

SUBMISSION REGARDING EQUITY OF ACCESS TO INQUIRY

14th July 2011

Dear Senate Inquiry

I am a pastoralist in the Pilbara of the North-West of WA, I am very concerned that the current debate precludes some of the people most likely to feel the greatest impact from any future ban on Live Export.

My past background is in the coordination of services that also involved remote Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley and Pilbara. I have job-shared with traditional owners, and gained a slight window into the level of disadvantage experienced by people who have English as a second or third language, when there is no equitable access to literacy or computer skills.

It has been alarming to witness a battle that was primarily conducted in Cyberspace, be exclusive of people who are most likely to be affected by it. Remote areas also have significant difficulties with Internet, Phone and Mobile coverage, with many of these services being unavailable or unserviceable for weeks at a time, people are highly unlikely to Tweet.

With Aboriginal and Indigenous Land Corporation ownership of pastoral stations, the pastoral industry has a high level of participation in all aspects of business, from the youth thru to Elders. Live Export has ensured there is a viable source of secure employment and training with real jobs industry wide as opposed to those created by a program.

At times young stockmen from the Kimberley have been employed in our stockyards. The neighbours employ traditional owners from this area, as do other stations in the Pilbara, some have generations of families living and working on the station.

In other related areas I would like the Senate to consider mental health as the Kimberley has one of the highest suicide rates in the world for young males, it was with great distress this year that I had to relay to a friend that the most capable young man whom he had worked with in our yards, had joined with many others. A promising future cut short even with him being the best at his sport, and work. So how do his friends cope with loss, when that which they are good at, look forward to and rely on in areas with very few other job opportunities is taken away.

If the pastoral industry collapses the jobs will not reappear in the meat industry. There will be a reduction in jobs, not an increase, as the meat industry is reliant on the pastoral industry for it's product. From talking to people who remember the northern seasonal abattoirs, they also recollect them closing down due to not being able to find skilled seasonal workers during the dry on an annual basis.

We are currently working with several media outlets, ILC and others to ensure people can be interviewed at upcoming local events. This is most likely to be obtained in Audio or Visual and where possible transcripts supplied. Today I spoke to with Cass at the Inquiry Committee who advised that there were no guarantees but the Senate

Inquiry would be likely to consider the submissions if they could be received by the 10th August.

As there will be a great deal of work to be done to ensure submissions are recorded and sent, could you please confirm this as soon as possible in writing that the Submissions will be included if sent by 10th August.

In the meantime I have included the only three articles that I could find on an internet search, currently with comment from aboriginal people who are directly affected. One of these articles I have written myself so I would suggest that there has not been a great deal recorded so far. I have deliberately not included photos in the transcripts of articles to be able to have a longer distribution.

It is a fundamental right of citizenship that people be included in decisions of Government that affect them.

With this in mind I would also query the current locations for holding Senate Inquiry Public Hearings in Darwin and Canberra. As far as I am aware no Live Export boats go out of Canberra, however they do leave out of ports in WA in Broome, Port Hedland, Geraldton and Perth, and Townsville in Queensland. The people most affected by this debate have already had to travel distances of 3000km and greater just to be able to meet with their industry.

The effect of the Suspension means most people are already significantly delayed in their Mustering which is essential for animal welfare, to travel across the width of Australia to provide input won't be an option.

Regards

Christine Glenn
Pilbara WA

Article 1

The Darwin Pro-Live Export Rally – 21st June 2011

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/06/21/3249681.htm>

"Indigenous stockmen told the rally the ban has put 750 Aboriginal jobs at risk.

Stockman Maurie Japarta Ryan from Kalkarindji says the Government must realise the suspension is putting cattle stations out of business.

"Today, I hope these people, the deaf tribe in Canberra, listen," he said.

"I don't respect any of them because they do not live here and they do not understand the Northern Territory, how big the industry is and how it affects everybody."

Article 2

Bohemia Downs, Fitzroy Crossing have given consent for the following news article from ABC Rural to be included as a submission.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2011/s3250330.htm>

Live export suspension putting indigenous jobs at risk

By Matt Brann from Fitzroy Crossing 6765

Wednesday, 22/06/2011

The suspension of the live cattle trade to Indonesia is looming as a disaster for Indigenous employment across northern Australia.

Of all the industries in the north, it's the cattle industry which has long succeeded in attracting young Aboriginal people.

According to the Indigenous Land Corporation, over 700 Indigenous people are directly employed through the northern cattle industry, and in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, a third of all stations are owned by Aboriginal people.

Alan Lawford is the manager of Bohemia Downs Station near Fitzroy Crossing, which runs 2,500 head of cattle.

He says the suspension has him worried about the future of his young workforce, who have all been sourced from nearby communities.

"I employ about 15, and at the moment we've got no income, there'll be no wages, and without the export market, it'll be back to the CDEP for a lot."

Mr Lawford says if the live export trade is banned, his stockman will be forced to look for employment elsewhere.

"The government need to put it back now (restore trade with Indonesia), because these guys aren't going to wait around", he said.

"It's sad to see ringers looking for another job, when their grandfather, their Dad, their uncle were all stockman who mustered this country,

"And I'm not sure what other jobs these blokes want to do, because their lives are around cattle, it's the only thing they know."

Mr Lawford is proud of the fact his station runs without any government support, and plans to muster cattle this weekend in hope that decisions can be made to resume the Indonesian trade."

Article 3

THE KIMBERLEY CATTLEMEN HAVE GATHERED 16th June 2011

By Christine Glenn

At Roebuck Plains Station with Ronnie Lormada, from Millyydee Station Right and Dicky Cox from Nookanbah Station.

It was a historic day in the Kimberley, as Aboriginal, Non-Aboriginal Pastoralists, Kimberleyites in all industries, and Politicians united together at Roebuck Plains Station, owned by Indigenous Land Corporation to tell Canberra to not destroy the only industry that binds Northern Australia together and risk perishing Australia's oldest industry and the old Station men and women with it. The significance of this event cannot be underestimated.

Ronnie Lormada from Millyydee Station and Dicky Cox from Nookanbah Station are concerned, they have pulled up mustering, the cattle trucks have stopped, the air is quiet when it shouldn't be. They are worried unless it gets rolling again and straight away that next year there will be no jobs. As the Pastoral industry has the highest percentage of Aboriginal ownership and participation in businesses in Australia and genuine jobs, this is more than alarming.

It was the first meeting of the people that are most affected by a debate conducted in Cyberspace, monopolised by people who have no connection to the cattle, people or the effects on the country of which they speak. In the power of the click, you are unlikely to have a voice, particularly if you still have to wait until the last mob of cattle has been drafted before you gather.

As decisions of government are made far from here, on what can effectively be described as a "mouse plague", there is genuine bewilderment as to why this is happening.

For Kimberley Countrymen, Live Export has made the difference between the slow death of the Pastoral industry, and the gradual reclaiming of Aboriginal ownership over a trade relationship that goes back long before the white-fellas got here. Many Kimberley Countrymen still have relatives in Malaysia and other parts of Asia.

They remember the days before Live Export when the cattle were poor, and there was not the money available for training. All the young ones now do low-stress stock handling, the Roebuck Plains Live Export Depot owned and run by the Indigenous Land Corporation is state of the art, in short the Live Export is good for animal welfare.

The young ones are in training for jobs, real jobs that will allow them to work in any part of the Pastoral Industry. They will get a job in an industry that they enjoy and that values their contribution and that of their Elders. We all know that there are many that despair takes and that the sorry business for young Kimberley males is one of the highest in the world, even among those with promising futures.

The Old Boys though will be Cattlemen till their last breathe. These fellas might not name all the cattle in the mob, but I can guarantee they know which one out of 800 is going to bolt. Let the Boats come and get the trucks rolling again, the mob is waiting.”

Thanks to Indigenous Land Corporation for hosting this event.”