

**Tom Toren** *BSc (Hons), MIE Aust, CPEng*  
*Consulting Engineer (retired)*

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Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Committee members,

Re: Exports of live animals for slaughter

My family, our circle of friends and I are deeply disappointed with what appears to have been complete ineffectiveness and/or total neglect of successive governments, Meat & Livestock Australia, Livecorp and other relevant industry bodies in ensuring animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets.

We believe that by supplying inappropriate Australian produced equipment and training to overseas abattoirs, all Australians were made complicit, directly and indirectly, in the atrocious treatment of our Australian cattle and sheep, to whom we owe our duty of care, even though they are voiceless. Fortunately, Australian voters are not voiceless.

By inappropriate Australian equipment, I mean the restraining boxes that are used in conjunction with slippery wet slopes, which make the animal fall on its side and struggle to get up, enabling the men to gradually kill it with multiple cuts to its throat ... a slow and torturous death.

The human brain has difficulties with visualizing large numbers, e.g. the suffering of 900,000 animals per annum. However, please spare a thought for the individual cow's fear and agony, preceding the above-mentioned torture, as she hears the cries and struggle of the cows that went before her and smells their blood! In the 'Four Corners' documentary film they showed the last cow in a group of five cows, that was trembling throughout her whole body waiting for her execution. I believe that such fear of death is worse than the actual death that follows. I can only compare this to the fear and suffering in the human concentration camps of last century.

Considering the fact that Meat & Livestock Australia, Livecorp and other relevant industry bodies were completely impotent in providing the appropriate equipment and training to the personnel of overseas abattoirs over a period of about ten years, it would be naive to the extreme to expect them to be able to perform any miracles in this regard in the foreseeable future. In his current trip to Indonesia, the Agriculture Minister already conceded that stunning would not be used by all Indonesian abattoirs.

Hence, the only logical conclusion is that all live exports ought to be ended immediately and permanently to all countries that refuse to use stunning equipment. No compromises are acceptable to Australians. New Zealand did the only right thing possible in this situation by stopping live exports in 2003. Let us learn something from the New Zealanders and finally do the right thing, so as not to be complicit in any more cruelty. As I was writing this letter and during the brief time that you will be reading it, many more innocent animals are being brutalized. An average of 1,373 animals are brutalized every day in Indonesia alone.

We are guilty, and our guilt is growing with every day that the appropriate decision to stop live exports is delayed! Please, I beg you ... do the right thing! If the farmers have to be compensated in some way, so be it. Australia must absolutely accept full responsibility not only for our wrong actions but also, as a nation, for the lack of action that has gone on for so many years.

Yours sincerely,

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