

**Submission to the Senate Committee
on Improvements in Animal Welfare for Australian Live Exports (3 pages only)**
It also refers to the 3 Bills now before the Parliament:
Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011
Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill No.1& No.2 2011
from Ms Carolin Thomas,



*"You may choose to look the other way, but you may never again say that you did not know".
William Wilberforce 1759-1833*

Submission under Section 3: Other Related Matters. (My submission is under 5 headings)

1. My purpose for making this submission and my cultural background

This is the first time I have ever made a submission to a Senate Committee. My reason for making this submission is 'shock'. I am grief stricken to see the depths to which the profit motive has reduced us. I do not understand how people of high community standing in government and the Live Animal Export Trade itself, could have permitted such terrible cruelty to continue unchecked? As a citizen it is my duty to help to end the trade. I write as a 'reasonable' citizen according to the ancient Common Law principle of the 'ordinary man'.

I am a retired university Administrator. My family has been in Australia since the 1850s. My cultural background is Irish/Catholic/Welsh/English. It is those values that have informed my life. I am not a member of a political party.

2. Social Licence: I submit that the government and the Livestock Industry do not have a 'social licence' from the Australian community to resume the Live Animal Export Trade.

In the Sydney Morning Herald, 16 June 2011 Mr Phillip Coorey's article entitled '*Industry warned against the rush to resume live trade*' reported that Senator Ludwig had told a breakfast of rural industry groups that '*the industry had a 'social licence' to export animals' and that the 'licence was under duress and risked being withdrawn should there be a repeat of the shocking treatment of animals.* Mr Ludwig then said that '*If you put the licence at risk your put the industry at risk*'. (See attached article)

I respectfully suggest that the committee consider whether the government and the meat industry bodies have a legitimate 'social licence' from the Australian community to continue the Live Animal Export Trade? If a 'social licence' ever existed, the Australia-wide outrage and call for the trade to cease, is evidence that the three elements of Legitimacy, Credibility and Trust, commonly considered to be necessary for the existence of a 'social licence', have been violated so severely that the 'licence' has already been withdrawn.

Legitimacy has been lost because the established Australian social and cultural norms regarding compassionate treatment of animals have not been observed in Islamic ritual killing practices in the Middle East and Indonesia.

Credibility has been lost because the peak industry bodies did not inform the Australian community about the conditions across the Middle Eastern and Indonesian slaughterhouses. That misrepresentation of the conditions has existed for many years, despite a large body of evidence of great cruelty across all market destinations.

Trust can only exist if there is mutual respect. How can that exist here? Even when the Trade was established, the Live Export industry and successive governments, ignored the advice of a significant body of the Animal Welfare Groups and individuals, that the trade was intrinsically cruel. Their opposition has continued ever since. It has now been proved to be right beyond reasonable doubt. After careful thought I cannot see how the government or the industry, can claim to have a 'social licence' to resume the Live Animal Export Trade.

3. The suffering of other species and our duty to prevent it.

Not once after the first few days, has there been much consideration given to the morality of inflicting such terrible suffering, on a vast scale, upon domestic herd animals. Since the Four Corners' program aired on 30th May 2011 there has been intermittent media discussion on the adverse effect cessation of that trade would have on individual farmers, the Northern Australian economy and Australia's relations with Indonesia. These are human, self-interested considerations. They are irrelevant to the poor, helpless beast who is standing in line to have his throat cut.

In the study of animal consciousness eminent scholars led by Professor Peter Singer, Professor Tom Regan and Professor Temple Grandin, have demonstrated that animals are not just machines without emotional feeling or the capacity to experience physical pain. There is overwhelming empirical evidence that they do. No one who saw the Four Corners Program could have doubted that those poor cattle suffered extreme fear and pain.

We have a long tradition that has taught us to treat other species with compassion and respect. All Australian States have statute law that prohibits cruelty to animals. In our culture it is generally accepted that it is wrong to do any thing else, although in some cases that principle is violated even here and incurs legal penalties. In the development of the live animal export trade that tradition of compassionate protection has been compromised by the unprincipled pursuit of profits.

4. The 'Moral Absolute'.

The Parliament, the industry and our whole community, are confronted by an inescapable 'moral absolute'. No matter how they tinker around the edges, the Trade causes terrible suffering that cannot be prevented because of the age old animal husbandry practices of the receiving countries. It is wrong to permit an animal to suffer if you can prevent it. Therefore the Trade must stop at once.

Apart from a few enlightened members and senators, across Party lines, most representatives have given no indication that they appreciate that this issue is a 'moral absolute'. In our culture that is understood to mean that there are certain actions that are absolutely right or wrong. If an action is wrong it must be stopped even if others will suffer harm from the stopping. The maxim is 'stop the evil and then find ways to remedy the residual damage'.

Human ingenuity established the trade. In justice, once the trade ends, that ingenuity must be applied to helping those whose livelihoods will be spoiled by its abolition. Just as the beasts who are not exported must be treated with compassion and humanity. One thing is sure! It is immoral to keep sending those beautiful creatures into such conditions in order to prop up a cruel industry.

Thanks to Ms White, Ms Ferguson and the ABC, overwhelming evidence has been presented to the Australian people. It is irrelevant where the cruelty took place or if it was in 11 slaughterhouses or in a hundred. **It is the Trade itself that is intrinsically wrong. If it is wrong it must be stopped because that is the ancient concept of the 'moral absolute' to which we all adhere. Our society could not function without it.**

5. Conclusion

If we are the compassionate, moral society we profess to be, the only honourable option is to end the Live Animal Export Trade immediately and for ever. History will remember that the 43rd Parliament of Australia had the power to end a great wrong. In more enlightened times, our descendants will not look kindly on you if you all 'choose to look the other way'. Please advise the Government to end this terrible trade.

Carolin Thomas (29th June 2011)

29th June 2011

Appendix

**Phillip Coorey: 'Industry warned against rush to resume live trade'
SMH 16/6/11 From the Animals Australia website**

THE federal government has warned the cattle industry it risks destroying the entire live export industry if it rushes to restore trade with Indonesia before adequate safeguards are in place.

In a speech to a breakfast of rural industry groups yesterday, the Agriculture Minister, Joe Ludwig, said the industry had a "social licence" from the community to export animals.

That licence was under duress and risked being withdrawn should there be a repeat of the shocking treatment of animals.

"If you put your social licence at risk, you put the industry at risk," Senator Ludwig told the breakfast, which was closed to the media.

Among those groups in attendance were the National Farmers' Federation, the Meat and Livestock Association and the Cattle Council of Australia.

With tens of thousands of cattle in limbo in northern Australia, all parties are keen to resume trade as soon as possible.

While the Nationals' leader, Warren Truss, said yesterday a limited trade could begin within a day or two for at least seven Indonesian abattoirs with high standards, it is understood the industry has told the government it envisages having the trade up and running by July 21.

The government has suspended all shipments of cattle to Indonesia and will not allow any resumption until it is satisfied cattle will not be sent to the bad abattoirs.

The government and the industry are working jointly to put in place a national livestock identification system to allow the trade to be progressively restored.

Under the system, all cattle would be tagged in Australia and electronically scanned at both ends of the supply chain.

Senator Ludwig is insisting adequate monitoring and verification arrangements be put in place in Indonesia.

He has moved to forcibly take from the MLA \$5 million from a reserve fund - paid for by levies on graziers - to feed and care for the thousands of cattle in the north which were awaiting export when the suspension was announced. Senator Ludwig said the industry also had contingencies for every shipment of cattle in the event that a shipment was rejected. He is satisfied the status quo can be maintained for a few more weeks.

But Mr Truss said a disaster was looming in the north and that some exports should resume now to relieve the pressure. While he agreed it would take a month or so for the identification system to be operational, he said cattle in the meantime could be tagged and scanned with hand-held devices.

"We are told that Indonesia has seven A-grade abattoir facilities and another 18 B-grade facilities. Getting those seven facilities accredited and back on line is our first and urgent priority in resuming trade. This should take days, not months," he said.

The NSW independent Tony Windsor backed calls for a limited resumption of trade, while the Greens senator Rachel Siewert introduced a bill to ban live exports altogether.

The Northern Territory has called on the federal government to resume trade as soon as possible. The Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, told parliament while only the federal government had the power to lift the ban on live exports, he would do everything in his power to expedite the resumption of trade. "This issue is a crisis for the Northern Territory," he said.