

Submission to Senate Inquiry on Live Export of Australian Livestock

This submission is tendered in support of the continuance and expansion into suitable markets of the practice of live export of Australian livestock.

This industry has provided significant financial benefit for the national economy and provided viable and much needed market diversification for Australian livestock producers. It is essential that this market diversity is maintained, as it provides a means of risk management for producers, and enables the producer to be less at the risk of market influences which are generated by the buying patterns and market manipulations utilized by Australia's multi-national meat processors.

Live export has come a long way in terms of its practice, and it is clear that shipping of live animals by sea and air is a reasonable practice with successful protocols and practice by Australian exporters in place and adhered to.

The transport of cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry within Australia is well handled by responsible transport operators with sale yards and processors adhering to agreed codes of practice with low levels of fatality and injury.

The current highly-political activity undertaken by some elements of the Australian press, activist groups and Government parties, both elected and members of the public service, to ban the export of live animals is, in effect, a direct attack on the financial foundations of a significant Australian industry with a long and proud heritage and contribution to national prosperity.

It is ideologically driven and the arguments put forward to justify this proposition are all clearly refutable on the application of balanced assessments. However, this is about emotion and politics, not fact or reason.

When one argues on the basis of emotion then reason becomes the casualty. I have no doubt that people seeking a ban to live export have the intent to provide livestock with good conditions. They conveniently choose to overlook that in this industry animals are provided with suitable food and nutrition, water, housing and ventilation; they have excellent handling and veterinary care throughout the transport phase of their journey. This is current practice, established and entrenched.

Those who advocate banning this trade have no right to put at risk the viability of producers, and the recent action by the government is reprehensible and amateurish at best, incompetent and self-destructive at worst. The Federal Government has an obligation and a responsibility to Australia's producers to enable and encourage successful trade and commerce, not destroy it.

In my opinion here can be little excuse for the actions taken by Federal political elements. They have acted against the national interest and actively destroyed the well-being of many rural and regional Australians.

The beef industry in general will now be subject for great uncertainty, not only in the live export oriented sections of the industry, by the flow-on effects of cattle numbers and competition for market specifications in other areas of the industry as well.

I am a cattle producer, and take my responsibilities very seriously, taking pride in producing food that is well-raised and high quality. Whilst I am not live export oriented in my business context, I know only too well the impacts that unfold when supply chains are interrupted or disrupted.

We need live export and I deeply believe the Federal Government has a responsibility to ensure this trade continues in an effective, cost reasonable context to enable economic benefit to Australia and its citizens.

That, after all, is their role and responsibility. This is my will.

Eion McAllister