

Submission: Inquiry into Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024



To: The Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture

June 11th, 2024

Honourable Committee Members,

As the founder of Australia Against Live Exports (AALE), I submit this crucial appeal to address the ongoing suffering of innocent animals in the live sheep export industry. Our organisation represents a passionate community committed to ending this cruel trade. The recent RSPCA investigation as published on Friday, 31st May 2024, has shed light on the harrowing conditions faced by sheep during their voyages, and we implore you to take decisive action.

RSPCA Investigation Findings

- **Starvation and Heat Stress:** Independent observer reports reveal that 80% of recent live sheep export voyages documented sheep starving on board, with at least 60% suffering from signs of heat stress. These distressing revelations stem from meticulous analysis of data collected during 53 export journeys between 2018 and 2023.
- **Sheep Mortality:** Shockingly, over 6,551 sheep lost their lives during these journeys. Causes included inanition (starvation), gastrointestinal disease, pneumonia, and injury. Regrettably, the data does not account for sheep deaths due to stress, injury, or illness before or after boarding.
- **Non-Compliance with Standards:** Approximately 70% of reports highlighted non-compliance with Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL). Issues ranged from overcrowding to poor animal handling, jeopardising the welfare of these sentient beings.
- **Veterinary Treatments:** Onboard, sheep received veterinary treatments for conditions such as “shy feeding,” gastrointestinal disease, lameness, and eye infections. These interventions underscore the severity of their suffering.

Community Support and Economic Transition

The majority of Australians—around two-thirds—support ending live sheep exports. Community sentiment aligns with our mission to protect animals from needless cruelty.

Contrary to claims, abolishing live export need not harm our sheep industry. An economic analysis by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences indicates a manageable transition to alternative markets.

Call to Action

We, the advocates for humane treatment and representatives of a concerned Australian public, implore the Parliamentary Committee to prioritise and hasten the termination of live sheep exports. The longstanding suffering of these sentient beings under current conditions necessitates immediate and decisive action.

To uphold the principles of animal welfare that our nation values, it is crucial to ensure rigorous enforcement of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL). This enforcement must be robust during the transition period while the industry is being phased out.

As elected representatives, we urge you to legislate with a conscience, aligning laws with the ethical standards and compassion that the Australian community demands. The introduction of legislation by the Federal Government to end this cruel practice by 2028 is a historic step, but we must act with more urgency.

Conclusion

Australia faces a defining moment. Let us choose a legacy of empathy and compassion over one of indifference and cruelty. The path we choose today will define our moral standing tomorrow. We call on you to act swiftly and decisively to end the suffering of live-exported sheep.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

Angela Martin

Founder

Australia Against Live Exports