

**Author: Tania Cummings,
Not an “animal rights activist” but an Animal Welfare Advocate
Not a “tree-hugging mung bean eating hippie” but a decent, humane, middle aged
lady with a social conscience and abhorrence of animal cruelty.**

SUBMISSION

Independent Review into Livestock Export Trade Addressing Terms of Reference (a) to (g)

a) the facilities, treatment, handling and slaughter of livestock, exported from Australia, in the importing country for consistency with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recommendations and standards set out in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code 2010 published by the World Organisation for Animal Health and other relevant standards.

The OIE standards are below Australian standards because they do not require pre-slaughter stunning and the slaughter of an animal in the upright position. Thus we see the continued hacking to death of animals at the roadside in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries during the mediocrally superstitious “festival of sacrifice” and the roping and felling of cattle in Indonesian backstreet slaughterhouses prior to the sawing off of their heads with blunt knives whilst they are fully conscious, writhing and bellowing in agony. That our government, supposedly representative of a Western developed nation, not only permits but condones this, is a disgrace to humanity.

If live exports are to continue, whether for a period of three years during phase-out if Senator Wilkie’s bill is passed or, God forbid, for longer, then Australia should demand that at least its livestock, be they cattle sheep or goats, are slaughtered in an upright position in an Australian abattoir standard restraint box without roping and tripping and following pre-stunning, rendering them unconscious to pain and the terror that accompanies the natural fight for life that the knowledge of what is occurring engenders. The abject terror that was evident in the black steer watching the prolonged slaughter and dismemberment of its companions, hearing their agonised shrieks and smelling the blood and fear pheromones, is something that many people viewing the Four Corners “A Bloody Business” documentary have said they have difficulty erasing from their minds and will carry with them forever.



Last in line, this steer trembled from head to foot as he watched one after another of his companions butchered alive while he waited his turn.

Modern day Australia, with its Anglo-Saxon roots and Catholic/Anglican heritage, should be seriously questioning the appropriateness, for the sake of “respect” of another religion, of permitting the barbaric slaughter conditions its livestock faces in the importing countries, where slaughter of fully conscious animals on their sides so that they are facing east is mandated.

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. 1

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

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Where is our self-respect in condoning this barbarity? It seems to me to be political correctness and pandering gone out of control, when we lower our own standards of decency and religious sensibility to appease the sentiments of those nations whose standards are still buried in the sixth century.

With particular reference to the Four Corners programme and the claims that the abattoirs filmed were not representative of the over 700 abattoirs operating in Indonesia, I think it is self-evident from the nonchalance exhibited by the workers there as they tortured and mutilated our cattle, taking some degree of pleasure in their ritual of thrashing, hosing, tail-breaking and eye-gouging, all in the presence of Westerners with a video camera in hand, that indifference toward another sentient being is the cultural norm. The MLA have known about this for several years and done nothing but cover it up and keep it out of sight of those they knew would be outraged, the Australian taxpayer who helped to fund their activities. Successive government ministers have followed the “out of sight out of mind” lead of the MLA and Livecorp and even when Senator Ludwig was made aware, long before the Four Corners documentary was shown, he chose to do nothing. This is to his discredit and shame.



This animal is alive and fully aware that he about to be killed. The RSPCA chief scientist counted from 11 to 33 sawing strokes of the necks of cattle during slaughter. One steer got up and ran towards Lyn White (Animals Australia) with its throat slit wide open.

b) The adequacy of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) as they apply to the preparation and export of all livestock with consideration of responsibilities for compliance and enforcement of the ASEL

According to information provided by the RSPCA, the ASEL takes a “whole of chain approach”, covering all aspects of the livestock export trade from planning through to on-board management, but many sections of the Standards lie outside the jurisdictional powers of the Australian government and could only be enforced under State and Territory legislation. However, no Australian State or Territory government has yet legislated to recognise the ASEL and as a result large sections of it are effectively unenforceable.

It is a ridiculous position, to have standards that are neither policed nor enforced. The government should attend to the business of legislating on these standards at federal level to create a national regulatory framework.

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c) the types of livestock suitable (weight, age, body condition, breeds) for export as feeder or slaughter animals

I do not believe that any livestock are suitable as export for feeder or slaughter purposes.

The RSPCA states that there is scientific evidence to show that exporting animals live compromises their welfare and that goats, deer, wild camels and all pregnant animals are at increased risk when subjected to the stressors inherent in live export.

The conditions on board the transporting vessels have been hotly contested by both sides of the debate. The pro live export lobby would have us believe that these are no less than floating five star bovine hotels. Those stockman and veterinarians who have accompanied what the contra live export lobby call the “ships of death” and have been brave enough to speak out against the cramped and unsanitary conditions have highlighted the mortality rates and degree of stress the animals endure.

The ABC Rural Website of June 8 2011 (Rural Report for Gippsland and South-east New South Wales by Cath McAloon and Keva Gocher) refers to a NSW south coast based former live-trade worker, a farm manager and experienced stockman, who has left the industry after three years of accompanying dairy cattle to the Middle east and China. Terry Comar was a stockman responsible for the welfare of the cattle on month-long voyages which also carried beef cattle and sheep. After thirteen such voyages he has given up his job, demoralized by the inhumane treatment of the livestock. The staffing levels were inadequate on the voyages, he stated. Whereas the required ratio is one stockman to 1500 cattle, he often found that he was the only stockman on board. He cites widespread abuse by untrained workers in all the Middle Eastern destinations and says that cruelty is rife. He became frustrated because the workers in the destination countries are casuals, who rotate between being truck-drivers, untrained electricians and stockmen. He would try to teach them some humane handling methods but next day he would be faced with a fresh team of untrained workers, back to square one. The workers were under pressure to deal with the cattle quickly and rushed the cattle. Afraid of their size, they would come prepared with metal rods and lumps of wood to try to beat the cattle into submission, hitting them on the spines and the legs. He reports visiting an abattoir in Kuwait and seeing exactly similar scenes to the ones filmed in Indonesia by Four Corners. He is quoted as saying “I am traumatised, demoralised by the stuff you see and the stuff you do for the industry, and you think there is going to be an improvement on it, but there never is.”

Below is a picture of Terry Coman holding his photos showing conditions onboard ships of Australian dairy cattle destined for Middle East countries: Credit: taken by Keva Gocher and featured in the report the link to which is below. Photos show a man standing in what appears to be ankle deep manure and cattle lying in supposedly foetid water.

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Terry Coman holding his photos showing conditions onboard ships of Australian dairy cattle destined for Middle East countries. (Photo credit: Keva Gocher)

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/regions/content/201106/3238420.htm>

The mortality rates are quoted by MLA as being in single figure percentages. Any mortality rate is to be deplored, and whilst they might trumpet this as being low, when one considers the millions of animals exported over the period this equates to thousands animals that have died in the most deplorable, unsanitary and stressful conditions imaginable. In 2003, 5600 sheep died on the Como Express which was carrying 50,000 sheep to Saudi Arabia. Convicts were carried to Australia over 200 years ago in these sorts of conditions. That in 2011 our government and the industry think it is acceptable to do this to living, breathing, feeling animals who can suffer from fear, disease and hunger is shameful.

In the outrage that resulted from the Four Corners images of the torture and barbaric slaughter methods in Indonesia, the concerns about conditions aboard the voyages these animals have to endure prior to reaching their destinations have been overshadowed. Yet despite advocacy groups such as the RSPCA, Animals Australia, WSPA, Voiceless and others condemning them for many years, nothing has been done. Terry Coman witnessed it first hand and his testimony should be included and considered carefully.

Jenny Hume is a NSW wheat and livestock producer who has been involved in abattoir advocacy, the Animal Liberation advocacy group and assisting in the drafting of the ACT Animal Welfare Act. During the 1980s she advised various government committees on animal welfare issues and trained veterinary officers for the Federal Department of Primary Industry. She is a credible advocate for the cessation of live export. She quotes several examples of voyages going horribly wrong on her website here:

<http://webdiary.com.au/cms/?q=node/1367/print>

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1980 Ship: Farid Fares – abandoned on fire 160km off the SA coast; 40,605 sheep died

1996 Ship: Uniceb – abandoned on fire off coast of Africa; 67,488 sheep died

1999 Ship: Kalymnian Express – 300 cattle died or were put down after ship met a cyclone

2003 Ship: Como Express – 5,581 sheep died after three months at sea due to being denied entry to Saudia Arabia and the Australian government frantically searching for an alternative destination.

Jenny Hume notes that the industry likes to talk about mortality in terms of percentages rather than actual figures, because 1.1% sounds so much better than 322,222 individual sheep that suffered and died horribly on voyage. Causes of death are suffocation (due to cramped conditions and trampling, heat exhaustion, starvation and injury. She notes that the industry and government prefer to use neutral euphemisms that sanitise the reality, such as ventilation failure in place of suffocation, shy feeding syndrome instead of starvation and inanition instead of heat exhaustion. This is akin to the killing of laboratory animals once they have outlived their use being preciously termed “sacrifice” instead of euthanasia.

Jenny Hume writes that the Keniry Inquiry reviewed the live export trade in 2004 following the Como Express incident, and noted that the trade was inherently “risky” for the animals. This was **twenty years** after the 1985 Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare report entitled “The Export of Live Sheep from Australia” which concluded that **there was enough evidence to stop the trade**: QUOTE:

“If a decision were to be made on the future of the trade purely on animal welfare grounds, there is enough evidence to stop the trade. The trade is in many respects, inimical to good animal welfare and it is not in the interests for the animal to be transported to the Middle East for slaughter.” UNQUOTE

The 1985 report recommended the trade be phased out and replaced with the chilled meat trade. So we have a report in 1985 recommending that live exports be phased out, an inquiry in 2004 stating the trade is “risky”, documented lists of voyages ending in disaster, personal witness accounts and video footage of sheep being brutalised in the Middle East sufficient for Prime Minister John Howard to suspend the trade to Egypt in 2006 and now video footage from Indonesia documenting heinous cruelty to cattle in abattoirs resulting in a temporary suspension, and still the present day government and its Liberal opposition are condoning and intending the continuation of this trade into perpetuity. One definition of insanity goes like this: Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Are our leaders insane? The public certainly aren’t because they are calling for change - in very large numbers in a very short space of time – over 160,000 signatures to an online GetUp petition in three days, the biggest and fastest response to any petition in GetUp’s history, with the figures now topping 300,000.

Jenny Hume’s web diary, written in 2006, notes that while live exports to the major Muslim markets in 2005 totalled \$557 million according to DAFF, the chilled meat trade to major Muslim markets was more than half as much, \$310 million. With Australian Halal accredited meat works, which she says have been operating “for decades” providing the chilled meat trade, the

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argument that the live export trade should continue for religious reasons is spurious. New Zealand ceased live export of animals for meat in 2003 and its chilled meat export market to Muslim countries is thriving, which completely obliterates any argument that lack of refrigeration facilities is a problem. Since Jenny Hume wrote this, Australia’s exports of chilled beef have overtaken the live export trade in value terms (refer Page 11).

The refrigeration argument is currently being used in the case of Indonesia. I would suggest, since we are able to hand over \$500 million of taxpayers money to finance the building of Islamic schools, which only serve to promote the types of cultural attitudes that deny animal welfare concerns, let us specify as a condition of this aid that a certain proportion of that funding be used for refrigerators as well as, if required, the necessary electrical infrastructure to support them.

In addressing this term of reference, because of all the foregoing, I maintain there are no types of livestock suitable for export as feeder or slaughter animals.

e) the extent of monitoring required for each export consignment of feeder or slaughter livestock, in a manner that ensures accurate and transparent reporting to the Australian Government of the condition of the livestock from departure from Australia up to and including the point of slaughter in the country of destination.

What is required is a very high level of **independent** monitoring and auditing by an external body **totally unrelated to the livestock industry** or its peak body the MLA and **independent of government**. The funding for this should be partly from government (i.e. taxpayers) and partly from the price paid for export licences by the exporter. There should be an additional tax, similar to stamp duty, attached to each export licence as a percentage of the value of that particular export. So the more head/more value of livestock a farmer or corporation exports, the higher the tax paid. This will ensure a user pays system and the bigger and hence more profitable the exporter, the higher proportion they pay to the total cost of the audit/monitoring for that entire shipload and the less proportion would be funded by the public taxpayer. Such an independent auditing body might be SGS Australia.

This requirement should be in place to ensure that mandatory stunning prior to slaughter without provocation or mis-handling of any animal is carried out for each and every animal. An AQIS veterinarian, a stockman and an independent auditor should be present at each accredited abattoir at all times that Australian cattle are being slaughtered. Only approved, accredited abattoirs should be employed. The importing country should have to apply for, pay for and be granted Australian accreditation before even one head of livestock passes through its doors. The accreditation process should be rigorous and should involve the requirement for stun boxes to Australian standards providing for upright pre-slaughter stunning and Australian standard stunning devices as well as training in their use. This of course will be very expensive for the importing country and the livestock industry to the extent that they will be relieved once live exports are phased out and they can supply their livestock to Australian abattoirs for the chilled meat export industry for lower overheads and provide jobs for Australians in rural areas.

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With regard to transport, there should be regulated strict number of livestock/space ratios independently audited prior to each voyage departure and upon arrival the mortality rate independently verified and reported to AQIS by an Australian independent auditor permanently stationed in the importing country, again funded by the Australian taxpayer and the “stamp-duty” on the export licence. In all countries to which Australia exports live cattle, corruption is rife and favours of officials are easily bought, which is why Australian auditors are required. This will also become a financial burden and disincentive to the live animal exporters and promote the desire for conversion to chilled meat exports. The continued partial funding by public taxes is necessary to ensure that the Australian public continues to be a stakeholder in this trade and is entitled to a voice.

The permanent identification of animals from farm to post-slaughter is required and a fully audited report prepared by the attending veterinarian witnessed by the attending stockman of the condition of each animal at point of export, point of import and reason for death (demise *en route* or slaughter) recorded and reported to AQIS.

Another professional associated with the live export industry has courageously spoken out against it. The National Affairs section of The Australian newspaper reported on July 13 that a Brisbane-based veterinarian, Dr Lloyd Reeve-Johnson, has expressed concern that government officials appointed to oversee the live export industry have continually failed to address conflicts of interest within the system. He describes the live export industry as “fundamentally flawed” because livestock companies have been allowed to be self-policing. He advocates that exporters should not directly employ or pay the officials providing so-called independent advice on animal welfare standards.

Dr Reeve-Johnson stated that he compiled an end of journey report for AQIS on his second voyage and because more than 2% of goats had died on board, in accordance with protocol, he notified AQIS. He claims the livestock company involved told him to not record the additional numbers that died during unloading but he refused to alter his report and declared 18 goat mortalities. The livestock exporter declared that only 11 had died. Dr Reeve-Johnson believes that so long as exporters employ independent auditors or vets charged with verifying animal welfare standards, the industry is at risk of conflicts of interest of this nature and that the exporters are not shouldering the responsibility inherent in self-regulation.

Dr Reeve-Johnson has spent the last three years trying to raise the issue in AQIS and wrote to former DAFF Minister Tony Burke warning him of the dangers of this conflict of interest. It is evident that his concerns have fallen on deaf ears and this is another example of the government’s failure to show any interest in mending this broken and bloody trade. MLA, Livecorp and the major livestock corporations have been allowed far too much power and regulatory oversight of this trade and, it would appear, have collectively intimidated successive governments into silence and complicity.

Below is a link to this report: “Vet worried about “dodgy” inspections of live exports”

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<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/vet-worried-about-dodgy-inspections-of-live-exports/story-fn59niix-1226093400993>

Whilst current DAFF Minister Ludwig defends his new supply chain process, it once again amounts to the same sort of self-regulation that has resulted in the deaths on voyages and inappropriate slaughter procedures that are constantly referred to by the RSPCA and other peak animal welfare bodies such as Animals Australia. Minister Ludwig has somewhat illogically stated that it would be “totally inappropriate” if taxpayers rather than exporters had to pay for the independent auditors. Yet the Australian taxpayers were the ones that funded the Mark 1 restraint boxes used in the Indonesian abattoirs about which there has been so much public outrage and which Professor Temple Grandin, world expert on cattle management and slaughter, has condemned as “atrocious”! This is a completely disingenuous and illogical position for the Minister to take. Minister Ludwig is quoted as saying that it is important to understand that the audit and verification process will not be conducted by the industry or its employees. Maybe not – but they are the ones that will select those auditors and pay them! The emperor may have new clothes, but we, the public can see right through them.

f) the risk management strategies necessary to address the welfare of animals from departure from Australia, up to and including the point of slaughter in the country of destination.

There are risks to animal welfare at each stage of the transport process from loading, shipping, unloading, at the feedlot and finally at slaughter. Animals are at risk of being trampled during loading and unloading as they run up or down the ramps. On board the vessels the conditions are so cramped that death by crushing is a frequent occurrence. I have heard reports that whilst on board the transport vessels, by the end of the journey, animals are standing up to their hocks or knees in their own excrement. Heavy seas toss the vessels and as they roll water and food spills from the feed containers and mixes with the urine and faeces on the floor and many animals slip, fall and inhale this foetid slurry and are suffocated. Being moved into feedlots in hotter and more humid climes is a further stress on these animals. We stopped transporting humans this way when the slave trade ended in 1807. Surely now, over two hundred years later, we are sufficiently advanced to realise that humans do not have the concession on pain, stress, suffering and indignity and that these transport conditions are equally intolerable and cruel when inflicted upon animals.

Stress of this nature is cumulative. By the time the animals reach the point of slaughter anything less than a swift and merciful pre-stun death further compounds their stress. The level of cruelty has by that time reached a degree that in domestic animals would be prosecutable.

Animals Australia and other animal welfare groups have documented instances of this cruelty over many years. The images broadcast by Four Corners during “A Bloody Business” are surely the worst we have seen. However sheep exported to the Middle East are routinely dragged along by one leg and an ear or held by the front legs between two men and dragged along on their knees before having their feet bound with wire and stuffed two or three at a time into car boots in temperatures close to 50 degrees Celsius before being driven to a backyard slaughter

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by an inexperienced layman. Some sheep are bought at the market and hacked to death at the side of the road. Is this the standard of decency and compassion Australia wants to demonstrate to the world? Is this the same Australia, forever grandstanding and showing off its sports prowess to the world and talking up its world-leading breakthroughs in medical technology such as the bionic ear, the heart pacemaker, ultrasound and pioneering microsurgery? Can we on the one hand claim world leadership in medical innovation that has brought relief and improved the lives and welfare of human beings whilst on the other hand still condone an archaic, bloody trade in live flesh with no thought to the welfare and suffering of our fellow sentient beings involved?

Why is it that these farm animals, bred for their meat, are deemed any less able to experience stress, pain and terror or why is it considered to matter less that they do? And why is it that Australia continues to condone this level of animal cruelty? How can we say Grace before meals and give thanks for our own food, when we consign and despatch food intended for overseas consumption with such abject abrogation of our responsibility to provide for a dignified and respectful end to those beings bred to satisfy those appetites?

Whilst attempting to uphold as humane as possible slaughter practices here because not to do so would invoke prosecution under animal cruelty laws, we are happy to outsource cruelty overseas much as we outsource our call-centres to India or our manufacturing to China. Such hypocrisy is not befitting an advanced nation. Australia banned the importation of dog and cat fur/skin products from China because of the cruelty involved in skinning these animals alive for their pelts, plus of course to us these are pet animals and most Australians consider their pets to be family members. How can the Australian government ban these imports on welfare grounds yet continue to severely compromise the welfare of its own farm animals by continuing the live export trade? A further example of hypocrisy and double standards dictated by the mighty dollar and the pressure of cashed up cowboy corporations.

Australia is attracting the disdain of other developed countries and is undermining its world standing in the continuance of live exports especially to those countries who do not uphold developed world standards of animal welfare and slaughter. This position is untenable and the live export trade should cease.

On 14 July 2009, Professor Paul Hemsworth of the Animal Welfare Science Centre in Melbourne and Professor David Mellor and Associate Professor Craig Johnson of the Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre of Palmerston North, New Zealand, published a paper entitled “A Scientific Comment on the Welfare of Sheep Slaughtered without Stunning”. They reviewed studies in calves carried out by other workers in 2009 and found: QUOTE:

“This new information demonstrates clearly for the first time that the act of slaughter by ventral neck incision is likely to be perceived as painful in the period between the incision and the onset of insensibility. The effects of captive bolt stunning in producing rapid insensibility and ameliorating changes in the EEG associated with neck incision have also been clearly demonstrated. Taken together, these papers (Gibson et al., 2009 a-d) provide the most comprehensive electrophysiological picture to date of the events surrounding slaughter by neck

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incision, and provide further support for the value of stunning in preventing pain in animals subjected to this procedure” UNQUOTE

The authors drew relevance between this and the slaughter of sheep with respect to functional anatomy of the neck, neurophysiology and pain centres and concluded that non-stunned sheep would also experience pain during the period between the neck cut and the onset of insensibility. They stated that this information indicated that neck cut slaughter in non-stunned sheep will cause pain. In summing up, they stated that there was sufficient information to allow confident conclusions to be drawn that the slaughter of sheep without stunning poses a risk to animal welfare in the period between the time of the neck cut and the time of loss of awareness as measured by collapse, inability to right itself, clonic convulsions etc. Estimation of the duration of this period of risk was considered to be anywhere from two to twenty seconds in duration. When one compares the practiced, swift and humane methods carried out under controlled conditions used for this study with the brutalising hacking and sawing carried out in a gutter at the side of a road one can only imagine the duration and level of suffering involved.

http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/welfare/aaws/a_scientific_comment_on_the_welfare_of_sheep_slaughtered_without_stunning

http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1370331/welfare-sheep-slaughter.pdf

Though Minister Ludwig temporarily suspended the live export trade to Indonesia while setting up (inadequate/conflict of interest ridden) supply chain monitoring systems for future exports of cattle to that country, nothing has been done or even mentioned by him about the sheep and goats sent to the Middle East. These sea voyages with all their inherent stressors are of far longer duration and there are no safeguards in place in relation to the standards of abattoirs in those countries. Indeed we have video evidence that at certain times of the year, the Muslim Festival of Sacrifice for example, many sheep never even reach the confines of an abattoir and the hands of a practised slaughterman but are butchered alive in someone’s backyard.

That these shipments and side of the road/backyard hacking to deaths have been permitted to continue unchecked for decades is a dereliction of duty of care of successive governments and Meat and Livestock Australia, the latter having profited handsomely from the trade whilst being fully aware of the atrocities being inflicted on the animals. Images of these sheep have been published in newspapers and magazines, shown on television and sent out in leaflets to thousands of supporters of various animal welfare groups. Though we might understand that many livestock producers were unaware of the degree of atrocities occurring in Indonesia, no claim could ever be considered credible that the farmers who sent their sheep to end their lives in this heinous way had no knowledge of what was occurring. That these same farmers are still anxious to continue the live trade yet claim to care for their animals is an oxymoron and makes no sense to those that wish to see an end to live exports.

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g) other matters relevant to these terms of reference that the reviewer considers appropriate

The value and economics of the live export trade

Australia’s total exports for 2010 were \$210.7 billion (Source: Wikipedia/CIA World Fact Book)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Australia

Of this, the live export trade comprised \$1.031 billion and employed 10,000 people. (Source: Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, Speech to Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Conference 1 April 2011).

http://www.maff.gov.au/media_office/transcripts/2010/nt-cattlemens

Thus the live export trade represents only 0.49 % of Australia’s total exports. In his speech Minister Ludwig noted that Indonesia is by far the largest importer of live cattle, importing around three quarters of Australia’s total exports, and the numbers grew strongly in the years 2004-2009. However numbers have decreased in the last year due to Indonesia’s restrictions on cattle weight and a limit on import permits. Thus there is considerable risk inherent in this industry with no certainty or stability of the market.

Indonesia intends to become self-sufficient in production of its own beef cattle by 2014 so this trade will eventually cease. The resumption of the trade one month after its suspension could be seen to be a cynical grab to “make hay while the sun shines” and make the most of the time left to finance the livestock producers’ adaptation to the inevitable change Indonesia’s self-sufficiency will bring. Senator Wilkie’s Bill proposes the cessation of the entire live export trade by 2014. Since live cattle to Indonesia is the largest value component of this trade, there is a strong case for phasing out live exports altogether by 2014 and I support Senator Wilkie’s Bill. My preference would be to see the trade end immediately on animal welfare grounds but some pragmatism is necessary to enable time for a transition to producing chilled boxed meat for export to replace the live export trade. This will provide more jobs for Australians in the Northern Territory and West Australia and opportunities for new businesses in abattoir building and operation, packaging supply and transport and local housing and infrastructure for workers.

Over the period 2002/3 to 2007/8 the value of the chilled beef export market grew from A\$1.62 billion to A\$2.02 billion, a 25% increase. The chilled beef trade for 2008 is worth twice the value of the live export trade of 2010 and chilled meat exports continue to grow. According to the MLA Market Information report March 2010, chilled beef exports to the Middle East and North Africa grew by 24% over the period 2008 to 2009. Clearly this is a burgeoning trade and Australia should capitalise on this demand and phase out live cattle exports with all its inherent difficulties, costs and cruelty.

Staying in the market is not going to improve animal welfare

The continuing argument that Australia should stay in the live export trade because it stands a chance of improving animal welfare is flawed. MLA had thirty years to get Animal Welfare issues right and failed to do so. They claimed cultural differences as the key difficulty and the fact that Australia cannot dictate slaughter practices to another country. If that is the case, then why are they claiming that staying in the trade will provide an opportunity for animal welfare standards in those countries to be improved? This is just a cynical appeasement attempt toward those

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Describing the stages of a winning strategy of non-violent activism.

**Author: Tania Cummings,
Not an “animal rights activist” but an Animal Welfare Advocate
Not a “tree-hugging mung bean eating hippie” but a decent, humane, middle aged
lady with a social conscience and abhorrence of animal cruelty.**

whom they know are deeply concerned with the animal welfare issues and it fails to convince any of us. The cultural differences of the importing countries are so deeply entrenched and enmeshed with their religious practices and values, firmly established since the coming of Mohammed in the sixth century, that no amount of time or effort will dislodge them. MLA had a larger budget for PR than for animal welfare and had prepared media spin ready for when the full truth of the issues were exposed to the Australian public. My view is that they were determined to continue this trade for as long as possible and muddle through as best they could no matter what happened to the cattle, ignore the public antipathy to the trade and make as much money as they could before Indonesia ceased importing in 2014. This is reprehensible.

The urban/rural divide, spin and rhetoric

The airing of the Four Corners documentary polarised urban and rural Australia and widened an already existing divide. However there have been many livestock and dairy farmers who have been appalled by what the images of the brutalisation of our cattle and are now calling for an end to the live export trade.

This issue has always been and remains an **animal welfare issue**. The people supporting a ban on the live export trade are **animal welfare advocates**. After the initial horror and chest beating by the media had died down, the media seemed to turn more to supporting the livestock producers and began to describe the pro-ban side as “animal rights activists”. This labelling, together with “mung bean munchers” and “tree huggers” used by the livestock and other pro-live export supporters, has been devised to discredit the approximately 300,000 Australians that now demand a cessation of the trade, and try to paint them as sentimental extremists, hippies and city slickers – all of which terms are used insultingly on social media pages where the two camps meet to verbally slug it out. What they have attempted to do is divert attention away from the real issue, that of cruelty and animal welfare, and on to dietary preferences and a matter of “rights” for animals. This is not what this is about. It is about **animal welfare**.

While it is true that some vegans and vegetarians have joined the call to end live exports and rather annoyingly used the platform to proclaim their views on the merits of their dietary choices, thus somewhat diverting the issue away from animal welfare and playing into the hands of those that label us lentils, what unites us all is the desire to see this cruel trade ended.

In fact many of the people supporting a ban on the trade are meat eaters, many are not city-based and some are farmers. All of us are united in the desire for an end to the miserable conditions these animals face during transport and the terror and pain to which they are subjected prior to and during slaughter once in the hands of their killers.

This movement grew at an astonishing rate. Within three days from Four Corners airing, 160,000 people had mobilized to sign a GetUp online petition; in size and speed it was the fastest GetUp had seen. The RSPCA and Animals Australia websites crashed within hours of the programme ending. The live export trade employs 10,000 people and there are now 300,000 of us demanding an end to it.

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That’s what scares them. That’s why they label us. That’s why they’re angry.

That’s why the Senate Enquiry and the Independent Review into the Live Export Trade need to be the catalyst to bring about an end live animal exports.

It’s cruel. It’s unnecessary. It’s unpopular.

We are determined. We are motivated. We are growing.

We are demanding an end to live exports.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Tania Cummings



The world’s most respected cattle expert, Temple Grandin, also called ‘bullshit’ on claims by a professor that the cattle were generally coping in Indonesia.

“Bullshit. To say that is generally good, that is just totally wrong,” she said.

“Conditions are absolutely terrible. That violates every humane standard around the world.”

Credit: “Rick” – Mamamia 31.05.2011

<http://www.mamamia.com.au/news/live-cattle-trade-youll-feel-sick-to-the-stomach/>

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