

## **Submission on Animal welfare standards for Australian live exports**

To: The Members of the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee

I am writing to express my support for the abolition of all live animal export.

I urge the senate to support the Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2] and the Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2].

Australians who viewed the Four Corners story on Monday 30 May 2011 felt compelled to immediately protest against the export of live cattle to Indonesia for slaughter. However this story is a small piece of a much greater problem. The transport of animals over long distances is inherently cruel and exporting to countries where Australia cannot enforce reasonable slaughter standards must cease.

Numerous investigations have exposed the brutal treatment of animals in countries in Asia and the Middle East. These investigations evidence the complete failure of the live export industry to improve the treatment of our animals overseas. The damning evidence makes it abundantly clear that the industry cannot be trusted to uphold animal welfare or be honest with the Australian public. The Australian public will no longer accept industry "spin". The only appropriate course of action now is to ban this trade. The trade has been in operation for close to two decades, and despite repeated claims on the part of industry that progressive animal welfare improvements have been made, the footage broadcast revealed that extreme animal abuse is current, endemic and widespread.

The Indonesian government have made it abundantly clear that they will not support animal welfare reforms and therefore ALL export to the country must cease. It is impractical and unworkable to try to send Australian livestock only to certain abattoirs.

Obviously the suspension or ban of live export will impact on Australian farmers. However the industry, particularly Meat and Livestock Australia, have known about these horrific issues for many years and have failed to act. MLA should now take responsibility for the impact of their negligence and should work to ease the impact on farmers.

Instead industry should work towards alternative means of income for those affected. Developing the meat industry within Australia can bring positive benefits to our economy from an end to the live trade. The government should support farmers and the industry by developing ways to implement a chilled meat export market to Indonesia, and other markets, thereby ensuring animal welfare AND Australian jobs.

Live export is only a small portion of Australia's meat industry and there is no guarantee that Indonesia, in particular, will continue the trade as they have indicated a preference to move towards beef self sufficiency.

In any event, the Australian public will not allow financial considerations to take precedence over animal welfare, and indeed humanity, any longer.

These bills are an important opportunity to right a terrible wrong that has hung over Australia for decades. It is an opportunity to send a strong message to those who abuse animals that Australia will not condone animal abuse, and to establish ourselves as a compassionate and ethical society in the international community.

I ask your support to end the live export trade.

Clare Sunderland  
6 July 2011