

I hereby wish to voice my utmost opposition in the strongest possible terms to the Government's recent decision to reinstate live export trading to Indonesia.

I had been impressed by the Gillard Government's quick response to the appalling brutality that was showcased on the ABC's 'Four Corners' by introducing a ban on live export trading.

Given the graphic carnage depicted therein however, there was obviously no alternative.

I am now shocked, appalled and horrified that some four weeks later the Government have lifted the ban. One must question the stringency and effectiveness of the 'safeguards' that are to be implemented – particularly given that there won't be any on-ground monitoring by Australia, and that it took a total of four weeks to come up with these 'safeguards'.

The Government have NOT addressed the fundamental issues at stake which have allowed this practice to go unnoticed for god knows how long – you now have a responsibility – and the mandate - to do so.

This is an abhorrent issue – one that has shamed and disgraced Australia internationally, and has resulted in an outpouring of support by the majority of the population for a ban. I am reminded of the saying that a country's wealth is measured by the compassion it shows to its most vulnerable. There are none more defenceless or vulnerable than creatures such as these.

How many millions of poor defenceless animals have so far been tortured before knowledge of these cruel, horrific practices came into the public arena? Whilst we must all live with the shame of what has been, we now at least have the power (and responsibility) to help those in the future.

To now, with this knowledge, turn our collective backs on these vulnerable creatures is nothing short of criminal.

To do so would be putting the almighty dollar before all else – including the country's moral compass - is that something Members of Parliament consider acceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?!!

I am grateful of the knowledge that a number of MPs from across the board are vehemently opposed to lifting of the ban. I applaud these Members of Parliament who are obviously not without a moral conscience.

I hereby implore you to support reinstating the ban on live trade exports – or, as per Andrew Wilkie's recent media interview, petition the Prime Minister to allow the Parliament to have a conscience vote on this issue.

This is NOT a political issue – it is an abhorrent stain on Australia's international reputation which has united people from all political persuasions.

The Government therefore DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT OR MANDATE to allow this carnage to continue.

THERE ARE MANY MORE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VOTERS WHO FEEL THIS WAY (MANY IN MARGINAL SEATS).

Do not make the mistake of underestimating the power of the people!!

I implore you with every fibre of my being to do everything within your power to reinstate the ban on live export trade.

If you have a moral compass and conscience you will know that there is simply no alternative. If you are without these tools however, then you most certainly do not deserve the privilege of continuing to serve as a Member of Parliament.

**Janice Witon**