

Submission for Senate Enquiry into Animal Welfare Standards in the Australian live export markets

My family have been operating in the Northern Territory for over 50 years. We now have the third generation working on cattle stations in the NT. And we are now all severely affected by the stupid and disastrous consequences of the live export trade suspension.

This is potentially going to be worse than the beef crash of 1974 as there is seriously no indication that our Terms of Trade are going to be anywhere near what they were 6 months ago. The market will open at a "snail's pace," it will be imposed with onerous regulations on our exporters, and the relationships with our Indonesian counterparts has taken a serious diplomatic hit, from which it may not recover.

Minister Ludwig has been nothing other than incompetent. He did not understand the trade before "his" shut down and is not interested in understanding the situation post "his" shutdown. And he will prove to be incompetent again in getting the trade operating efficiently again.

The environment will suffer due to overstocking. Livestock will suffer due lack of feed. Employees and families are suffering due to financial stresses. Associated businesses are suffering financial stresses. Aboriginal employees we have will need to be laid off. Aboriginal businesses will be financially stressed. Generally the aboriginal situation will be disastrous as these employees go back into the welfare systems in very ordinary situations.

Most importantly – whilst Australia is not in Indonesia the Animal Cruelty up there will be worse. Activists and ignorant politicians have achieved a "net nothing" and should be answerable for this.

In responding to the Terms of Reference to the Senate Enquiry;

1. Investigate and report into the role and effectiveness of Government, Meat and Livestock Australia, Livecorp and relevant industry bodies in improving animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets, including:

This investigation must happen, but immediate focus needs to be on redeveloping a viable and sustainable Indonesian live trade

a) The level, nature and effectiveness of expenditure and efforts to promote or improve animal welfare standards with respect to all Australian live export market countries;

Whatever the level (of 3 points below) it will be more than any other country in the world. This has to be acknowledged. And yes, we need to do more.

i) expenditure and efforts on marketing and promoting live export to Australian producers;

ii) ongoing monitoring of the subscription to, and practice of, animal welfare standards in all live export market countries;

iii) actions to improve animal welfare outcomes in all other live export market countries and the evidence base for these actions.

b) The extent of knowledge of animal welfare practices in Australia's live export markets including:

Whatever the extent (of 2 points below) it will be more than any other country in the world. This has to be acknowledged. And yes, we need to do more.

i) formal and informal monitoring and reporting structures;

ii) formal and informal processes for reporting and addressing poor animal welfare practices.

2. Investigate and report on the domestic economic impact of the live export trade within Australia including:

Ensure that this investigation is all encompassing. The effect of a prolonged shutdown will go right through rural and agricultural Australia.

a) Impact on regional and remote employment especially in northern Australia;

b) Impact and role of the industry on local livestock production and prices;

c) Impact on the processing of live stock within Australia.

3. Other related matters.

Economic impact of severe land de-valuation will be massive as banks Endeavour to retrieve money from good operators and/or impair and write off loans and send people bankrupt.

The reporting date is 25 August 2011.

Related Private Senators' Bills

On 23 June 2011 the Senate jointly referred the Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011 [No.2] and the Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2] for inquiry and report by 16 August 2011.

This is profoundly ignorant and beyond contemplation! We met these people in Canberra and they simply don't care about consequences.

David Warriner