

Parliamentary inquiry submission:

**Inquiry into Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024
June 2024- Canberra**

To Whom It May Concern;

I have been involved in and around the live export of sheep trade since 1999. I have been an eyewitness to all aspects of the trade from preparation of the sheep, working as a stevedore loading ships in Fremantle for three years, being the shipboard veterinarian on 57 voyages, and up to the point of observing stressful, fully conscious slaughter in foreign destinations.

As such I fully support the phase out of the trade, this trade cannot be trusted to self regulate and trying to enforce regulations on such a trade is a fool's errand.

It is with gratitude that I thank the Government for making this policy change possible. Live sheep export is a cruel and marginal trade that should have been phased out decades ago.

The industry was put 'on notice' to the phase out of this trade due to animal welfare concerns in 1985 with the findings of the then Senate Select Committee regarding the live sheep export trade. Hence, no farmer or industry body can honestly claim to have been 'blindsided'.

With the increase in uptake and marketing of boxed meat exports, the changing attitudes in importing countries regarding sourcing protein, global disapproval of the animal welfare risks and outcomes as well as the dwindling size of the global fleet, especially those vessels of a safe enough standard to trade from Australia it is clear the trade is experiencing a natural, unreversible death.

When I started in the trade in 1999 there were over 5million sheep a year being exported and possibly over 40 ships servicing the trade from Australia, recently we have seen around 0.5 million sheep a year being exported and an Australian certified fleet of smaller ships numbering around 25 with no apparent confidence in global trade to build/ convert new comers.

Australian chilled sheep meat exports are 58 times the value of the live sheep export trade (\$4.5 billion v \$77 million in 2022–23). The phaseout will ensure that the local processing sector is reliable and can meet demand. Removing this trade will create more stability and certainty for farmers with beneficial flow-on effects for regional communities.

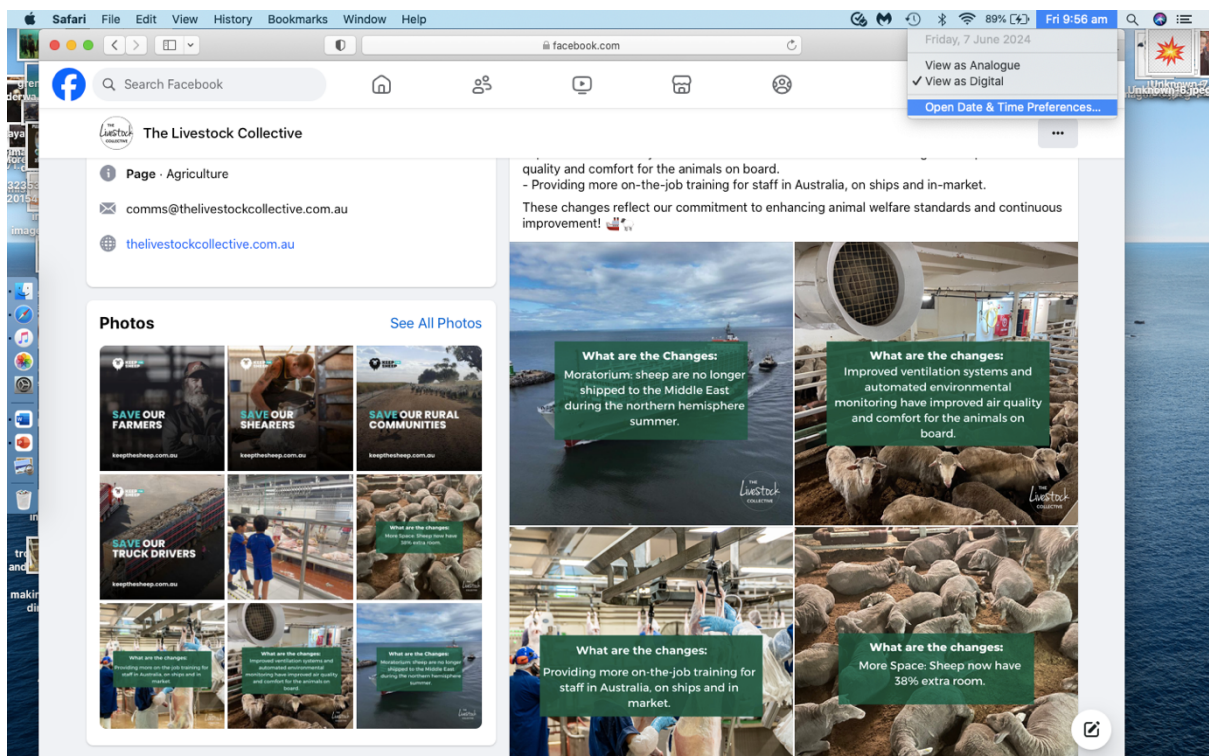
This industry has many unmanageable risks to animal welfare that cannot be avoided with more regulation or tweaked standards/ legislation. Inherent risks such as Heat stress, mechanical breakdowns (loss of steering, propulsion, fresh-water production, feed delivery systems, blackouts and ventilation failures), fires, capsizing, and disease spread are not outlier events, and they cannot be predicted or prevented sufficiently to protect animals at sea during a voyage.

Independent Observer reports show ongoing issues that have not been sufficiently overcome with recent modifications to trade such single tier decks, increased ventilation rates and reduced stocking density. The risks still exist, any further modifications will make the trade increasingly unviable and still fraught with risk.

Scare mongering by the industry and the spreading of blatant misinformation has been tremendously confusing and damaging to the very farmers these groups represent ie; in 2017 sheep stocking density was reduced by 17.5% regardless of the science used to investigate saying it should be a greater reduction. The industry put up much resistance even to the compromised number of 17.5% reduction yet feel the need to publish bold lies as represented in the image below on farmer social media target accounts such as The Livestock Collective..



Even after being advised of their open deceit publicly, they continue to publish such misinformation.



The Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea Bill will provide much needed certainty to the industry and individual farmers who are currently struggling to understand the realities of the situation.

I look forward to seeing communities begin to thrive with more local income being spent in their towns from the increased worker wages as abattoir worker numbers and processing increases locally. This includes the profits being retained from carcasses and their by-products being processed in Australia and not being sent offshore to mostly benefit a handful of international businessmen.

The end of this cruel trade should also give farmers a greater sense of pride and peace of mind about the animals and products they work so hard to produce, and a sense of certainty and sustainability about their business futures.

I strongly encourage committee members to support the legislation.

Sincerely

Dr Lynn Simpson

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