

Dear Senate Inquiry

I ask that the Government reinstate the ban of live trade to Indonesia to prevent continued inhumane treatment of Australian cattle in Indonesia.

Support the passage of the Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011 [No.2] and the Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2] which seek an end date for all live animal exports within 3 years.

In the interim years, I recommend that the Australian Government together with industry implement the highest standards of animal welfare, which are confirmed to go beyond those set by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

World leading expert in animal behaviour, Professor Temple Grandin, has reported that research agrees that throat-cutting without stunning does not induce instantaneous unconsciousness. Ritual slaughter remains to submit animals to some level of cruelty and is inhumane. **If the government maintains live cattle export, they must include a guarantee that slaughter without stunning (known in most cases as ritual (halal or kosher) slaughter) will *not* occur.**

The recent concern about live export, which is a Federal animal welfare responsibility, highlights the need for a national agency to address animal welfare issues. In light of the recent situation of the treatment of Australian cattle exported to Indonesia, and the recent reporting of the lack of credible research into slaughter of such cattle in Indonesia, it is clear that Australia needs a Non-Departmental Public Body to review and recommend advice on animal welfare matters. **I Recommend the establishment of an *Australian Animal Welfare Council* to provide accurate independent advice on animal welfare matters.**

The case for an Australian Animal Welfare Council

Recent events involving the welfare of Australian cattle in Indonesia, and the public's overwhelming response and concern over this issue have brought animal welfare to the forefront of decision making. In light of this situation, and the recent reporting of the lack of credible research into slaughter of Australian cattle in Indonesia, it is clear that Australia needs a Non-Departmental Public Body to provide accurate independent advice on animal welfare matters. Such a body was very effective in the United Kingdom in the form of the Farm Animal Welfare Council, until recent government cuts necessitated a down-regulation of its role. It was able to present an informed opinion that was independent of industry and animal advocacy interests on the key animal welfare issues of the day. In Australia the livestock industries are of much greater relative importance than in the UK and such a body is essential to inform government, industry and the public on animal welfare matters. It would consult widely and receive written and verbal information from interested parties, before issuing reports to government for consideration. State governments already have the Animal Welfare Advisory Committees, which investigate regional issues, but the recent concern about live export, which is a federal animal welfare responsibility, highlights the need for a national agency to address animal welfare issues. In addition, the investigations by several state AWACs into similar animal welfare issues is wasteful of experts' time and taxpayers' money.

The membership of an Australian Animal Welfare Council should include a team of experts with a knowledge and experience of animal welfare science and practice, veterinary medicine, livestock production, enforcement, retailing and consumer interests and a lay person. It is recommended that the Council would focus on farm animals, but would have the power to investigate other animal uses when the need arises, for example laboratory animals.

The Council would aim to bring about effective and rational improvement in animal welfare through eliminating avoidable suffering, implementation of new knowledge about animal responses to management practices and reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of

alternatives to current practices. Specific recommendations on changes in legislation would be an essential part of the Council's function.

The Council would bring together the activities of a number of disparate government and other bodies that have animal welfare as a key component of their activities, The Live Export Standards Advisory Group, The state Animal Welfare Advisory Committees, The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy, the NHMRC Animal Welfare Committee, the National Animal Welfare RD&E Strategy. The advantages in terms of independence, efficiency and clarity of operation are significant. The Council would also provide a more effective interface with relevant bodies overseas, such as the Office Internationale des Épizooties (OIE, World Animal Health Organisation) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The Council would include Standing Committees for the major animal groupings that are tasked with keeping a watching brief on topical welfare threats to industry and identify experts able to respond rapidly to emerging threats. Such a group would have anticipated the threat to the northern cattle live export trade, for example, or the sheep trade to the Middle East.

**Thank you
Mr Bremner**