

## **SUBMISSION**

### **SENATE INQUIRY: Improvements in animal welfare for Australian live exports**

#### **Export of Livestock**

The Senate Select Committee of Inquiry into Animal Welfare in Australia (Senate Select Committee), concluded over 20 years ago that that the live export trade should be phased out altogether because of unavoidably adverse impact on animal welfare (Senate Select Committee, 'Export of Live Sheep from Australia', Report, 1985). The situation has not changed and animals are still suffering.

There is endless evidence that long distance sea transportation on any ship (state of the art or otherwise) of animals causes stress, distress, injuries and illness. Animals exported in this manner are cruelly exposed to overcrowding, oxygen deprivation, heat stress, pneumonia, trauma, diarrhoea, blindness and a poisoning which causes respiratory ailments.

The Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) do not protect the animals, there is mounting evidence regarding the treatment of export animals enduring shocking treatment and neglect by workers at the point of being loaded and unloaded - some current footage if you care: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZvzIfA97CI>

#### **Australian Standards / World Standards for the Export of Livestock**

Although Senator Ludwig has referred to 'World's best practice' and 'World class standards' there are NO 'world' standards which are independently or objectively defined in animal welfare to which the industry can correctly and accurately be accountable to or compared with. Some countries have no standards at all!

Three main points:

- The Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) are the 'rules' the Australian Government and the live export industry have themselves established and so of course, claim they comply with.
- Therefore any suggestion that there is a 'World best' standard is misleading, deceptive and lacks credibility. Any claim that the live export industry complies with its own 'strict' standards within this country is also not to be believed as demonstrated clearly by footage and information obtained by Animals Australia and Four Corners.
- There are NO standards with which the importing countries such as those in Asia or the Middle East must meet. There is NO animal welfare legislation in the Middle East or Asia so regardless of any work Australia claims to do in these countries animal welfare remains poor, the animals continue to suffer horrendous cruelty.

If we look at Indonesia specifically, they passed a Farm and Animal Welfare law at least 18 months ago however there are no regulations providing sanctions, which means there are no penalties if the law is breached.

## **Australian Regulators: Meat and Livestock Australia and LiveCorp**

The Government and the Regulating bodies have been in place for many years. They have had over 20 years to implement standards and practises that would ensure the humane treatment of export animals. The treatment of animals in Asia and the Middle East is horrendous. There is no respect for the welfare of animals at all. MLA/LiveCorp say they have had people on the ground in the Middle East and have put signage up to assist in the better treatment of animals – yet we still see footage of sheep being stuffed into car boots, dragged by the legs, kicked and bound, thrown from heights into trucks like a sack of potatoes, all before they are then brutally slaughtered with 'backyard techniques'.

In relation to Indonesia, the report, titled 'Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership 2009/10 - Indonesian point of slaughter improvements', examined 11 Indonesian abattoirs where investigators witnessed 29 slaughters. It was commissioned by the MLA and LiveCorp and released in May 2010.

[http://www.daff.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1886477/indonesia.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1886477/indonesia.pdf)

MLA's website says it had "no prior knowledge of the brutal treatment of animals illustrated in recent media coverage, prior to being shown the footage".

The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) says the report proves the MLA was aware of the inhumane slaughters at least a year before the program aired.

"They've known about this since last year why didn't they do something then?," AMIEU secretary Brian Crawford said.

"The evidence was forwarded to the (federal) Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

"A significant issue is what action they took, if any, and whether the minister was briefed on the situation."

Mr Finucan of MLA "We've been working up here for many years and we've always known that there's issues, and that's why we commit resources and time and energy and effort in being in Jakarta, being in the - in Indonesia and delivering these programs. We're working in another country, there's challenges there. We've always known there's more to do, and we've always been upfront that that's what we are doing."

MLA are also the industry 'body' that introduced the Mark 1 boxes into Indonesia. These boxes have been slammed by leading industry experts. How can you put something into practice that causes brutal suffering? Surely if this is as good as it gets with MLA and their research departments, then this is a disgraceful waste of the levies that are paid and taxpayers money. - Reference online farm newspaper The Land -

<http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/state/livestock/cattle/feeding-fears-of-what-might-lurk-in-mla-shadows/2208278.aspx>

## **Economic Impact**

In response to the many economic arguments regarding live export there is much conflicting information. If we look at the Industry claims and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) we can compare:

### The live export industry claims:

'The live export industry provides employment for 13,000 people'. (<http://www.liveexportcare.com.au>). The industry continues to report that employment in the live trade is on the increase. The Hassall Report of 1999 had the trade employing over 9,000. This figure was revised in 2006 (again by an industry funded study by Hassall and Associates) to 13,000. NB: The group producing the Hassall report are affiliated with the live export industry.

### Independently assessed facts and figures:

The Heilbron Report was commissioned by the 'Australian Meat Processor Corporation Limited', and undertaken by SG Heilbron Pty Ltd. The report was completed in April 2000 and the findings published in the Heilbron Report established that the trade employs just over 3000 people. These are confirmed as jobs which exist because of the live animal trade.

And although the industry claim the live export trade contributes \$1.8 billion to the economy (<http://www.liveexportcare.com.au>), The Heilbron Report showed that stopping live export and slaughtering in Australia (pursuant to Australian animal welfare standards) and the meat products then being exported overseas, would in fact increase Australia's gross domestic product by approximately \$1.7 billion and create approximately 12,000 jobs. It currently costs Australia approximately \$280 million in household income.

## **Stunning in Indonesia**

There has been much said about stunning in Indonesia in relation to religious preferences however in the MLC/LiveCorp report - Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership 2009/10 they wrote - "Stunning is accepted in Indonesia and there are currently four abattoirs licensed to use pre-slaughter stunning. These facilities are licensed by the Halal certifying body - Indonesia Ulema Council (MUI) to use stunning prior to slaughter. These facilities are modern processing operations and produce high value vacuum packed chilled beef predominantly sold into the retail and food service market in Indonesia". Source: Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership 2009/10.

If this is the case then you can assume there is some level of acceptance for stunning to occur within Indonesia. So why had more not been done to gain further acceptance. There has been a strong argument against stunning however I would now question this. MLA could have done more here - spending some of the Levy that they receive per head of cattle on stunning being acceptable to the Halal certifying body.

## Conclusion

From my point of view there is no trust or transparency with the industry body MLA and LiveCorp. There is evidence and admittance that information regarding the horrendous treatment of export animals to overseas markets was provided to the Government and was well documented by MLA yet it appears the Government have done very little.

It took the Four Corners Report 'A Bloody Business' ([http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/special\\_edds/20110530/cattle/](http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/special_edds/20110530/cattle/)) to be aired to the public to have a temporary ban put in place for exporting to Indonesia. And this was quickly lifted. And to the public it would appear very little change (if any) was made regarding implementing measures to ensure the humane treatment and slaughter of export cattle.

There are many more points I could make regarding the horrendous treatment that appears to have been occurring in Indonesia. Indicating that the governing bodies responsible for the welfare of Australian cattle can not be trusted to do their job objectively with animal welfare as priority.

But if we again look at the Middle East, [Seven separate investigations](http://liveexport-indefensible.com/investigations/) by Animals Australia (<http://liveexport-indefensible.com/investigations/>) have documented terrible abuses of Australian animals. In abattoirs and private homes sheep face a terrifying slaughter, as their throats will be cut whilst fully conscious.

Millions of people in the Middle East believe that Australians approve of their treatment of animals due to our willingness to export them to their country.

Rather than inspiring much needed change, we are reinforcing long-held beliefs that such cruel treatment of animals is acceptable.

Remembering that this is not an isolated incident of cruelty towards export animals, The Cormo Express comes to mind ([http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA\\_Cormo\\_Express\\_V84.htm](http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA_Cormo_Express_V84.htm)).

For further examples please see the links attached:

[http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA\\_AI\\_Messilah.htm](http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA_AI_Messilah.htm)

[http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA\\_AI\\_Shuwaikh\\_V20.htm](http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA_AI_Shuwaikh_V20.htm)

[http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA\\_AI\\_Shuwaikh\\_V21.htm](http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA_AI_Shuwaikh_V21.htm)

[http://www.liveexportshame.com/docs/AFFA\\_Becrux\\_Oct\\_2002\\_Investigation.pdf](http://www.liveexportshame.com/docs/AFFA_Becrux_Oct_2002_Investigation.pdf)

[http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA\\_Coriedale\\_Express\\_V152.htm](http://www.liveexportshame.com/publications/AFFA_Coriedale_Express_V152.htm)

[http://www.liveexportshame.com/docs/AFFA\\_MVNovantes\\_Voyage83\\_Mortality.pdf](http://www.liveexportshame.com/docs/AFFA_MVNovantes_Voyage83_Mortality.pdf)

Live export of all animals should be banned. I am fundamentally opposed to all live export and believe it should be banned. I believe my submission presents you with substantial reasons and history for this cruel and unnecessary trade.

Mrs Shannon Vassos

Ph: 0419109564