

The live cattle trade should be ended now. This trade has been allowed to continue for many years with little accountability. MLA, LiveCorp and the cattle industry would have the public believe that there is no other way to trade with the world than with live cattle. The cattle industry would have the public believe that cruelty is not our concern. The cattle industry would have the public believe that thousands of Australians would be out of work if this industry was to end.

As a member of the Australian public who has followed this industry for 20 years and has continued question its viability, I refuse to believe anything the cattle industry tells me. I have seen no evidence of welfare management. I have seen the systematic closure of Australian meat processing centres and the retrenchment of thousands of workers who relied on the domestic meat market for their living. It seems to me we were willing to let those people go unemployed, but now we must show concern for the people now facing hardship due to the live export ban.

Australia has an opportunity to keep our resource in Australia, process it here, be accountable for welfare and to export a high quality product overseas. Please do not use the refrigeration argument to allow live cattle export to continue. Workers in Australia need jobs. Our multicultural workforce can handle the various religious requirements required by our neighbouring countries. While international trade is critical, keeping jobs and resources in Australia is more critical. When we export raw resources, we export Australian jobs.

After 30 years of poor performance on behalf of MLA and LiveCorp, let's look at an alternative approach. By ending live cattle export and processing meat in this country, we open the doors to new markets, new opportunities and we keep jobs in our country. We also guarantee that the welfare of our precious resource is managed according to our own high standards. Honestly, can we ever trust any other country to maintain the welfare standards we expect of ourselves? I think not. MLA's complete lack of ability to manage welfare issues in Indonesia and the Middle East has demonstrated this. Regardless of what strict policies the government puts in place, we can not monitor the welfare of Australian cattle once they leave our shores.

Finally, this is absolutely a welfare issue. It is a welfare issue for every Australian citizen. The mark of a sophisticated and enlightened society is to manage the welfare of its most vulnerable members – human and animal. Let's show the world that Australia is a sophisticated country that cares for animal welfare and their citizens' welfare. Ban live export. Protect the welfare of Australian cattle. Increase jobs in Australia and open new and exciting markets for the Australian meat industry.