

**To: The Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Committee Inquiry into  
Animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets.**

**From: Grant Brooks in Western Australia**

**Preamble:**

I write this submission to the inquiry as an active cattle producer who has been involved in the beef cattle industry since I was a kid in short pants. I have accumulated almost fifty years of hands on experience and knowledge that I believe qualifies me to be able to let all the committee members know what the real facts of this current debate with animal welfare and live exports are.

Now as with all debates, there is always two sides to the story but I can see that on this topic of animal welfare, everybody from the livestock producers right through the supply chain, to the RSPCA and their associates is in agreement that good animal welfare should be paramount and animal cruelty must not be allowed to happen under any circumstances.

From a livestock production perspective any undue stress on animals creates immediate economic loss in the form of any one or more of the circumstances listed below;

- Loss of weight
- Poor feed conversion
- Decreased glycogen levels in muscle creating dark cutting meat when slaughtered
- Decreased reproductive performance
- Illness
- Death

A person causing animal cruelty or another animal causing the same, such as a group of wild dogs attacking another species in a rangeland situation can cause at least one or more of the above to happen. Even Mother Nature herself can cause stress and extreme cruelty when a slow and painful death results from an animal failing to give birth to her offspring correctly.

The point is that human induced stress and or cruelty, unlike that displayed in the wild happens because someone has made one or more poor decisions in relation to the husbandry or welfare of that animal, whichever species it is.

Furthermore it is an obvious no brainer that anyone in their right mind would not want to lose financially through poor management of their animals.

Over time there have been some people who have been charged and convicted of crimes against animals from various species but their numbers are statistically relatively small in

comparison to both the size of the Australian population and the number of animals in this country. Our objective from an Australian perspective should be to achieve good animal welfare outcomes for all animals of all species in this country and those we send abroad, but not to prevent the lawful use of animals for the wellbeing and requirements of our nation's inhabitants.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **1.**

I write as a producer member of MLA and can only tell you the facts as presented to me by Government, industry bodies and what I have learnt over many years.

I understand that over time and I'm talking about a minimum of a decade that MLA, AQIS, ALEC, CCA and the Australian Government have all been working towards better outcomes for animal welfare in foreign markets through the Live Export Programme.

The Australian Live Export Corporation (Livecorp) has a strategic plan drafted in August 2010.

Strategy 3.2.1 particularly relates to animal welfare.

<http://www.livecorp.com.au/Public%20Files/News/Final%20LiveCorp%20Strategic%20Plan%202011%20-%202014%20v27%20clean.pdf>

I know that in 2010/2011 prior to the end of May that these organisations spent almost 3.5 Million Dollars on marketing and R&D to support established animal welfare programmes in the live export industry.

Prior to this Animal Health Australia was commissioned by Government to establish The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy for Standards and Guidelines from 22 industry model codes of practice to be incorporated into one national standard for livestock welfare.

The marketing and promotion of live export to Australia's producers by industry bodies has not been necessary as the market forces that have prevailed over the past 30 years that I have been supplying cattle to the live export trade have clearly shown that for the classes, breeds and types of cattle produced in the Northern areas of Australia this is by far the most viable mechanism for selling cattle. Before the live trade opened up for cattle, the slaughter industry in the North was declining at such a rapid rate for the very same reasons that it doesn't exist there today.

The cost of trucking cattle to Southern processing works today to receive lower prices does not help to encourage new or younger participants to this industry nor does it promote efficient energy use in Australia.

Our business chooses to supply feeder cattle to the live export industry because it is an efficient use of our natural rangeland resources.

Australia has the world's best practice electronic livestock identification system (NLIS) that has been operable since 2005. The mandatory use of NLIS provides a secure and rapid method of tracking any animal born in Australia, traded domestically or exported from this country.

This technology is a reliable method of tracking animals in importing countries up to the point of slaughter.

OIE member countries would be able to administer the protocols for correct reporting and adequate training of staff.

The OIE standards as set out in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2010) and accepted by 178 member countries, which incorporate all major importers of Australian cattle, should be mandated as the basis for World's Best Practice

The Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) has the required risk management strategies necessary up to the point of disembarkation where Australia's jurisdiction ceases.

It has recommendations for post disembarkation in sovereign nations. Please refer to page 10 of ASEL v2.3 of April 2011.

[http://www.daff.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1904365/australian-standardsv2.3.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1904365/australian-standardsv2.3.pdf)

Each consignment of cattle we supply to exporters is required to be accompanied by a signed Vendor Declaration of herd health. Please see example attached -

(Feeder Cattle To.PDF).

## 2.

The Centre for International Economics reported to Livecorp and MLA in June 2011 updating the report by Hassall and Associates of 2006 on the contribution of the live export industry to Australia. As a producer of cattle for the live export industry I find this report is extremely accurate and I agree with its contents.

[http://www.livecorp.com.au/R\\_D/The%20Contribution%20of%20the%20Aus%20live%20export%20Ind%20June%202011.pdf](http://www.livecorp.com.au/R_D/The%20Contribution%20of%20the%20Aus%20live%20export%20Ind%20June%202011.pdf)

This report clearly demonstrates many positives to Australia for the retention of the Live Animal Export trade.

The beef industry employs 121,000 workers directly with a flow on support industry multiple of 7 that means around 850,000 jobs associated with the cattle industry including 985 Million Dollars in wages payments to employees.

**3.**

Our business has been supplying cattle to live export markets for over 30 years. We have witnessed an ever increasing improvement in standards of welfare, facilities, land transport, shipping, regulation and accountability. These continue to improve as education and new technology is introduced to the industry. Australia has the highest standards of any nation exporting livestock in the world.

We have seen the events of the past six weeks created by a minority of people who have not upheld these high standards of animal welfare, facilities and accountability. This inquiry and the subsequent recommendations from it will reinforce our high standards and help to ensure that others conform to these standards in order to protect the future of the live export industry.

The decision making process has broken down somewhat and has allowed emotion and trial by media to run rife along with many groups who have various agendas portraying their points of view rather than what is fact.

I was pleased to see that this committee was already in consultation with Mr. David Palmer the former CEO of MLA prior to the media footage that has so badly damaged the cattle industry in general, not just the live trade.

I have enclosed the Hansard transcript of your interview with Mr. Palmer for all to see so that people can be aware that this committee has a good understanding of the issues raised by this inquiry.

I have also included Extracts from Hansard of the West Australian State Parliament supporting the live export industry which are attached as PDF.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the terms of reference to this inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Grant Brooks