

I am a naturalised Australian. I came to this country to attend high school and university and to learn the Australian way of life. Before that I lived amongst third world cultures like Indonesia where animal welfare is non-existent and all animals are treated as chattels. They are presumed not to have any feelings, almost as if they are not flesh and blood. This is what I grew up with and accepted as normal.....until I came to live here. With education about animal welfare I came to regard animals as friends to be loved, cherished and respected. Indeed they are sentient beings who give unconditional love without judgement nor agenda.

I do not condone but know why the Indonesians do what they do. It is all they know and cruelty to animals is a way of life for them. It is accepted as normal when a pet is kicked or physically abused for the smallest transgression. Life is cheap there and there is no welfare nor health care for the general population. They could not care less about a few cows and they are not keen to learn. It is almost as if they are proud of their ignorance and to teach this generation of Indonesians animal welfare would be a waste of time and resource for Australia. We can only hope that the next generation will be different but I, for one, will not be holding my breath. These are not people who are keen to progress and compassion for animals is not even on their radar.

For now all Australia can do is to keep our live cattle away from these people. They and Meat and Livestock Australia will give us verbal assurances but as soon as the furore dies down they will be back to their old ways and our cattle will suffer once again. When Joe Ludwig resumed live trade I realised how much like the Indonesians we are except we are worse. We know the difference between right and wrong and yet we send our cattle back to that hellhole with our eyes wide open. Action speaks louder than words and to the Indonesians we are a nation of talkers with no backbone. They are laughing loudly at us and will not take us seriously again in the foreseeable future. I have always been proud to be a compassionate Australian. Now I am ashamed that we are too weak to stand up to a nation whose values are not even on the same page as ours.

I call upon those who are in power and who have conscience to end the live trade immediately. Whilst we talk, our cattle die in agony. The Indonesians are light years away in animal welfare. We are not.

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