

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

12 July 2011

Dear Committee members

Submission: Animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets

Australia has exported live animals for many years and it has been monitored by the export industry. The ABC Four Corners program that shocked a nation demonstrated what happens when profit is put before animal welfare and the live export industry controls the processes.

In Australia we have high standards of livestock treatment. There are processes in place to protect our animals and prosecute offenders. As soon as we export live animals to other countries we lose that control and our animals suffer whatever conditions are normal in the country where they land. That treatment, in many cases, would be a prosecutable offence if it had happened in Australia. I've seen videos of live sheep being put into car boots.

I can see no humane way to export animals for slaughter. Putting thousands of sheep or cattle (land animals) onto a ship where a certain amount die and those deaths are considered acceptable or normal is not humane. The conditions on the ship are not acceptable or humane. The time it takes for the ships to travel to their destination causes extended periods of stress and suffering to all the animals.

Australia is a proud country. I have been proud of my country and proud to be an Australian. I was even prouder when we stopped live exports to Indonesia based on the footage we saw of their treatment in Indonesia. I was however, ASHAMED of our country when live exports resumed when NO MATERIAL CHANGES WERE MADE.

The international standards that are to be adhered to, do not require stunning of animals. There are no guarantees of animal welfare and the industry is to monitor the processes. We've already seen what happens when the industry monitors the processes. That is no material difference from what caused the horrific images.

The live export industry is based on inhumane treatment of animals. To be profitable it has to be inhumane. Being humane is too expensive. The industry, almost by definition, does the least it has to do so it can maximise profits – we have seen the results. The industry cannot realistically control what happens to our animals in other countries and this causes further abuses to our animals.

I call on the committee to put animal welfare before profits and to follow the moral stand taken by New Zealand and BAN LIVE EXPORTS on the grounds that they cannot be done humanely.

Yours faithfully

Neale Blackwood