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### SUBMISSION RE ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS IN AUSTRALIA'S LIVE EXPORT MARKETS

1. We are concerned about the inherent cruelty of the live export trade. Our concerns include transportation, the extreme mistreatment and abuse of livestock after arrival at their destination, and the mistreatment, torture and slaughter of fully conscious animals in abattoirs in Indonesia and the Middle East.
2. We are very concerned that the Australian Government has resumed the live export trade with Indonesia without a firm requirement in place that animals will be stunned immediately prior to slaughter. It is completely unacceptable to us that cattle now being sent to or already in Indonesia are once again likely to be cruelly slaughtered while fully conscious as was so recently documented by Four Corners.
3. Given we are told that we cannot tell the Indonesian Government what to do and know that Indonesia has no enforceable animal welfare laws, it is hard to see how the welfare of the cattle that we are once again sending to Indonesia can be monitored in an effective and ongoing way. It is unlikely that occasional auditing will prevent the entrenched torture and abuse of these animals in the process of slaughter. As for industry monitoring and education in Indonesian abattoirs, we have seen what Meat Livestock Australia has failed to do, while taking millions of dollars from cattle producers and the Australian taxpayers.
4. The cruelty to sheep in particular, in the Middle East goes on as was revealed by footage released to the Australian Government and the public late last year. Despite a previous two year suspension of trade in the Middle East, Australians once again saw images of sheep with their feet bound with wire being thrown into car boots and driven away on roof racks in the heat of a middle eastern summer, as well as sheep being dragged on their backs into abattoirs and being slaughtered while fully conscious.

5. While the Government has asked the industry to address the situation of ongoing cruelty to livestock exported to the Middle East clearly nothing has changed given the evidence to the contrary. This above situation again highlights the problems inherent in asking an industry body with vested interests to monitor its own industry, as well as the impossibility of monitoring the welfare of Australian livestock in countries without enforceable animal welfare laws.
6. There are many deaths associated with the exposure of sheep, cattle and other livestock to long sea journeys with 180,000 Australian livestock having died over the past five years while being transported by ship to foreign ports. On one ship leaving Adelaide and Portland late last year 2572 sheep died in the 26 day journey to Kuwait and Bahrain. Most deaths were attributed to diarrhoea and heat stress because of the stifling Middle East summer. Other deaths which occur at sea are caused through crushing injuries and suffocation. The figures on the ongoing animal deaths at sea speak for themselves and are surely unacceptable.
7. Over the past twenty years in Australia abattoirs have been shut down and many jobs in the Australian meat processing industry have been lost as a direct result of the expansion of the live export trade. These are jobs that could be restored. New Zealand banned live export in 2007 and its export of processed meat is thriving, so clearly the industry could survive a reorientation towards the export of processed meat. Maximising profits out of the ongoing suffering of these animals is not sufficient reason for Australia to be a party to their torture and mistreatment, especially when with political and industry will there are other viable and profitable meat processing options which can be pursued.
8. Finally, it is very disappointing that the Australian Government has not considered the option of a phasing out or banning of the entire live export trade given the inherent and ongoing extreme cruelty to animals and the total failure of the industry itself to raise animal welfare standards. It is clearly inhumane and unethical to subject cattle, sheep and other livestock to the terrible stresses and abuse of this trade. It is inhumane to continue disregarding the welfare of these animals. These are living beings well capable of experiencing fear, pain and terror, not just units of protein.

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