

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT****INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS IN AUSTRALIA'S LIVE EXPORT MARKETS**

I have been hesitant to make a submission to this inquiry as the Terms of Reference can easily be read as pre-determining an outcome to exonerate industry interests from any culpability in aiding and abetting animal cruelty by knowingly providing material support either directly or indirectly in the form of live animals to abhorrent conditions of slaughter.

However, I wish to address 1(b) of your Terms of Reference with reference to the Four Corners 'Bloody Business' viewed 30.5.11 and the report by Caple, McGown, Gregory and Cusack 'Independent study into animal welfare conditions for cattle in Indonesia from point of arrival from Australia to slaughter 2009-10', with specific reference to those sections dealing with slaughter.

The independent report was a result of visiting 11/750 reported abattoirs in Indonesia over the period 1-9 March 2010. An undisclosed number of those visits were pre-arranged. The investigative team witnessed the slaughter of 29 animals distributed over an undisclosed number of the 11 abattoirs visited. The findings were that it took, on average, 4 cuts to sever the animal's throat and an animal could expect to thrash its head 3.5 times. No range in cuts or thrashings were given albeit one incident was cited, "At an abattoir in Sumatra the neck was struck with a knife using a hard impact to sever the skin above the larynx and then up to 18 cuts were made to sever the neck and both arteries." Kelly Burke's article 'Meat industry knew of Indonesian cruelty last year,' SMH 25-26 June 2011 page 1 provides additional quotes from that report including reference to the impediment of bleeding in 10% of cattle. The report also raised concerns about the 'visual stimulation' for animals awaiting slaughter. (Who would ever forget the haunting image of the fear and terror of that last trembling animal in an Indonesian abattoir, as shown in 'Bloody Business', having being 'visually stimulated' by the slaughter and dismembering of those preceding it?) The cited evidence of cruelties went beyond any justification on the grounds of religious and cultural differences and bore no relationship to halal methods of slaughter.

The evidence in 'Bloody Business' merely confirmed, in part, what was in the alleged independent report. Furthermore, its audience was to people who were well skilled in reading and deconstructing its content to refute the report's conclusions when applied to the prevailing conditions of slaughter. The evidence of animal welfare issues in it makes it impossible for Meat and Livestock Australia and Livecorp to argue that they did not know of the banal evilness of those conditions. It is also important that this was only representing 11 of the reported 750 abattoirs spread throughout Indonesia.

Since the airing of 'Bloody Business' I have been appalled at the crisis management statements on the website for MLA in particular, which would suggest that they were 'unaware' of the extent of animal cruelties in Indonesian abattoirs and were as disturbed by this evidence as was the rest of the viewing public. Yet this same industry group has been involved in the Indonesian trade for years and networks, be they formal or informal would be well aware of these cruelties over that time. If they were not so then there would be no reason as to why MLA and Livecorp would be claiming that they have been making 'improvements' over the last 10 years plus. It is incumbent upon MLA to produce a Charter of Accounts for its expenditure on 'improvements over the years' to clearly identify what areas it chose to avoid. That money trail would identify, by their failure to act or omission to act

on the evidence of cruelties, be it from formal or informal networks and reporting systems, the decision-makers involved to divert expenditures elsewhere.

At the most basic, why didn't improvements in slaughtering conditions address the following:

1. Animals awaiting slaughter being kept out of sight of the slaughter and dismembering of any preceding animal
2. Prohibiting the cutting of tendons to reduce mobility
3. Prohibiting hosing of an animal
4. Prohibiting gouging of the eyes and/or interference with the nose
5. Any interference with the genitalia or orifice
6. Prohibiting any breaking of a tail bone to control an animal
7. Prohibiting whipping of an animal or jabbing with unnecessary force an animal with any rod, bar, bamboo or equivalent
8. Why weren't sharp halal knives insisted upon
9. Why wasn't an halal knife sharpened after each slaughter
10. Why weren't animal welfare persons trained to address the aforementioned but, as part of a crisis management strategy MLA only now see fit to train only 30?
11. Why didn't MLA seek out the services of say, retired Australian slaughtermen to help train those on the slaughter floors
12. Why, given early evidence that the restraining boxes were causing undue stress, did MLA continue to install them, even with a modified design, without seeking expert advice on alternative designs which would provide for an animal to be in a standing position prior to having its throat severed?

It is evident that MLA's failure to act or omission to act on the evidence of animal cruelties, failed the industry as a whole. It is also clearly evident that the industry cannot be left to self-regulate and an export ban is the appropriate course of action. It is not appropriate to take the position that we have to move forward and introduce a regulatory framework because the proposed regulatory framework falls short at that point where the most abhorrent practices have been tolerated.

### 3. Other Related Matters

The government has lifted the ban on live exports to Indonesia since the announcement of this inquiry. It has also introduced a regulatory framework of transparency, tracking and auditing to ensure that IOE standards are met in the supply chain excluding slaughter. Without the latter being addressed then the regulatory framework, in large part becomes an exercise in smoke and mirrors.

If the government lacks the moral fortitude and forthrightness to prepare for a restructuring of the industry over the next say three years (Reference Live Animal Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011) then I would ask the Committee to give due consideration to the following in relation to slaughter in Indonesia: (and elsewhere)

1. Animals are to be electronically tagged from farm to abattoirs. The tag is to be positioned on the animal so as to avoid it being cut out/off. Each animal is to be physically identified by its tag by an independently employed RSPCA or Animals Australia person at the point of slaughter.

2. The animal is to be stunned into unconsciousness prior to its throat being cut. Any opposition to stunning on the grounds that the animals is dead can be readily undone with the use of a stethoscope to be supplied to each abattoir.
3. The throat is to be slit across the artery with one slice so as to promote instant bleed
4. Independent animal welfare persons (2) are to be employed at each abattoir. These people are responsible for the ongoing certification of each abattoirs. They need to be rotated between abattoirs so as to avoid being compromised in their responsibilities at any one abattoirs. These people cannot be employed by any corporation or have any prior affiliation with any industry groups so as to maximise their independence.
5. Abattoirs are to be certified according to Australian slaughtering conditions and accept only those cattle from Australian certified feed lots. That certification has to meet standards jointly laid down by the Australian government and animal welfare groups such as the RSPCA and Animals Australia or equivalent. Those standards, at a minimum are to adhere to IOE on animal health.
6. Certification of an abattoir is to be immediately withdrawn if those conditions lapse and any contractual obligations are null and void. Court proceedings are to begin immediately against the offending party.
7. Abattoirs are to be randomly inspected by independent persons from animal welfare at least one a week. Their report(s) to an independent certification body will provide a longitudinal profile to determine whether or not an abattoir can continue to accept Australian cattle
8. Future abattoirs taking Australian live exported cattle are to be jointly owned by Australia and Indonesian investment. The operations of those abattoirs are to be done jointly by Australian and Indonesian directorship and management and floor staff so as to maintain and enforce standards for certification
9. Existing abattoirs are to be supervised in their operations by Australian staff who are rotated from the Australian mainland so as not to compromise their responsibilities in adhering to prescribed standards of humane slaughtering.
10. Directors of any company engaging in the live export trade, found to be thwarting or violating conditions relating to the humane treatment of animals must resign from the board and be prohibited from holding a directorship on the board of any business registered in Australia
11. The 'audit' as in the proposed regulatory framework needs to address the following questions:
  - I) Who is doing the audit on what,
  - II) When and where is it to be done and how often
  - III) To whom is it accountable and to what standards set by whom
  - IV) What are the penalties if these 'standards' are not adhered to
  - V) Who audits the auditor
  - VI) When and in what form is the audit made public
  - VII) What feedback loop exists for the result of such an audit
12. And finally, recognition for international pressure to be brought to bear on Indonesia as a test case by the international community to address animal welfare issues.

Patricia Warren

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