promised in the ALP email to me in early May 2022.

On the Dept of Agriculture website the role of the department is: 'We work to support our agriculture, fishery, food & forestry industries. So they can remain competitive & sustainable.'

The department's role is in conflict with animal welfare. In order for the new Inspector-General for Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports to be successful and 'strengthen animal welfare assurance, and increase accountability and transparency for animal welfare in livestock exports' it needs to be independent of the Department of Agriculture. For example:

The Dept of Agriculture & the Minister for Agriculture should not be involved in the appointment of the IGAWLAE and support staff.

It would be good if the IGAWLAE is not located in the same building as the Dept of Agriculture. Although its role will be to review the Dept functions if it was located in another building it would convey more independence from the Dept.

The IGAWLAE needs to have far more power than the current IGLAE which currently cannot review specific or individual cases and seems to have mainly a reviewing and reporting role.

All independent observers and Vets employed on live export ships should be paid by, and accountable only, to the IGAWLAE.

All reports written by independent observers and Vets' should be given directly to the IGAWLAE with no input from Dept of Ag or the Minister for Agriculture.

All such reports should be acted upon as soon as possible in order to 'increase accountability and transparency for reporting of animal welfare breaches'.

IGAWLAE should ensure that there are observer(s) on all live export ships.

When this is not possible IGAWLAE should write a public report asap explaining why and what steps have been taken to ensure an observer will be on the next ship.

The current IGLAE should not continue as the IGAWLAE for the remaining term to 10.12.24.

When the new office of IGAWLAE is set up there should be a reappointment process to select a new appointee to the role and it should be someone with animal welfare experience.

In conclusion IGAWLAE needs to be an independent body outside the Dept of Agriculture so that 'the Australian community' can 'expect robust oversight, accountability and transparency of animal welfare in livestock exports'.

