

SUBMISSION OF CAROLYN WASSELL TO SENATE ENQUIRY INTO LIVE EXPORTS:

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The Australian livestock export trade has a long history of animal abuse and the recent 4 Corners program has comprehensively demonstrated why this trade should be banned.

Issues highlighted in the 4 Corners program that are relevant to your enquiry and should lead you to the same conclusion are:

- Animals cannot be transported on long overseas journeys without unnecessary suffering. There is sufficient recorded data on death and suffering during transport alone to warrant banning this trade.
- Lack of appropriate standards on animal welfare or penalties for cruelty or abuse at the destination countries means animals can and will be treated badly.
- Proven inability of the Australian Industry bodies (MLA, LiveCorp) to secure appropriate animal handling and killing standards or act on reports of animal cruelty. An obvious illustration is MLA's introduction and continuing support of the Mark 1 slaughter boxes in Indonesian abattoirs.

The problems with these are obvious and to quote Dr Bidda Jones of the RSPCA have "...entrenched a system of restraint and slaughtering that cause's significant suffering and would be illegal in Australia". The reality here is that far from influencing best animal handling practice our presence in Indonesia has entrenched bad practice.

In my opinion there is a sufficient conflict of interest for any reasonable person to conclude these bodies could be relied upon to take appropriate action to protect exported animals.

Additionally the industry contends that introduction of electronic tagging and the requirement for exporters to ensure abattoirs have appropriate animal welfare standards (the so called "supply chain assurances") will end the abuse. On any proper analysis this argument does not stand up and your enquiry should reject it:

- Whilst tagging will record where animals came from and where they went to it cannot show whether or not they suffered during the journey or how they were killed.

- Even if an exporter does obtain the necessary assurances, in the absence of any penalties for failure of an abattoir to observe them they are meaningless.

In my submission there is no justification for the continuation of this trade and I respectfully suggest that any rational person would come to the same conclusion.

I acknowledge that banning this trade will have some short term financial impacts on the current participants however this does not justify continuing the trade. Rather the enquiry should look at ways of assisting those who are impacted to transition to other markets (eg chilled/refrigerated exports, domestic market etc) or train for other employment.

Government industry support or retraining is a common feature of our economy and I believe in this instance would be more acceptable to the large number of ordinary Australians who want this trade banned.

Carolyn Wassell