

Submission to Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport

Animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets.

I am making this submission to express my disappointment that the live export industry is not required to adhere to the same standards for humane slaughter that the domestic market must adhere to.

I do not believe that the OIE guidelines are acceptable as they do not enforce stunning prior to slaughter causing unnecessary stress to the animal. Australia has no control over animal welfare standards in importing countries, which has been apparent on numerous occasions. Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) has claimed it is raising the standards in importing countries, yet the standards are still well below Australian standards. The importing country has no obligation to meet Australian requirements; therefore the industry can only provide suggestions and guidelines on suitable handling practices. There can be no guarantee that animals will be treated humanely once they leave Australia, as we have no control once the importing country takes ownership and there is no way that we as a country can enforce our standards upon them. The only way to ensure animal welfare standards meet the expectations of the Australian people is to process domestically and export chilled meat.

I do not believe that MLA has spent funds raised by producers for animal welfare effectively. They seem to have focused more on informing people that they are improving the standards rather than actually achieving anything. I believe that there should be further investigation into the MLA's use of funds for animal welfare.

In conclusion I support the phasing out of the live export industry and a transition to a chilled trade as I think this is the only way we can ensure that high animal welfare standards are adhered to. I believe that Australia should look to New Zealand for guidance as they have successfully phased live exports out.

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