

SUBMISSION SENATE INQUIRY ANIMAL WELFARE LIVESTOCK EXPORT

The RSPCA and
Federal Government Senate Inquiry & Parliamentary Investigations
Into Live Animal Export Industry
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

15 July 2011

THE LIVE ANIMAL EXPORT INDUSTRY AND THE MEAT AND LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION

I am writing to the Government and RSPCA in respect to submissions being called for both the Senate inquiry and the Joint Parliamentary Investigations into the performance of the live cattle export industry and their representative bodies the Meat and Livestock Association (MLA) and LiveCorp; the accountability to the taxpayers and impact of their activities on both animal welfare and the domestic economy. I and many Australians view this to be adverse in all respects.

Australians do not trust or accept that the suspension of the live animal export to Indonesia was lifted after only three weeks. The resolution is again relying on the industry to now provide its own supply chain to an abattoir but which will not be required to stun animals before their slaughter.

The abattoirs which will slaughter 'Australian animals' may only need to show they will aspire to meeting the most basic Animal Health (OIE) standards for developing countries and which permits the slaughter of fully conscious animals, as well as cruel roping slaughter. This sector of the pastoral industry will develop and grow and continue to profiteer from the cruel outcome for millions of Australian animals which are under-mature and quickly turned over through export.

The Sydney Morning herald reported on 7 July 2011 that:

"The Minister Mr. Joe Ludwig himself said he can't guarantee that Australian animals won't be subjected to cruel practices." The Government's own backbenchers have responded that: "If that's the case, the trade should not have been reopened."

Critique of the MLA and industry action Plan and adopted OIE standards

Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Scientist for the RSPCA provided a critique of the 'Live Export Industry Welfare Action Plan' and \$9 million provision by the MLA to reinstate the industry in Indonesia.

Dr Jones determined in her scientific report that :

"This will not remove the incidence of cruelty as it involves an objective of meeting OIE animal standards of practice. OIE provide the basic slaughter standards for underdeveloped nations to aspire to and this is only expected to be reached in Indonesia by 2015. Dr Jones reports that the traditional practices which are brutal and slow will remain as the permitted and preferred choice.

"The 90% of Australian cattle slaughtered in facilities without stunning will be free to continue under OIE standards and few Indonesian abattoirs even come close to meeting the OIE standards."

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“The MLA’s action plan included the recycling of the Australian designed Mark1 restraint boxes which world experts state breach all international standards in humane treatment of animals, do not allow stunning and were to date used to aid the barbaric slow disabling of a large animal for the traditional slaughter”.

“In Australia, the process of developing Australian animal welfare standards would always include targeted consultation with all stakeholders, including key animal protection organisations, and a period of open public consultation. This provides a transparent, inclusive and relatively robust process. The industry action plan does not involve either of these inputs.”

“The Indonesian ‘live export animal welfare action plan’ from the MLA - May 2011 and OIE standards adopted by the Government will not change the incidence of cruel practices with Australian cattle slaughtered offshore. The MLA cannot be trusted to ensure live cattle exported are not treated cruelly.”

The Mark 1 restraint box did not permit stunning but have assisted and encouraged roping slaughter as has been determined cruel and inhumane and atrocious by the developed world and Dr. Temple Grandin, the world leading expert on cattle handling and slaughter practices. The boxes were designed and put in use by the MLA and were examined and accepted by its own reporting delegation which included an appointed veterinary practitioner. One of the facilities used by the MLA where barbaric practices were filmed, the Gudrun abattoir, was reported to have had six visits by Australian experts in the last 14 months, received reports that met MLA standards and continued to slaughter Australian cattle.

After the trade was suspended and Dr Grandin’s views were screened, the boxes were thrown out by a Government delegation. The MLA had in over a decade failed to introduce stunning before slaughter or any supply chain assurance to the Indonesian abattoirs. The industry plan for resuming live export to Indonesia has none the less been placed back again in the hands of the industry and its agency the MLA as is highly unacceptable.

The claim that the MLA has funded education and improvements in animal welfare in the region has never been substantiated and has been proven incorrect by the independent reports from Dr Bidida Jones, Chief Scientist from the RSPCA.

The study proved that animal welfare was exacerbated by the Australian designed and installed Mark 1 restrain boxes which Dr Jones states to be “unsuitable for stunning and even set a standard of cruelty that the Indonesians are now copying”.

The Mark 1 restraint boxes were found to be aiding the torture and cruel practices used in the traditional disabling of the Australian animals while stunning was not overall introduced or taken up when provided.

The claimed Australian facilities using stun guns only amounted to two or three out of the estimated up eighty or so which LiveCorp used and equipped.

Any Australian facility that used stunning would be unlikely to see a local cow on which to pass on the Australian practises. The overflow of 90 percent of Australian cattle were simply sent to up to one hundred slaughter facilities which did not use stun guns and caused unnecessary pain and prolonged death.

The MLA organisation has been subjected to a Senate inquiry and also a Joint parliamentary investigation as should examine its performance, financial appropriations and responsibility to taxpayers. The MLA failed to act or report the cruel slaughter practices, which it also equipped and failed to stop the brutal practices while funded by taxpayers. The MLA should be disbanded and its funding cease.

The lifted suspension is based on the MLA and industry plan and is totally discredited for the following reasons:

1. There has been a back down on the demand for mandatory stunning of all Australian cattle in Indonesian abattoirs.

Federal Senator Siewert, as quoted on July 7 Bernama.com, is agreed in her statement that: "The welfare standards which are acceptable to the Australian public and farmers cannot be guaranteed in overseas markets. Stunning must be a non-negotiable aspect of live trade. Cattle will be allowed to go back to facilities where these agreed new conditions still don't require upright restraint, pre- slaughter stunning nor do they prohibit traditional roping slaughter where animals are forcibly tripped onto their side for the throat cut."

Mr Sid Parker, of the South East Asia Livestock Services company confirmed that he sends 50,000 head to Indonesia each year and said he was hopeful of the trade resuming and stated: "Conditions in Indonesian abattoirs had greatly improved over the past two decades. Now we've got modern feedlots, modern trucks, a lot of work's been done and we just need to get back to business." The industry never mentions nor details any abattoir improvements as are the focus of concerns

The RSPCA's Chief Executive Heather Neil stated that :

"The OIE standards don't go far enough, and all cattle should be stunned before being slaughtered. Before any export permits are issued by the Minister and an animal is put on a boat, that stunning must not only be guaranteed, we must be able to see independent evidence that the slaughter houses meet Australian standards, and that the cattle are tracked to ensure they can't go to any other abattoir."

The Australian Veterinary Association have submitted a plan to the Government in which they state they can only support mandatory stunning before slaughter, as is later outlined under animal welfare and this has been ignored by the industry and Government in their resolution plan.

In regards to the new traceability, transparency and auditing requirements, Ms Neil stated that : The devil is in the detail. How often are these places audited, who is doing the auditing, all of that detail. Before any export permits are issued, all the detail should be put in the public domain. It's about keeping the industry accountable and making sure we all understand what it is Australian animals are going to." This was also not put in the public domain.

2. The number of abattoirs which may stun Australian cattle are two or three in number; this would represent 4 percent of the 80 abattoirs used by the MLA for the exported cattle.

There is stated expectation that 20 abattoirs will at some time reach OIE standards and may use a stun gun but this is not required. If this were achieved, it would still only represent 25 percent of

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the required abattoirs. The remainder of the Australian cattle will be exposed to cruel, slow and painful knife and traditional roping slaughters at other abattoirs, as shown in the footage.

3. All Australian officials, including vets, were barred and never allowed to inspect or enter the abattoirs while the trade was resumed, as remains unacceptable.
4. The public do not trust that the industry and MLA after over a decade of appalling performance will again be relied on to provide a supply chain and abattoir as will grant them an export license. This will not remedy the traditional brutal slaughter practices at most of the abattoirs. The practices have existed for three or four decades to include the last decade in which it was totally mishandled by the MLA.
5. Tagged cattle may now be tracked to their destination but it is the practices in the abattoirs at the end that remains unaddressed, is of major concern and was the reason for the suspension.
6. Australians consider that an auditing process paid for by the industry will not be independent, nor sufficient, nor will it assure inspections are not forewarned in a corrupt industry and country. These audits will occur after the event and be unlikely to reveal routine mistreatment where stunning is not mandatory and no penalties for cruelty exist under Indonesian law. The reporting that was arranged to date by the MLA and industry to include a veterinary practitioner did not demonstrate honesty and transparency in its reporting.
7. The Australian public, after the MLA and industry control, will only accept audits conducted by the RSPCA and Animals Australia welfare bodies, and which may be frequent and unplanned. The proposed audit procedure is not considered independent or trusted.
8. The resumption of trade resulted from the Australian Government accepting that the Indonesian Government would *not* require their abattoirs to stun cattle before slaughter, nor legislate to ensure more humane practices and penalties against animal cruelty. The Indonesian Government have responded that “this was a matter for the abattoirs themselves”.

Any belated conversations held by the Foreign Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd in Indonesia were *after* trade was resumed are not trusted or this would have been secured with the deal.

9. The suspension was not lifted due to the serious interest of Indonesia which is confirmed in their repeated announcement that they intend and are on track to phase out the imports by 2014.
10. The suspension was lifted due to the angry push and threats from the Australian cattle exporters and the MLA and which *even* rejected Government package to care for their animals. The major political party leaders have shown little interest in their voters demand for a ban and are simply focused on the Carbon tax and its economic effects as an election issue.
11. The smaller live cattle dependent exporters will still be forced to use the vast majority of more marginal abattoirs with bad practices as before which is discriminatory and a major failure.

The large corporations such as Elders and AACo conveyed they will be soon ready to run with the tagging and licenses and have arrangements with a couple of abattoirs that can stun cattle. The smaller or live export dependent cattlemen will be forced to rely on the remainder with barbaric traditional practices as they say they cannot sustain the wait. Little will change for most of the animals slaughtered.

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12. The Governments had argued the need for a quick solution due to the smaller dependent exporters' pressure from debt, hardship, and threats of the starvation or shooting of cattle but has shown no concern for these producers and whose animals will be now be forced to all rely on the traditional slaughter houses.

13. The Government-backed industry plan has excluded any consultation with the animal welfare stakeholders, or the RSPCA . The public are very angered as it was these organisations which have repeatedly exposed the cruel practices and which the MLA and LiveCorp failed to deal with or honestly report and had exacerbated with their equipment.

14. The RSPCA and animal welfare stakeholders will also find admission to the Indonesian abattoirs now impossible after the Indonesian reaction. This leaves Australians even more concerned about the Government's and industry conduct.

15. The trade was resumed quickly without proper Parliamentary debate and under substantial objection to the lowered standards, from the Government's own Labor and Green members, the Independents who have introduced Bills for a ban on the lice export trade and many untested objections from both sides of parliament .

16. Australian voters have been angered by the standard letters containing a uniform party response and which are repeatedly reissued by their local federal members and are the same in every electorate. A party line is being taken to underplay and fend off the local members' inundation by voter demands for a Ban which is simply viewed as inconvenient and bad for business.

17. The standard responses are issued with phrases which replicate the excuses long served up as industry propaganda and PR by the MLA and have all been proven false by the scientific reports of Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Scientist from the RSPCA.

18. Voters are also confirming that face to face appointments reveal that many federal representatives view conversely that MLA should be disbanded and that they would support an end to Australia's live animal export trade.

There are now very strong grounds for a conscience vote to be granted in the Parliament in respect to the Bills for an immediate Ban and Phased Ban of live animal exports.

19. The MLA as the major representative body for the industry must be fully investigated on a number of counts and which should have been addressed before the trade was resumed:

- 1) The MLA's very bad performance in implementing stunning and changing cruel practices, in wrongful equipping and failing to provide honest reporting and disclose the incidence of cruelty in the slaughter of Australian animals.
- 2) the MLA's avoidance of accountability for almost a decade of major taxpayer funding for research and welfare development and its misappropriation (which is in region of \$40 million annually)
- 3) The MLA's failure to include in its constitution essential animal protection objectives; which should be 'central' to any association formed to 'trade in live animals for export and slaughter'. This is even more so in the specific targeting of the world's recognised worst region for animal cruelty, ritualistic slaughter practices and absence of any penalties for cruelty.

There was little achieved by the Government's short trade suspension. The Indonesians remain disinterested in live imports and refused to encourage stunning before the slaughter of Australian cattle, clarifying this was a matter for the abattoirs to decide. Indonesian abattoirs prefer traditional roping slaughter practices as seen in the footage and which rely on brutal torturous practices to disable cattle before attempting the throat cut.

The resumption of live exports guarantees nothing will change in terms of the percentage of Australian cattle being relegated to traditional abattoirs. Australians are profoundly unhappy with the lifting of the suspension on 7 July by the Prime Minister and Minister Joe Ludwig and the dropping of mandatory stunning of all Australian cattle before slaughter.

This has ignored the public's long demand for the humane treatment of millions of animals exported for slaughter to Indonesia and the Middle East and which spearheaded the suspension

Failed performance of the MLA as industry representative body

Australia's greatest claim to economic fame in 2011 is as the world's number one, or biggest live animal exporter and which also targets the world's most notorious region for cruelty to animals, reliance on ritualistic slaughter practices and absence of animal cruelty legislation.

The industry has been driven by the MLA as is also substantially taxpayer funded. The industry is not sustainable for Australia and needs to change both from its failure to provide due returns to the economy and in its failure to award animal protection from cruelty.

The industry and MLA have focused on pecuniary gain and there is major conflict of interest with the primary need to assure the protection of animal against cruelty foremost in the export region.

The MLA has not performed in any way to dispel this view in failing after more than a decade to introduce stunning of livestock before slaughter and assisting Indonesian slaughterhouses in barbaric traditional slaughter practices with its own designed Mark 1 cattle restraint boxes. . It also failed to honestly report the cruel practices it relied on.

There has been a total lack of accountability to the Australian taxpayer for its funding of research and development and the expectation its provided animal protection in its activities.

Funds have conversely been seen spent on wide advertising, media articles and propaganda to convince the Australian taxpayers that the export industry was focused on animal welfare as it failed to do.

These matters are outlined hereunder:

1. Failure of the MLA to promote animal welfare and honest reporting

Industry spending on PR and propaganda in news media and magazines even women's magazines has focused on reinforcing to Australians that live animal trading was conducted to improve animal welfare in Indonesia and the Middle East. The evidence has shown this to be the reverse through its activities and the purpose of its equipment.

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The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) have confirmed in repeated media releases, such as on 31 May 2011 and 10 June 2011, that stunning and humane treatment of animals was paramount and also supports the public's view that stunning of the live animals before their slaughter is not a negotiable issue. This was long ago recommended by the AVA as in March 2006 in relation to trade with Egypt. Six years later we see their advice remains ignored in the export region by the Australian Government and its live animal trade.

The veterinary practitioner engaged by the MLA to visit and report on the Indonesian abattoirs when asked to comment on the ABC Four Corners footage, showed no signs of surprise at the practices on the footage and would not confirm that the practices were exceptional. He also would not comment on whether their torturous practices might be painful or stressful for the animal and simply responded that he "did not know if that would stress the animal"

The professional reporting for the MLA has not been considered transparent, nor fair and unprejudiced.

There are two experienced veterinary professionals in our family, who have spent due time in abattoirs and on cattle farms. They, their colleagues and the academics that trained them all similarly express that they have disdain for the live animal export industry, its practices and prolonged stress and pain subjected on the animals.

Reference is also made to the horrific animal shipment conditions that haunted veterinary practitioner Dr Peter Kerkenezov in attending to a sheep shipment by LiveCorp to Saudi Arabia during 2002 and 2003 as he reported and was printed in the Northern Star in Ballina on 4th June 2011 at <http://www.northernstar.com.au/story/2011/06/04/haunted-by-cruel-live-trade-ballina/>

The MLA and the industry cannot be relied on to fund or determine the animal welfare of Australian animals exported to this region for slaughter, or to provide honest reports.

The AVA confirmed in their media release, 31 May 2011:

"We are appalled by the images of the treatment of Australian livestock in last night's ABC Four Corners," said Dr Barry Smyth, President of the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA).

"The AVA has serious concerns about the welfare of exported Australian livestock and the failure to use methods of humane slaughter on these animals.

"It is important that government and industry work with the veterinary profession to ensure that standards of animal welfare are maintained in all areas of live export.

"The AVA considers that importing countries must meet similar animal welfare standards as exist in Australia, including for humane slaughter.

"A truly independent expert taskforce is needed to set and maintain animal welfare standards in Indonesian abattoirs that receive Australian cattle."

"This taskforce would act as an independent watchdog, with people who are empowered to be critical, with a process that is transparent," said Dr Barry Smyth, President of the Australian Veterinary Association.

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“Where Australia is the supplier of livestock to other countries for slaughter, we face an ethical obligation to ensure their welfare. Only by ensuring that high standards of welfare are established and maintained can the industry resume trade with Indonesia.

States that they have written to the federal Minister and the department to set out our plan and we are waiting to hear their response,” he said.

The tasks that have been proposed include:

- Establishing acceptable standards of abattoir facilities and practices.
- Classifying Indonesian abattoirs according to the standards.
- Set and monitor an auditing process to ensure animal welfare standards for the supply chain from Australia to point of slaughter.

“The AVA strongly supports stunning of all cattle before slaughter and this will also be an important priority for the taskforce,” said Dr Smyth.

The primary AVA recommendations for resumption of the industry have been ignored.

Warnings were earlier provided to the Government and industry by the AVA in March 2006 in regard to cruel practices with Australian animals in Egypt tolerated and may not be acted on under sovereign law in other countries.

An independent task force would be required from the Government to further animal welfare in dealing directly with foreign vet and Government bodies in this region as it essentially requires cooperation of their own legal framework.

Ref: <http://www.liveexportshame.com/news2/index.php?action=printpage;topic=2051.0>

It is proven over and over that the MLA and live export industry does not improve animal welfare. It does not allocate due funding to this and does not follow the AVA and RSPCA recommendations.

2. The profitability is isolated and has created large vested interests

The industry provides highly focused earnings while also receiving heavy funding from taxpayers to the MLA for research and development. It has been precluded from accountability and public reporting which is unacceptable with respect to its need to primarily assure animal welfare. The Government funding has also not demonstrated returns but rather significantly disadvantaged the home economy and employment.

Some very large corporations and businesses have grown from live export such as Elders and AACo. Consolidated Pastoral Company which owned 19 stations, was owned by the Packer family's Consolidated Press Holdings, and was sold to huge capital gain to foreign investors at around \$400 million based on its profitability in live animal exports and while animal welfare struggled to catch up. This has not benefited the Australian economy.

<http://www.fionalake.com.au/blog/news/agricultural-news-property-sales/consolidated-pastoral-company-sale/>

Paul Holmes a Court is reported to be Chief executive of Heytesbury in Northern Western Australia which runs several big cattle stations for live export out of the Kimberley area.

A number of huge corporations have simply generated wealth while offering limited full time employment per capita to their regions. These organisations however have strong political pull.

It was the National Party which set up the MLA and its taxpayer funding in 2003/2004 and also oversaw its constitution and objectives. The MLA's and industry has provided poor return to taxpayers and the economy in addition to not assuring protection of the animals it traded.

3. Conflict of interest with animal protection

The MLA and industry performance has highlighted the existence of a major conflict of interest between the high profitability of live export turnover; with the failure to protect the animals it sold for offshore slaughter where there is duty of care. This was not included as an essential goal of the MLA.

Pecuniary interest has been its primary objective and the focus has been simply that maximum cattle arrive in good saleable condition. Animals became turned over quicker and younger to meet Indonesian requirement of buying cheaper, at reduced weights, and maximizing time spent on local feedlots for up to 4 months.

The Australian fore example reported on 8 July 2011:

“Cattleman with a 200,000hectare station surrounds Port Hedland's cattle yards, breeds Droughtmasters, a tick-resistant Australian breed that adapts well to the hot and dry, and sells them to whatever market pays the best price, be it Indonesia, Egypt or Thailand.

“1000 head planned to ship would reap up to half a million dollars as is already half pay back a business quoted to cost \$1 million a year to run. 10,000 remain on the property highly profitable business even for smaller live exporter and suggest extremely lucrative for the large corporations”

The welfare of cattle after shipment and sale has been of little concern with respect to slaughter practices. Even the large corporate pastoralists as Elders have only spoken since the cruelty footage was screened that there is a need to stun cattle before slaughter, but why never before?

The MLA have spent little of their huge taxpayer funding on assuring animal welfare yet have sought to justify in the media that its objective is to develop animal welfare in the region

4. Media support and advertising campaigns misleads the taxpayers

Further to the shocking truth revealed by the ABC's Four Corners, much that has been screened has been aimed at dispelling the truth. What has been screened or published has promoted anything from 'farmers and young children in their family cattle business' or 'to angry cowboy live exporters standing proudly by their beautiful beasts – while loudly demanding their rights to trade their animals to countries where their buyers may then do with them as they will and are notorious for animal mistreatment.

This recent promotional backlash by the MLA has been totally one sided and is not new and is to be deplored, as is here reported.

The Australian National Affairs reported on 29 June 2011 :

“While thousands of their cattle were being cruelly slaughtered across Indonesia, Australia's peak beef industry body was spending thousands of dollars *on publicity* in media outlets such as The Australian Women's Weekly to highlight the industry's transparency and commitment to animal welfare, a report has revealed.

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The revelations were contained in a consultant's report detailing how Meat & Livestock Australia spent about \$50 million from funds raised by an additional \$1.50 levy on each beast sold as part of a "*Funding for the Future*" program from 2005 to 2008.

The expenditure was described yesterday as the MLA "*glossing over*" allegations of cruelty at point of slaughter rather than choosing to spend money improving conditions in operations such as abattoirs in Indonesia.

The 2009 report gave a detailed breakdown of the Funding for the Future spending, including about \$2.9m on MLA's Live Exports Communications Activities, which were described as *effective in countering and modifying negative perceptions about the live export trade*. This is pitched to outlets such as Qantas Business Radio, The West Australian and A Current Affair.

It was relayed that "Proactive communication is critical to improving public perception and raising awareness of the industry," noted the 2009 Independent Review of the Effectiveness of the Additional \$1.50 Beef Marketing Levy study by Warwick Yates and Associates and Econ Search.

"It gives MLA a platform to promote their key messages, people and initiatives to create a positive industry identity, and to highlight industry's transparency and commitment to animal welfare."

MLA also spent money on the *Creating a Human Bond* campaign, which was described as a successful media partnership with Women's Weekly generating exposure for cattle producers through the telling of their stories and featuring evocative images.

"Two features have run and a third is under way. Each has *delivered* extended value such as a book, an increased profile for cattle producers featured, and an interest generated in further promotions," the review said.

Another section of the report was headed Media Educational and revealed how MLA and LiveCorp representatives regularly met with key metropolitan and regional media at media briefing sessions to *develop relationships with key journalists*.

This is all dishonest media promotion while there has been nothing spent to protect millions of traded animals from absurd cruelty after they are turned rapidly and at a premium to live export.

The Australian media meanwhile showed no corresponding support for all the Australian voters and volunteers that have supported a wide desire to end the pain for all these poor animals with a final ban in what is viewed to be a long ugly inward focused and profiteering industry. Their letters to the newspapers in support for the Bills for a ban were never printed.

The protest rally in many Australian states and cities on 18th June was noticeably under-reported by TV stations and newspapers. In Sydney the SMH referred to it as merely a couple of hundred protestors combined with some vegan campaigners. This was not accurate.

The International Business Times reported on 7 July 2011 that:
"The 'World Society for the [Protection](#) of Animals (WSPA) says it has been *flooded* with emails and calls from members of the community outraged by the Government's decision to resume live cattle exports to Indonesia."

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“Ms Jessica Borg Campaign Manager for the WSPA said “WSPA is not simply calling for a ban, we’re calling for the chilled meat trade to take the place of live exports. Economic analysis has shown that live exports actually cost [Australia](#) \$1.5 billion in lost [GDP](#), \$270 million in lost household income and around 10,500 in lost jobs.”

There is ample reporting abroad about Australia’s major role in the live animal exportation to such a notorious region. In other developed nations attuned with the 21st century this is an industry where few would now dare to even tread without massive confrontation and media coverage. In Australia it is all swept under the carpet by sympathetic powerbrokers.

One cannot expect fair reporting in Australia about its internationally shamed live export industry when the lucrative trade includes huge pastoral live export corporations, with strong media ownership and political influence.

The prejudicial media and political handling of Australia’s live animal export to the region is truly remarkable and is all funded with deliberation from the MLA’s large coffers from taxpayer funds as well as farmers. .

5. The MLA controls the Government and political objectives

The MLA has deep reserves from long term Government funding, reported to be around \$40 million annually and in receiving levies from farmers of annually between \$60 to \$70 million and which it uses to drive growth in the industry and little but misdeed in regional animal welfare.

Recent events confirmed that is however inward focused in rejecting to support its member farmers and cattle after its own bad performance and role in the cruel slaughter of the animals in Indonesia. The trade was suspended after it failed to be able to trace its cattle or assure they were not being brutally mishandled in the 90 percent of their abattoirs which did not stun.

It will require a public inquiry to conclude on its activities and the wide objection to its ongoing heavy funding from the public purse.

The MLA none the less still flexed its powerful muscles at the Australian Government assisted by a major advertising campaign and which was not agreed by the taxpayers. It simply bullied and controlled its own conditions for resuming its trade. The Indonesians clear disinterest in animal protection was simply catered to by the MLA and the cruel slaughter of many of the cattle will be able to continue.

The MLA’s objectives are also heavily driven by its political arm in the Nationals, in coalition with the Liberal Party and also by the Government’s full preoccupation with major structural and fiscal upheaval and the carbon tax.

The MLA continues to mask the preferred traditional and barbaric slaughter practices as it has done for over a decade. It advised Australians of its intention to simply forge ahead and grow live animal exports further.

It was announced that around \$700 million has been received in research funds since 1998 and much from Government funding and its appropriation is not made public. Of the thousands of projects nominated less than 8 percent would appear to have been documented or followed through. Large appropriations have been noted made over to associates of directors. There are

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also indications that some of the directors of the MLA have large interests in 'foreign meat processing businesses' as is entirely unacceptable.

Reference is made to Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/a-beef-about-beef-rampd-lost-in-a-dust-storm-20110626-1glm7.html#ixzz1RJ9VDSC3>

Where "Exhibit one in Economou's argument is the presence of JBS-Swift's chief executive, Iain Mars, on the board of MLA. JBS-Swift, headquartered in Brazil, just happens to be the processor of 30 per cent of Australia's export cattle."

The cattlemen claim to be angry and not responsible for the \$60 to \$70 million a year they paid in levies and was not assigned to protect the animals in their care. Research and development in the primary matter of animal protection appears to be totally deficient and the wide incidence of animal mistreatment never reported.

In the Sydney Morning Herald 27th June 2011 it is reported; The MLA's chairman, Don Heatley, said on ABC radio's Victorian **Country Hour** on Thursday. "Number one, can I say really clearly: If the MLA knew that this horrible activity was taking place within the marketplace, would we not have done something about it?" Read more <http://www.smh.com.au/business/a-beef-about-beef-rampd-lost-in-a-dust-storm-20110626-1glm7.html#ixzz1RJA1wIGe>

Exhibit two is an enduring opaqueness about how MLA spends its research and development money. This is not a small argument, given the MLA spent \$82 million raised from farmers on R&D last financial year, and about than \$700 million since 1998.

And exhibit three is the shadowy process by which companies including at least one of the meat processors (JBS-Swift again) appear to double their R&D dollars through a poorly disclosed funding mechanism.

Through renewed focus on a couple of incendiary submissions bowled up last year to a Productivity Commission inquiry into R&D corporations, the beef association has put the issue of MLA accountability squarely on the agenda.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/a-beef-about-beef-rampd-lost-in-a-dust-storm-20110626-1glm7.html#ixzz1RJAMzLJ>

In the beef association submissions Economou authored, he disclosed that only 260 R&D projects funded by MLA had a final report.

The MLA strongly defends its disclosure, saying not all projects receive a final report, and questions Economou's count of 4000 R&D projects. But the point stands: the results of a large amount of MLA R&D is unknown.

While annual audits and compliance audits tell the federal government everything is in order with MLA's R&D funding, no one knows publicly which body received what MLA funding.

The least disclosure comes, paradoxically, in the funding that is boosted on a dollar-for-dollar basis by state and federal governments.

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Through a wholly-owned subsidiary known as the MLA Donor Company, MLA received \$11 million in "donations" last financial year.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/a-beef-about-beef-rampd-lost-in-a-dust-storm-20110626-1glm7.html#ixzz1RJAhcGy9>

This was supported by government funding to become 63 R&D contracts valued at \$22.9 million.

The annual report states that the funding contributes to projects across "all parts of the industry supply chain including processors, value-adders, breed societies, large pastoral companies, and technology providers".

But the projects funded through the MLA Donor Company are not the subject of any disclosure. Economou says that this is against what R&D should be about and says:

"You must publish research and development so it can be built on by researchers and used by industry, that's the scientific requirement as opposed to an accounting requirement."

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/a-beef-about-beef-rampd-lost-in-a-dust-storm-20110626-1glm7.html#ixzz1RJAuBDQi>

So, in rough terms, Australia's largest meat processor puts \$1 in and gets \$3 out. For what? That isn't disclosed on the research database. These kinds of transactions get on Economou's goat, so to speak, when considering the needs of Australian farmers.

"The collective body has become captured by the giant local and international merchants," he says. "It's not working in our interests."

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/a-beef-about-beef-rampd-lost-in-a-dust-storm-20110626-1glm7.html#ixzz1RJB9VNts>

This is all entirely unacceptable practice.

6. The Industry and MLA took risks and must take responsibility

Farmers entered the live export trade together with some very big corporations and private businesses which found it very lucrative, some took loans as a result and some have sold their businesses for large capital gains, some of which were also to foreign investors. Quicker returns were generated with quicker turnover of under mature animals.

Once a product is sold a purchaser may do with it as he will. The industry targeted the East and Middle Eastern regions which is the most notorious in the world for cruel practises with animals as is widely known and expected.

But there is a duty of care in rearing animals. The exporters used an agency the MLA on which they were represented. If their association did not disclose the risks of excessive cruelty in trading live animals to be slaughtered offshore, then it was the member's and cattle exporter's job to find out. If the ongoing campaign pledges great care for their animals why did they not seek to find out and question their agency. They held the view that their care and protection and foremost against cruelty stopped at their point of sale and saleability.

There were major risks with this lucrative trade in abandoning and exposing animals to cruel practices which were not disclosed and which the Australian taxpayer did not agree. Three or four decades of selling millions of live animals for wide scale cruel slaughter in the export and over a decade of its mishandling by the MLA is viewed too much by the Australian taxpayers.

The MLA and industry have never been answerable to the taxpayer and significantly over Australians' concerns for the welfare and protection of the live animals Australians sold for slaughter. The export producers accepted the risks in entering the live animal trade for its profitability on the back of the mistreatment of Australian animals and this was not disclosed and against taxpayer's agreement.

The live export business plan is viewed to have been an abomination and the objectives and performance and the MLA has avoided financial and animal welfare accountability. Australians may have held high respect for their cattlemen but now widely feel no sympathy for the live export businessmen.

The GFT shocked and devastated the financial economy, secondary industry and service sectors, forcing huge losses to jobs, savings and retirement funds. This was largely not self inflicted yet all sectors have adjusted and gone forward. The live export sector should not have scoffed at the Governments funding of \$33 million to ease their direct needs and adjustments which the industry may have to one day face.

It may be time that Australian taxpayers' views and disappointments with the live export trades are now brought over. Other Australian animals are extended respect and humane treatment on shore and as much so when they have served their owner for sale and for consumption as food.

7. The unaccounted costs to the Australian taxpayers and volunteers

Charitable groups have been forced to unfairly compete with the MLA in its lavish promotion of the live animal trade to be an achiever in animal welfare. Volunteer organisations have to scratch up funds to remind the public to stay with their support for the ban and a close to this archaic cruel industry.

In NSW for example "the Sydney Pet Rescue and Adoption Society "(a member of the WSPA) for one, have more than enough on their plate in time consuming benevolent work just looking after Australia's onshore discarded or mistreated animals. They have taken on another big campaign to run stalls and try and raise funds for "newspaper advertisements" to remind the public to follow through their support in banning the Australian live export trade. These 'ad's,' which our big media/pastoral corporations would reject to support, have cost charity workers \$2,000 a page.

It is not acceptable that private fundraisers, who are also taxpayers, must then work hard to inform and maintain the public's awareness of the major spin and misconceptions from the live export industry, its offshore cruelty and need for Australia to finally withdraw from this.

It is appalling that this is adding to the cost and deployment of so many of Australia's best volunteers and societies. This is a shameful added burden and expectation on Australians and the economy, which is simply placed on them by what is considered a heinous self interested, powerful and inwardly directed industry which has not improved livestock welfare in the region.

Live export has also demanded ongoing resources from both Animals Australia and RSPCA to provide honest independent reports. This presents an unnecessary added burden on the community and a distraction from these organisations existing and stretched roles onshore.

8. Live export is an economic drain and handicap to economic development

Exporting a primary product in its alive and most rudimentary form has been at other cost to the economy and the taxpayer in terms of causing a decline in Australia's processing industry and related economic growth. The live export industry is not sustainable for Australia's future.

Live export meat is reported to sell for 10c per kilo more than processed exports, as is a small margin for the major loss to economic value added to totally unacceptable animal welfare outcomes.

The International Business Times on 7 July 2011 reported :
"Economic analysis has shown that live exports actually cost [Australia](#) \$1.5 billion in lost [GDP](#), \$270 million in lost household income and around 10,500 in lost jobs. This approach is supported by the Labor Party in WA who voted at their recent party conference in support of a transition from live exports to a chilled meat trade, encouraging industry diversification and supporting a strong processing sector that in turn creates local jobs,"

The MLA has proven in over a decade that it cannot be trusted and needs the Government to act as a permanent international watchdog over the live animal export industry and its offshore slaughter practices not only in Indonesia but the entire Middle Eastern region. This will add further ongoing cost to the Australian economy.

The employment which the trade boasts is highly focused and much is seasonal and there has been little economic return to the region in terms of balanced economic development and full time work. Welfare is also highly relied on. There has also been no economic return and in fact loss to the Australian economy as a whole. Contractors in transport and shipping would also be required with processed exports.

Australia was served major economic disadvantage with the expansion of live animal exports and the closure of many abattoirs largely in the Northern regions. Australia's biggest meat processing companies have reported the retraction of food processing and related industries.

Economic progress relies on sectoral change and the steady development of secondary industry, manufacturing and food processing which has all been foregone through promoting the live animal trade for slaughter.

Mr Bill Shorten recently announced that "Australians will now have to work harder in the areas of agriculture, mining and services". This expectation will be higher with a carbon tax. Current move towards bigger government may also be added.

There was no mention of secondary industry, manufacturing and processing and non-Government technology and industries, while allowances were made for Australians to rely on jobs in 'foreign-owned' industry and takeovers. That is not good enough.

Australia is simply becoming used to the omission of secondary industry from the Australian economic equation. Its secondary and assembly industries are being continually driven offshore

by cost accountants; to India, Thailand and parts of Asia, as with the once thriving car manufacture and assembly.

It is in Australia's best interests to regain its foothold on secondary industry and in Australian ownership and this may be embarked on with growth in food processing and its export.

Australia should not be shipping *every* primary product offshore without its further development. Economic growth and rising standard of living relies on the transition from primary industries to secondary (manufacturing, assembling and processing) industries. This is the driving force behind rising living standards. Small business cannot harness economies of scale or provide for real income growth and avoidance of living beyond our means or on credit. .

"Live" animal export, in common with mining, is well down the development scale. While leaving the cruelty concerns aside, the live cattle industry should *not* be sponsored by taxpayers to grow and rapidly turnover assets for shipment offshore without any respective return to the economy, employment and growth.

The dynamic effects of value added to onshore cattle processing would flow on to building, construction, planning, marketing, export agencies, as well as current needs for transport and shipping. It will also flow on to by products such as leather, bone and 'organic' fertilisers. It will provide for more regional employment and contractors not less. The existing productive capacity and employment, ancillary jobs and contractors such as stockmen, transport and shipping would be retained.

Australia's agricultural base producers are highly respected but the country cannot slip back to being a primary producing economy sustaining largely service and financial industries and 'big' government. This will not provide a secure and wealthy future to take Australians forward and maintain its economic development into the next century.

9. Taxpayer funding for the cattle industry - in onshore processing

A move to onshore meat processing would justify Government funding be transferred from the MLA to of the cattle industry and food processing. The government should not be providing taxpayers funds to live cattle exports but assist the cattle industry to restructure for its sustainability, to lead the way and contribute to economic growth. Instead of undermining the economic progress this would provide a stimulus and would also increase Government income and reduction of debt.

The Government should also sponsor the restoration and development of Australia's meat processing industries for export. This will not only grow regional employment but also boost the wider Australian economy.

10. Marketing and Refrigeration of Processed Meat can be overcome

Indonesia has informed Australia that its beef is preferred. It also has the edge through logistics and proximity. Australian beef is reported to be eaten by the top ten percent of Indonesian income earners as may include restaurants and does not feed the poor. The poor cannot afford Australian meat and their diet consists of various meat forms and pulses as are met by subsistence.

Australia may therefore determine how its beef and meat will be marketed. It is not required to provide live cattle to feed Indonesia's third world "wet markets" with "warm meat" as the MLA continues to promote, and which permits the mistreatment of its animals.

Australia should harness its edge in quality, logistics and proximity, market and improve on its upmarket demand and does not need to supply to wet markets. This specialised market sector has more future as Indonesia develops. Indonesia has repeatedly stated its intention to cease live cattle imports by 2014 and to become self sufficient. Aside of it being achieved, that is Indonesia's known intention.

Australia is good at refrigeration and might grow this industry. The hurdle in providing refrigeration for upmarket chilled or frozen meat sales in Indonesia can be far more quickly overcome than in the protection and slaughtering of its live animals. This could boost the refrigeration industry in supplying Indonesia and in fitting out ships.

Indonesia already buys Australian processed meat as is also Halal and sought chilled or boxed meat from New Zealand during the Australian suspension, and not live animals.

Egypt, the one scenario where live export was stopped, there was a remarkable growth in the exportation of meat processed in Australia. Egyptian imports of Australian processed sheep meat rose by 300 per cent between 2002-03 and 2005-06, when Australian live sheep imports were stopped.

The Australian cattle industry should move towards a sustainable and proud future in exporting boxed, chilled or frozen and processed beef as the Government may assist.

11. The MLA should be disbanded.

The Government should not continue allocating taxpayer funding to the MLA based on its very bad performance, complete lack of integrity and dishonesty.

There is also wide public, worker union and also industry support for onshore processing of cattle for export and disbanding the MLA as will protect the animals from cruel slaughter. There is also growing Parliamentary support.

The live export industry has been driven by MLA to grow on the back of animal cruelty and dishonest reporting. It has failed to address animal cruelty and has actually harnessed it. It has not been accountable to the taxpayer on economic or animal cruelty grounds for its allocation of around \$40 million in public funds annually since 2003

The Australian public widely support the banning of live cattle exports to Indonesia and which led to its initial suspension. Almost a quarter of a million Australians quickly petitioned for that in the space of just forty eight hours.

12. Animal welfare objectives through Government Aid

Animal welfare in Indonesia and the Middle East has not, and cannot be, achieved through funding private business interests or their agency the MLA. This has been proven without any question and at immeasurable cost to animal suffering.

The vested interests which developed have simply pursued their business opportunities in these countries and have set no priority or record in animal protection as has been proven.

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The Government needs to improve the humane treatment of animals through direct foreign aid to the region as underdevelopment impacts as much on animal mistreatment as it does human misfortune and this is intertwined. This is best achieved through veterinary and animal welfare programmes or volunteers. Agencies such as "Vetnet" send volunteers from all faculties to underdeveloped nations. This has included training by rotational vets, remittance of recycled veterinary equipment and donated medications, and has far greater success and acceptance of Australian standards and practices as trusted by the local people.

The betterment of animal welfare, laws to protect cruelty and bad slaughter practices *cannot* be achieved by sending millions of animals from Australia to simply adding catastrophically to the numbers subjected to the cruel treatment – the trade has been driven by simply business opportunism. This is wasteful of Government funding and brings no success.

The Government funding of the MLA for research and development and its claimed use to further education and welfare of animals in the region should be fully investigated and terminated.

The AVA and RSPCA should have both been fully involved and consulted in the resolution as was recommended instead of simply acting to the dictates of the industry and MLA.

There is need for a "Federal Ministry for Animal Protection" when strong vested interests and corporations predominate in agriculture and pastoral business, as well as large investment divisions from other sectors such as media and have strong parliamentary lobby in Australia. There is a conflict of interest with the significant undermining of animal welfare and protection and more so when the animals move offshore and out from under Australian laws and standards. As experienced this can then take decades to turn around and defeat and while the misery and pain inflicted on animals is prolonged, out of sight and out of control.

As Independent MP Andrew Wilkie told reporters in Canberra on 7th July:

"Both the government and the opposition are being held to their party's policy and he has urged Ms Gillard to allow a conscience vote on whether the live export trade should be stopped."

There is every indication also that views of the majority of Australians also have large support throughout both major parties in the Parliament. Australians do not want their representatives to be dictated to by party policy - foremost in denying support for a major humanitarian issue as wide scale animal cruelty.

Voters are now demanding that their Parliamentary representatives be permitted to vote with their consciences on such an issue.

Yours sincerely,

Pamela Gillot

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Grew up and schooled internationally, including the Middle East and India. An Economist (Uni. of Melb 1971), experienced as Hospital Administrator to the Royal Melbourne Hospital, & the London Heart and Chest Hospital, currently manage and direct with husband, a small consultancy/company in Electronics and IT Network-Engineering

Daughter 1 & husband - experienced vets (Uni. of Sydney) , with cattle and livestock farms, in domestic animal practices, animal and wildlife rescue and protection, worked overseas on veterinary aid programme “Vetnet” to train vets and promote good and humane medicine and practices to underdeveloped countries.

Daughter 2 – graduating and entering human Medicine practice 2011. (Uni. of NSW)

**WHAT AUSTRALIANS ARE NOT BEING TOLD ABOUT THE LIVE EXPORT INDUSTRY
AND ITS ACTION PLAN FOR REFORM**

Live Export has undermined and not benefited the Australian economy.

Three separate economic reports over the past two years have confirmed that live exports are undermining Australia's meat processing industry - an industry five times more lucrative than live exports. ACIL Tasman's reviews into the live sheep trade found that phasing out live sheep exports would have minimal impact on farmers and would in fact reap greater benefits for farmers and the economy through increased processing in Australia. The most recent report, released last year, reached a damning conclusion about the impact of live cattle exports on Queensland's beef industry. It found that live cattle exports were 'cannibalising' Queensland's beef processing sector and threatened to destroy \$3.5 billion worth of assets, \$5 billion in turnover and 36,000 jobs. The loss to Australian or Northern Territory employment is false the industry would maintain its production and employment, including shipping and transport but also expanded dramatically by processing operations and jobs.

Live exports undermine Australia's more valuable meat processing industry .

Reports into the impact of live cattle exports on Queensland's beef industry have found that live exports are directly competing with the beef processing sector to the point of threatening its future viability.

Creating a loss to Australian or Northern Territory employment is false

A move to Australian livestock processing industries would not create unemployment. Cattle farmers could maintain their production and employment, including shipping and transport. Regional and overall employment would grow dramatically by developing processing operations and jobs in Australia. The 80 reported indigenous stations which employ 700 aborigines, many of which may be temporary or seasonal, would continue to work and produce. If they have love and pride for the cattle then the extended growth or fattening in Australia, followed by reliable careful handling and processing would be more rewarding.

Countless new jobs would be created in added abattoirs and meat processing, packaging marketing, building and planning also for leather, bone and fertilizer by products, adding to retained primary production, transport, shipping and export for meat and by products.

Chilled and frozen meat exports from Australia are worth five times the value of live exports

Chilled and frozen meat exports from Australia are already worth over five times the value of live exports annually. This would further increase if Australia was not providing importing nations with the alternative of 'live animals' and providing focused unethical profits to only some.

New Zealand banned live export in 2003

New Zealand successfully banned live export in 2003 because of irresolvable animal welfare concerns and has dramatically increased their chilled meat trade. Around 30,000 head of Australian cattle remained in Indonesian feed lots after the suspension and many are still slaughtered each night. The welfare of those animals in Indonesia requires a protective ruling right now.

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Big corporations and vested interest control the industry and the “Indonesian live Cattle business” which has been based on high profits and risk

A number of big “Indonesian live cattle business have been sold for hundreds of millions of dollars and huge capital gains, often to foreign investors , while animal welfare struggled to catch up. Cruelty reports were repeatedly provided to the industry and politicians and were rejected.

The voting structure of these sizeable companys effectively gives control of the industry to large corporations many of which are foreign-owned. These lucrative operations and vested interests have maintained a tight grasp on the country heedless of animal welfare issues.

Some of the largest live export businesses are also privately owned such the Consolidated Pastoral Company (division of Packer family Consolidated Press Holdings) with 19 stations, and AACo. These organizations also have both powerful media control and political lobby; huge persuasive powers with the Australian public concerning the live export business and also in suppressing the highly undesirable aspects.

Many lucrative Indonesian cattle businesses have been sold out for hundreds of millions of dollars and huge capital gains. The operations and profitability of these multi national corporations or their divisions have been focused and the wealth would not have benefited Australians widely or cattlemen generally nor has it provided duty of care to millions of live animals.

Other cattlemen may have been lured to the lucrative live export business but have accepted its risk and the damage that may now be measured. The substantial ethical and economic grounds for onshore processing may require adjustment to production. The Australian government and the taxpayer-funded MLA should now be made accountable for compensation to cattlemen under any transition.

The MLA cannot be trusted to ensure live cattle exported are not treated cruelly

Cattle farmers pay \$5 a head to the MLA for every animal slaughtered. A total of \$96 million was levied from farmers and exporters last year and \$38 million was received in R&D grants from government or taxpayers. An analysis of MLA annual reports over the past eight years shows that \$66 million of their research funds went to companies or institutions associated with its board members. Last year a hefty \$17 million, or 25 percent, of the \$70 million R & D budget was paid out to associates of the directors of the MLA.

Ms Janelle Saffin, Federal Member for Page, has confirmed that the company's voting structure - which effectively gives control of the industry to large corporations, many of them foreign-owned - was also of concern. So was the way the MLA and the Australian Meat Processor Corporation delivered research funding. The company does *not* publish the results of the research it funds, citing commercial-in-confidence concerns in many cases. The MLA said board members have removed themselves when conflict-of-interest issues arose. The Industry's lack of transparency was determined by a Senate inquiry in 2002; recommendations were made to the previous government under the Minister Mr Warren Truss and nothing was done about it.

A further joint parliamentary inquiry is now being called in the wake of the Senate inquiry into the Indonesian cattle slaughter scandal to now investigate the entire beef industry, including

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the distribution of millions of dollars of government funds and cattlemen levies for the undocumented research and development projects.

Despite a deadline from Senator Ludwig, the stand-off over the release of \$5 million of MLA funds to assist farmers affected by the need to suspend live export to Indonesia is unresolved. An investigation into the entire meat industry might be called. A growing number of politicians are lobbying the current Agriculture Minister, Mr Joe Ludwig, for a joint parliamentary inquiry into the beef industry, including the distribution of millions of dollars of government funds and farmers' levies for undocumented research and development projects, and effectiveness of the national tag identification system.

There is long evidence of a clear conflict of interest between the Ministry and Department of Agriculture which focuses largely on pecuniary outcome and animal welfare.

An investigation into live export cruelty reports was handed to The Australian National Party leader and Minister for Agriculture Mr. Warrant Truss in 2003. Animal welfare was cited as a prime consideration. Mr Truss however rejected the recommendation to introduce a tagging and tracking system for cattle and which would have made it relatively easy to stop cattle being sent to bad abattoirs in Indonesia.

It took 21 months to complete tagging of other livestock in Australia. Mr Truss and the National Party however are *now* insisting such an identification system is urgent and must be completed in a day or so to enable the live cattle export business to quickly restart.

The MLA was set up by the National Party under their operational guidelines and funding regimes. The objectives of the MLA does not include the welfare of animals it would process off shore. Wealthy business, and its political arm or lobby and control of the MLA have, heedless of widespread animal cruelty, have all actively promoted live export. There has meantime been repeated failure to respond to ongoing reports of serious animal cruelty.

The MLA and politicians involved have shown for years that they cannot be trusted with animals sent offshore for processing and slaughter which is outside the bounds Australian law and standards. There is a clear evidence that a conflict of interest has existed in Australia between animal welfare and the Ministry and Department of Agriculture foremost in relation to big business in agriculture and pure pecuniary interest. This may be a call for a Ministry for Animal Protection to in future ensure such ventures may not grow to an industry on the back of widespread inhumane practices with animals.

Australia's live export trade has been sending live animals to the Middle East for over three decades and cattle to South East Asia for two decades. Some 150 million sheep were exported to the Middle East during that time and over 6.4 million cattle exported to Indonesia.

The MLA report themselves that around the richest 10% of the Indonesian population are buying Australian beef (as our major importer), so by banning the trade we are not starving people (indeed Indonesia is happy to accept frozen meat - even if it was affordable to the poor!)

In banning live export Australia would expand its already lucrative frozen or chilled meat trade to Indonesia. There is no direct threat that Indonesia would source live animals from another country such as far off Argentina. Indonesia have already stated they will increase their frozen supply from NZ as an alternative source after the Australian suspension.

The live export industry 'claim' that Australia's presence in Indonesia (and other importing countries) gives us greater influence to improve animal welfare generally is wrong.

This statement is completely unfounded and is part of a cunning MLA and industry PR campaign to keep farmer and government taxpayer support which over almost a decade is quite astounding. Australian industry presence in Indonesia has in fact made animal welfare *worse* as Australian funded and installed equipment, which is unsuitable to stunning, has set a standard of cruelty that the Indonesians are now copying. The only significant welfare improvement in the Middle East, despite the live export industry exporting there for 30 years, is the introduction of stunning in the more civilized Jordan and which resulted from an Animals Australia investigation and direct involvement of the amenable Jordanian royal family.

Some of the worst cruelty documented was made possible by the Australian-designed Mark I restraint boxes as confirms the 'claim' of improving welfare standards is wrong.

During the Indonesian investigation, evidence was also documented of the impacts on cattle welfare of the Australian-designed Mark I cattle restraint devices, commissioned under the MLA/Livecorp program. 103 such devices have been installed in Indonesian abattoirs since 2001, assisted by over \$1.2 million in Australian taxpayer funding. The devices were installed to enable Indonesian workers to manage Australian cattle, which are larger, whilst continuing to use their traditional method of roping slaughter. The box confines Australian cattle while their legs are roped from below. When the box is opened the cattle struggle against the leg ropes and trip, falling with their entire weight onto a 45 degree sloping concrete slab. Cattle automatically try to regain their feet which results in them crashing their heads against the concrete slab and even breaking their jaws.

Evidence shows that these boxes were installed to facilitate Australian cattle being subjected to the cruel traditional method of Indonesian roping slaughter that trips the animals onto their sides in readiness for the throat cut. Footage shows terrified animals falling violently onto a sloping concrete slab and during the process of trying to get up crashing their heads and faces against the sharp edge of a concrete blood drain. The force of these blows is reported to have chipped away at the cement and has been known to break the cows jaws.

Some of the worst cruelty documented resulted from the use of Australian Mark I restraint boxes. This results in a prolonged and distressing death. Designing, funding and installing cruel restraint devices in Indonesia that have been condemned by leading international slaughter experts and which breach all international standards lays to rest once and for all any claim the Australian live export industry cares about animal welfare.

The Australian Mark 1 restraint box did not improve traditional slaughter methods, it breached every humane standard anywhere in the world.

Both methods are cruel and completely unacceptable. On viewing a Mark 1 restraint box in operation, Professor Dr. Temple Grandin, of the Colorado State University and the world's leading expert on livestock handling and slaughter, stated that this box "breached every humane standard anywhere in the world and was unacceptable and absolutely atrocious".

Australian live exporters have consistently shown they are willing to supply animals to countries which have NO laws to protect them from cruelty and where inhumane handling and slaughter are routine.

Animals Australia investigators visited ten abattoirs in four cities on the islands of Java and Sumatra. Once again this investigation revealed the willingness of Australia's live export industry to supply animals regardless of how brutally they will be treated, disturbingly in Indonesia, and to even supply equipment that facilitates and encourages cruel treatment. The evidence has revealed that Australian cattle are being subjected on a nightly basis to the torture techniques to force them to move into position for slaughter.

A key observation of the 2004 Keniry review into the live trade was that the industry was self-regulating and that this had to change. Seven years later, there is an abundance of evidence that nothing has changed.

The 'claim' that Australia sets the world's highest standards for the export of livestock is false.

Under current arrangements many of the Australian standards for the export of livestock (ASEL) are unenforceable or simply unenforced. Tens of thousands of animals continue to die each year on live export vessels and the others face cruel practices throughout the region after arrival. Despite high mortality shipment investigations conducted by AQIS regularly revealing clear breaches of ASEL, rarely have AQIS imposed penalties on exporters.

Stunning animals prior to slaughter is accepted for halal slaughter.

Contrary to what many people believe, stunning animals prior to slaughter is accepted for halal slaughter and is practiced in Australian abattoirs that produce halal accredited beef. Despite this, unfortunately stunning is still very rare in Indonesia. The animal cruelty witnessed in our investigation is not halal as it breaches fundamental halal principles of causing minimum harm to animals. This campaign is not about religion — it is solely about animal cruelty..

Methods of slaughter for Australian animals in Indonesia

Most Australian cattle arriving in Indonesia spend around 90 days (3 months) in a feedlot where they put on weight prior to being slaughtered. Indonesia has 10 large feedlots and 12 smaller operations with one-time capacities of between 2,000 and 30,000 head. When they have reached slaughter weight, cattle are trucked to either private or government-owned abattoirs. There are at least 121 possible slaughter locations for Australian animals. There are 750 registered slaughterhouses and potentially over 4,000 'slaughter slabs' in Indonesia. These facilities can slaughter anywhere between a few animals a night to over 300 animals a night. Many slaughter facilities are small, often just extensions of cattle holding yards [3]. Facilities range from archaic to relatively modern.

The two primary methods of slaughter for Australian animals are:

- i) rope casting whereby ropes are tied from a ring in the floor then around the animal's neck and legs to trip it over onto its side for the throat cut; and
- ii) restraint boxes that confine the animal in one place so ropes can be tied around the legs and the animal trips over onto its side when it attempts to walk out of the box. Both methods are distressing for the animal and cause a prolonged and cruel death. The restraint boxes (primarily the Mark 1 Restraint Box) were introduced into Indonesia by the Australian live export industry and have been denounced by international experts as being inhumane.

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90% of cattle slaughtered in Indonesia are not stunned and that is free to continue under OIE standards and while few Indonesian abattoirs even come close to meeting the OIE standards.

Stunning is accepted in Indonesia but is only practiced in a reported four abattoirs. Less than 10% of Australia's cattle are slaughtered in these facilities [3] with all other cattle experiencing cutting of the throat while fully conscious.

Two investigations over the past 12 months have documented the cruel treatment and slaughter of both Australian and Indonesian cattle

A live export industry commissioned report [4] recently documented poor slaughter methods, with cattle attempting to rise an average of 3.5 times once they had been forcibly tripped into the slaughter position and then experiencing an average of four cuts to the throat before it was properly cut to allow bleeding out. The Report also documented instances of eye gouging, tail twisting and hosing of animals to slide prior to slaughter, water jetted up the nostrils. A second investigation [5] carried out in March 2011 documented similar poor treatment and slaughter of both local and Australian cattle, including instances of abuse and torture. Animals have been reported to be tied up for a few days with food and water withheld before slaughter to further break their resistance to the slaughter practices.

Approaches made to Australian government and Ministry by animal welfare experts have been ignored.

In March 2011, Animals Australia investigators visited 11 abattoirs in four Indonesian cities to document the treatment and slaughter of Australian cattle. RSPCA Australia conducted a full scientific assessment of the evidence from this investigation. The evidence is damning and again shows the willingness of live exporters to supply Australian animals overseas, regardless of how cruelly they will be treated. Footage from this investigation was provided to the ABC's Four Corners program to enable evidence to be brought to the attention of the public.

Previous evidence of cruelty to Australian livestock documented in Kuwait in November 2010 had been immediately provided to Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig. The Minister's failure to take appropriate action left Animals Australia and RSPCA Australia, with no choice but to provide the evidence from Indonesia directly to the media.

The investigators who conducted the recent Indonesian investigation, Animals Australia's Campaign Director Lyn White, a former South Australian police officer, and the Director of UK-based Tracks Investigations, also conducted the 2005/06 investigations in Egypt that led to the suspension of the live trade to that country and eventual ban on the export of sheep to Egypt. Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and Livecorp admitted knowledge of the practices (tendon slashing and eye stabbing) that were routinely inflicted on cattle in Egypt.

The investigation in Indonesia revealed further terrible evidence of exported Australian animals being brutalised and, in the worst cases, tortured prior to slaughter. The scale of cruelty endured in Indonesia has been assessed as worse and more widespread than that inflicted on cattle in Egypt.

Footage of the cruel treatment of Australian exported sheep in the Middle East was taken directly to Senator Ludwig in November 2010. Senator Ludwig failed to take appropriate action

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and instead put finding a solution back in the hands of live exporters. Evidence of unacceptable numbers of sheep deaths, illness and appalling conditions on a LiveCorp vessel had similarly been presented to former Minister for Agriculture, Mr Warren Truss already in 2003.

Reference is also made to the haunting animal shipment conditions reported by veterinary practitioner Dr Peter Kerkenezov in attending to a sheep shipment by LiveCorp to Saudi Arabia during 2002 and 2003. This was printed in the Northern Star in Ballina on 4th June 2011 at <http://www.northernstar.com.au/story/2011/06/04/haunted-by-cruel-live-trade-ballina/>

In April, the Minister was advised about the severity of cruelty witnessed during the investigation in Indonesia but he has not requested to see the footage or discuss what was observed. The RSPCA's and Animals Australia's experience is that only when the public are made aware of the cruel treatment of Australian exported animals via the media, does the government take notice.

The suspension of the Egypt trade in 2006 only occurred after footage was aired on 60 Minutes, despite Agriculture Minister Peter McGauran already being informed that cattle were being brutalised in Bassateen abattoir. Australia's live exporters knowingly supplied nearly one million cattle to Egypt in the full knowledge that it was routine practice for animals to have their leg tendons slashed and eyes stabbed to disable them prior to slaughter

Indonesia does not have any enforceable animal protection laws

Indonesia is a member of the OIE (the World Organisation for Animal Health), but it does not have any Codes or laws that impose the OIE Guidelines (OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code for Transport of Animals by Land and the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code for Slaughter of Animals) or any other welfare standards.

The Indonesian workforce is largely unskilled and temporary.

Due to the largely unskilled and temporary nature of the Indonesian workforce, the live export industry focuses any animal handling training on the higher output private and public abattoirs rather than the smaller facilities [6]. Despite some training under the MLA/Livecorp program, it is clear that the majority of slaughter men have little understanding of animal behaviour or consideration of their capacity to suffer and feel pain and fear. Cruel and painful techniques are routinely used to move cattle. Stunning is simply encouraged under OIE standards. Given the choice and no legislation the traditional methods will continue.

The treatment of cattle in Indonesia is contrary to Australian law and standards

Cattle are stunned prior to slaughter in Australian abattoirs [7] (both for export and for domestic consumption). This includes cattle slaughtered for the halal-certified beef export market. Advice [8] provided in November 2008 to the Primary Industries Standing Committee clearly articulates that restraint should maintain conscious animals in an upright position and using restraint boxes that tip animals "is in itself an animal welfare risk and not acceptable."

Meat from Australian cattle slaughtered in Indonesia may be sold at "wet markets" or in Supermarkets

Much of the beef consumed in Indonesia is purchased from the fresh market system, with live cattle sold to local butchers who sell through the wet markets [9]. In supermarkets, people can purchase Australian beef processed in Indonesia or Australian (halal-certified) beef imported from Australia as boxed beef [10]. Last year, boxed beef exports to Indonesia were worth \$179.8 million

Every slaughter facility in Indonesia breaches international animal welfare guidelines (the OIE code)

Most animals were subjected to abuse through eye gouging, kicking, tail-twisting and even tail breaking. Cattle experienced an average of 11 cuts to the throat with one animal having his throat cut 33 times. Half of all Australian animals observed showed signs of consciousness more than 1.5 minutes after their throat was cut. One animal with a broken leg was tortured for 26 minutes before being killed. One animal that regained his feet after the throat cut and escaped on the slaughter-room floor then had his leg tendon slashed to disable him. A cow was seen shaking and heaving uncontrollably as the last standing in line for treatment after observing all of its mates one by one being brutalised and then stripped to carcass. The scale of the brutality documented in Indonesia on a nightly basis demanded that the Gillard Government suspend all live animal exports to Indonesia.

There has been consistent failure of stun gun trials and adoption in Indonesia

A planned stunning trial in a single abattoir in 2010 was not able to be completed due to a broad range of identified impediments in Indonesia. Now, a few months later, the industry is suggesting that they could facilitate the adoption of stunning in five abattoirs and implying that the broad uptake of stunning will occur from 2012. This is pie in the sky. The only slaughterhouses that are likely to be stunning animals at the end of 2011 are those private facilities that are already stunning, or already have the facilities and equipment to use stunning.

The likelihood of uptake of consistent and effective stunning in over 100 abattoirs that slaughter Australian cattle is absolutely negligible in the foreseeable future. The industry's new action plan states: It is deeply concerning to contemplate what this implies – that Australian-designed restraint boxes could have been installed in Indonesian slaughterhouses by MLA and Livecorp without any associated or ongoing training being delivered.

Their purpose has however been proven. It is absurd to suggest that in a country with no enforceable animal welfare regulations or penalties, "adherence to endorsed livestock welfare standards" is an achievable goal. Neither the industry nor the Australian Government have the capacity to ensure adherence to standards in another country.

The Indonesian 'live export animal welfare action plan' from the MLA - May 2011 will NOT change the incidence of cruel practices with Australian cattle slaughtered offshore

For the past 20 years, the Australian livestock export industry and Government have allowed more than 6 million animals to be exported to Indonesia, knowing that they will face a cruel and lengthy slaughter. The MLA are prepared to support this action plan to restore their industry with a \$9 million allocation from their fund but reject any responsibility to compensate \$5 million to cattle farmers for the care of the cattle as result of the mishandling and non disclosure of the cruelty issues. The cruelty would continue under the proposed industry action plan.

The action plan that has been provided by the 'Australian live export industry' is entirely unacceptable. Live Corp and the MLA have also failed to end cruel practices with the export of live Australian animals and its reporting has hidden the prevalence of cruelty for over a decade. The industry cannot be trusted in presenting now an action plan for quick solution.

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The plan has been analysed by Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Scientist for the RSPCA [5] and found to be worthless and will achieve no improvements to practices or not for many years.

The three key elements of the action plan are: to extend the use of restraint boxes, to advance the use of stunning to five Indonesian slaughterhouses, and a 'desired outcome' to meet OIE standards by 2015.

None of these are new developments. They have all failed in the past to protect the welfare of Australian animals, and we have no reason to believe that, in the hands of this industry, they will succeed in the future. For a decade, the industry has been installing restraint boxes and other infrastructure and conducting associated training.

These restraint boxes would be illegal in Australia, they fail to meet basic international animal welfare standards, and have been condemned by the world's leading slaughter expert Dr Temple Grandin – yet the action plan will allow their continued use. Not *one* Mark 1 restraint box would be removed from use under this plan – indeed their use would be further cemented and extended through a program of maintenance and upgrades.

The key problem with this proposed action is that it *totally* fails to acknowledge that the installation of the Mark 1 box has acted to entrench a system of restraint and slaughter that is inherently cruel. No amount of SOP training can prevent the forcible casting of Australian cattle onto their sides on a sloping concrete slab from causing distress, pain, suffering or injury.

The 2011 investigation has demonstrated that, where training programs have already been delivered in conjunction with the installation of restraint boxes, it has not had sufficient impact on Indonesian workers to prevent the abuse of animals or ensure a basic level of understanding of animal welfare, knowledge of their requirements under the OIE Code, or ability to perform an efficient throat cut.

There has been an Indonesian Animal Welfare Taskforce (MLA/LiveCorp/APFINDO) since 2006 doing exactly these assessments, identifying priorities and overseeing the installation of restraint boxes and training. This system has failed

This box design is in direct contravention of the OIE Code which states that "methods of restraint causing avoidable suffering should not be used in conscious animals because they cause severe pain and distress". Nowhere in this action plan is there any acknowledgement of the industry's failure to assess the welfare impact of this restraint device or that the restraint box is unable to accommodate stunning and thus is an impediment to expanding the uptake of stunning.

Training programs have failed to prevent the abuse of animals, ensure a basic understanding of cattle behaviour and welfare, or even guarantee proficient slaughter. The industry itself has stated, as recently as this year, that expanding the use of stunning in Indonesia would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. A planned stunning trial in a single abattoir in 2010 was not able to be completed. The likelihood of uptake of consistent and effective stunning in over 100 abattoirs that slaughter Australian cattle is absolutely negligible in the foreseeable future.

The Australian Government and the live export industry have given repeated assurances that signatories to the OIE are obliged to comply with OIE standards. But in Indonesia, as in many

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other OIE countries, there is no incentive, nor implementation or enforcement regime to achieve this.

The OIE Code sets out international minimum standards for animal welfare. They are intended to set a basic benchmark to provide guidance to countries that are still in the process of developing, or are yet to develop their own animal protection legislation and standards. This benchmark is far below the minimum standards of major livestock producing countries such as Australia. For example, the OIE standards *allow* the slaughter of fully conscious animals: this is *not* permitted under Australian slaughter standards.

The Australian industry is now putting forward an action plan that sets operating to OIE standards – the minimum international standards for animal welfare and the point that Indonesia should have been at before live cattle exports began. This is also only as a 'desired outcome' to be reached by 2015. In other words, the industry believes it will take Indonesia four years to reach the most basic international standards of animal welfare. Yet it has been exporting animals to this country for 20 years.

The industry programs in Indonesia over the past 10 years have *focused* on the installation of restraint boxes and associated training in order to increase the number of slaughterhouses where Australian cattle can be safely handled, reduce pre-slaughter stress and improve meat quality. They have categorically failed to make any significant improvements in the welfare of Australian cattle, as demonstrated by the footage obtained in the 2011 Animals Australia investigation and the RSPCA Australia analysis of this footage. In terms of improving animal welfare, the \$4 million of industry and taxpayer's money has been *wasted* on a restraint box program that entrenches inhumane handling and cruel slaughter techniques.

Mark 1 restraint box *cannot* be used for stunning as it does not hold the animal's head or body in a fixed, stable position. In fact, the industry's own reports have already acknowledged that the Mark 1 restraint box cannot incorporate stunning.

Until the Animals Australia investigation, the MLA and industry and politicians had no strategic vision or desire to manage supply chains (i.e. establish closed systems) in order to protect Australian animals from cruelty. In 2010, the industry responded to a direct request by animal protection groups to introduce closed systems, so that Australian animals only went through appropriate facilities, by again claiming their current provision of *ad hoc* facility upgrades and training was the best way to improve animal welfare in importing countries. Animals have been exported to Indonesia, and all other countries bar Egypt, with no restrictions on where they might be transported to or slaughtered.

In Australia, the process of developing Australian animal welfare standards would always include *targeted consultation with all stakeholders*, including key animal protection organisations, and a period of open public consultation. This provides a transparent, inclusive and relatively robust process. The industry action plan does *not* involve either of these inputs.

This industry has a *history* of employing consultants with links to the trade, or 'experts' who have previously or currently receive funding associated with the trade. These experts and consultants cannot be considered independent as they have an inherent conflict of interest.

The introduction of an abattoir auditing system was recommended six years ago in an industry funded report 4. This included a checklist based on Dr Temple Grandin's abattoir audit critical

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control points which are also used in Australian abattoirs. If this auditing process had been implemented back in 2005, then the industry would have been aware of the unacceptability of processing facilities at that time. None of the facilities visited in the 2011 Animals Australia investigation would have passed such an audit.

The 'Live Export Industry Action Plan' will not remove the incidence of cruelty

Animals will not be protected from cruelty in importing countries until animal protection laws are passed and enforced. Despite knowing about the cruel treatment of Australian cattle in Indonesia for decades, once again the industry has only promised to act when faced with exposure.

The industry 'action plan' costed at \$9 million is a predictable public relations response designed once again to mislead farmers and the government into continuing to support the trade. It is the MLA and industry's excuse to by pass their immediate and direct responsibility for \$5 million to compensate farmers in caring for the need to suspended cattle shipments.

There is no incentive for importing countries to take such action when a country such as Australia is willing to supply animals regardless of how brutally they will be treated. This is irrefutable evidence that the live export industry cannot be trusted. They will without hesitation allow animals to be subjected to cruel treatment, torture and brutality and then go so far as to facilitate it by installing inhumane devices that have been condemned by world experts.

Australians all have a duty of care and our country should not be forced to step back in time and support cruel practices from other's habits and cultures with the Australian animals that have been handed over or and abandoned offshore. The live cattle trade with Indonesia must be halted immediately and the Australian Government must announce an end date for live animal exports to all other countries. Were all those involved in this trade made accountable to Australian animal welfare laws they would be prosecuted and convicted for animal cruelty. This trade has continued only because it operates outside of the reach of Australian animal protection legislation and Australian slaughter standards.

The detailed response to the industry action plan from Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Scientist for the RSPCA (5) should be considered above any industry opinion and objectives and evidence it has provided to date.

Sources :

[1] Livecorp Annual Report (2009/2010)

[2] <http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/welfare/export-trade/mortalities>

[3] MLA/Livecorp Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership, Final report – Indonesian point of slaughter improvements (2009/10)

[4] Independent study into animal welfare conditions for cattle in Indonesia from point of arrival from Australia to slaughter. Caple, I, McGown, P., Gregory, N., Cusack, P. (2010)

[5] Welfare conditions for Australian cattle in Indonesia, An Observational Study, Dr Bidda Jones, RSPCA Australia (2011)

[6] MLA Opportunities to improve slaughter standards and profitability in Indonesia (2005)

[7] http://kb.rspca.org.au/What-is-halal-slaughter_116.html

[8] http://www.daff.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1370332/animal-welfare-livestock-slaughter.pdf

[9] MLA Opportunities to improve slaughter standards and profitability in Indonesia (2005)

[10] http://www.youtube.com/livestockexporttruth#p/search/0/Flw70rH_WZ8

Pamela Gillot, 194 Copeland Rd Beecroft NSW 2119 Tel 02 98755188 (22.06.2011)

Pamela Gillot

From: Ruddock, Philip (MP) [philip.ruddock.mp@aph.gov.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 1 June 2011 5:18 PM
To: Pamela Gillot
Subject: RE: Bill on Immediate Ban on Live Animal Exports

Dear Ms Gillot

Like all Australians, I was shocked and deeply disturbed by the mistreatment of Australian livestock exposed during the *Four Corners* program on 30 May 2011. I thank you for your correspondence and I share your concerns.

There can be no justification for mistreating Australian animals in Indonesia or anywhere else. As Australians, we should not and do not, accept cruelty to animals.

If we could have our way, Australia would only process, freeze and ship packaged meat to other parts of the world. For one thing, it's a higher value product. But there are some countries where that is not possible for cultural and practical reasons.

In many areas, especially in Asia and the Middle East, we are talking about villages where there no refrigeration. The only way families in those areas have access to fresh meat is to buy product that was slaughtered locally.

We did see on *Four Corners* brief glimpses of good practice, where Australian Government and industry investment has provided modern stunning and slaughter facilities to some of the larger Indonesian abattoirs.

We support the government's decision to ban exports of Australian cattle to abattoirs that do not have such facilities.

It is true that some practices and attitudes in foreign countries differ markedly from our own. We must remember that we're dealing with centuries-old cultures and change takes time.

That is why we invest millions of dollars to improve animal care and education overseas. Through this trade we strive to be the instrument of change. Clearly, more needs to be done and the industry is committed to extending its work in upgrading Indonesian abattoirs.

Australia is the only country in the world actively working to improve animal care in our destination markets. We must use our influence in those countries to speed up progress on animal welfare reform.

The suspension of exports will remain until Australian expectations of acceptable animal welfare practices are in place. These expectations, are not optional, they are integral to our requirements for the live export industry.

I thank you, again, for your interest in this important issue and I can assure you that the Coalition will continue to work to ensure Australia leads the world in animal welfare – both here and overseas.

Warm regards,

The Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Member for Berowra

From: Pamela Gillot []
Sent: Tuesday, 31 May 2011 6:47 PM
To: Ruddock, Philip (MP)
Subject: Bill on Immediate Ban on Live Animal Exports

Dear Mr. Ruddock,

Please find my letter attached to you.

15/07/2011

Yours sincerely

Pamela Gillot

SUBMISSION SENATE INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE
LIVESTOCK EXPORT TRADE

Federal Government Senate Inquiry & Parliamentary Investigations
Into Live Animal Export Industry
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

15 July 2011

THE LIVE ANIMAL EXPORT INDUSTRY AND THE MEAT AND LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION

I am forwarding a copy of a standardised party letter which many voters seem to be receiving from federal representatives across Australia and comparing. It contains largely identical statements in response to the public's very serious concerns about live animal export practices and the overwhelming desire to now see this banned. I referred to this in my submission.

The letters contain the same excuses and positive statement for the live export industry, in portraying it to be successfully promoting and achieving animal welfare throughout the export region. I understood that this has been sent out to some seven hundred voters in our constituency alone and possibly in response to also many phone calls. That is an alarming number of active and written reactions to one issue and there would be also many multiples of this who view the same but would not get around to writing or speaking up.

The major concern is that a party would supply uniform factual information that is being recognised as familiar MLA and industry propaganda as is used to convey its achievements in the welfare and protection of animals in their live export destinations, but which has been proven quite false by their performance. Voters across the country are in this case being unfairly misled and may pass on this material. The public's outcry about the industry's cruelty to million of animals over decades is simply being fended off and silenced while the export industry insists it will resume and grow.

Our representative did not seem too familiar with the term 'MLA' but said he believed the industry body only received levies from farmers, and not taxpayers, which it has in fact heavily received for a decade.

I consider that the details used in this letter should be checked for their source. People expect to approach their elected representative to have 'their' voices heard and conveyed to the party and not the reverse in the form of a deluge of persuasive and one sided material. This may mislead and silence voters across the country and with respect to a vested interest group which has justified investigation.

There is major support from the voters of both party persuasions for passing the Bills to ban live animal exports but democracy seem to be failing on this issue. The parties may be demanding that their members accept unity in their vote for their own convenience while major economic issues are under fire. The public seem to feel that there are however increasing reasons why both major parties should permit a conscience vote on this major humanitarian issue.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Gillot

SUBMISSION SENATE INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE
LIVESTOCK EXPORT TRADE

Federal Government Senate Inquiry & Parliamentary Investigations
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Canberra ACT 2600

15 July 2011

**ANIMAL WELFARE OF LIVE EXPORTS TO INDONESIA 1998 - 2011 UNDER THE MLA
- RESPONSE BY MICHAEL FINUCAN, LIVE EXPORT MANAGER IN JAKARTA**

The live export industry of cattle to Indonesia and its export agency the MLA should be judged by the total failure to achieve animal welfare standards which are acceptable to the rest of the developed world. The welfare and protection of the animals exported became the responsibility of the Meat and Livestock Association (MLA) which was formed by the Nationals in Government in 1998 and who in 2003 oversaw it becoming funded and joint responsibility of the Government.

The practices with exported animals have not been accepted by Australians either, but they were kept in the dark by the industry's control of the media, marketing and advertising campaigns Australia and lack of honesty in the MLA's regular self reporting on the abattoir practises – and which were heavily protected by the MLA and unpublished.

Michael Finucan, the MLA's live export manager in Jakarta in interview with Tony Jones , ABC's Lateline, 8th June 2011 simply confirmed the statements made by Cameron Hall, CEO of LiveCorp - their joint livestock shipping agents (interviewed by Four Corners in respect to the abattoir footage). The MLA and industry have known about the cruel slaughter conditions of the cattle in Indonesia for close to fourteen years, and Mr Finucan revealed to Australians, the MLA had simply not been able to get on top of it yet were very earnest about increasing the trade and pushing more cattle out over there. At arrangement with Indonesians, the cattle were able to be 'turned- off' younger; therefore also turned over faster and more profitably for the exporters. The transcript of Mr Finucan's interview with Tony Jones is commented on as follows:

TONY JONES "The video footage on Four Corners is evidence of what they (MLA) have achieved in ten years. This is systematic abuse with little hope of any real change if this has not been achieved by now."

"Australians were appalled, it is appalling. My concern now is that it is too easy to forget. Millions of cattle and sheep have been exported to countries without animal cruelty penalties. Countless inspections have been done but these conditions were allowed to continue. If not for the quite fearless efforts of Animals Australia and Four Corners these conditions would never have changed."

Yes, the efforts also took courage to bring this over widely to Australians – after years of industry media control, promotional material - anything else would have been felt disrespectful and politically incorrect in the Australian agricultural economy and political climate.

SUBMISSION SENATE INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE
LIVESTOCK EXPORT TRADE

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “Yeah, we've got a lot of work to do. We've a great team up here. We've got eight guys supplementing our team of our animal welfare people here in Indonesia.

They're out in the markets every night at the abattoirs; they're delivering a program that can help us ensure the welfare of cattle right through the chain. They're there working with the local operators to making sure that we can put in place systems that will make sure we don't see those images again.”

TONY JONES: “Did you and your colleagues - as Bob Katter has just said in the piece we've just seen, did you and your colleagues know about this for years and just not managed to solve the problem?”

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “We've been working up here for many years and we've always known there's issues, and that's why we commit resources and time and energy and effort into being in Jakarta, being 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's what we're doing.

We put levies into that, we've funded it properly, we've funded it as much as we could, and we're continuing to fund it and we will fund it until we get it right. So, we're committed to this trade, always have been.”

After fourteen years and six million cattle, my the MLA be asked should there be still “more to do” with the slaughter practices?

TONY JONES: “Let me just ask you this: how many Australian cattle are sitting in Indonesian feedlots right now waiting to be slaughtered? “

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “I don't have the exact number. It's probably around 100,000 head. So we're work on a system with the operators up here to direct those cattle to abattoirs that have appropriate standards where we've done extra work where we know the infrastructure and the teams working there are up to a standard that we can accept.”

TONY JONES: “That's an awful lot of cattle to be funnelled through a very limited number of abattoirs. From what we understand there are remarkably few of the 100 abattoirs dealing with Australian cattle that can actually do this correctly.”

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “What we've done is worked on a core group of abattoirs that we know will meet above the standards that we require to get those right initially. We'll be rolling this program out further to get additional facilities up and running.

We've got strong commitment from the Indonesian importers themselves. They're investing further down the chain to help improve other facilities and get the standards up to what they have to be.”

After fourteen years of efforts there is only “a core group that will (in due course) meet above the standards” from several hundred abattoirs and what standards?

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LIVESTOCK EXPORT TRADE

So Indonesians are investing in this too, atop of major funding from the farmers' and Government one to one - there's not much to show for it in arresting animal cruelty - after fourteen years, and eight from the taxpayers purse.

Yet Mr Finucan advises that the MLA are still pushing the millions of cattle exported up and up, insisting the Australian export numbers must resume and increase.

Is this not inhumane and insane, or simply incapable management?

TONY JONES: "As I understand it, there are only six of the 100 abattoirs which take Australian cattle that use the stunning device which stuns cattle and makes them unconscious before slaughter.

That is not very many, is it? I mean - and isn't that in the end - because that's what the animal welfare people agree is the only way you can actually do this - isn't that in the end, the only places you can send cattle, that have stunning devices?"

MICHAEL FINUCAN: "No, we feel we can send them to places that have good systems that manage the cattle, control the cattle during the process and get the right welfare outcomes. We're working to OIE (World Organization for Animal Health).

Indonesia's a developing country; we have to consider that. We want to deliver those outcomes, OIE outcomes, and we need to provide them the right infrastructure to get that outcome."

After fourteen years of working on the prevalence and ingrained preference for traditional roping slaughter, slow torturous disablement of the animal - the Indonesian export manager has conceded that abattoirs are still not even near the most basic OIE standards to which underdeveloped countries might aspire.

"The stunning is important. We're committed to delivering more stunning. There's a number of operators already purchased extra stunners.

We've got a program of getting involved with the local religious authorities and endorsing stunning and promoting that and we've already got additional facilities coming online now."

TONY JONES: "I'm thinking here of a potential quick solution. Even the animal welfare people, as I say, agree with the stunning devices; they're acceptable. So why don't you simply import 100 of them and put them in each of the 100 abattoirs that deal with Australian cattle and put Australian overseers or experts into each of those places for a period of time to save the trade?"

MICHAEL FINUCAN: "Look, using stunning equipment doesn't necessarily mean a good welfare outcome. We need to train the people in the correct use of them. We need to get the systems in place to use that equipment and we also need to get the acceptance of the local authorities and the local regional religious authorities that they accept it.

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So, while we do have acceptance of stunning at some levels, we don't have it right across the country. So, there's sensitivities, there's cultural sensitivities we must consider and we're going to work with the local authorities to get more stunning in place."

TONY JONES: "Well, how long do you think that'll take? Because, after all, the national religious authorities agreed that stunning is halal, is possible under their religion. So, how hard could it be to get this kind of equipment out to all the other places?"

MICHAEL FINUCAN: Well there's a number of operators, as I said, already purchasing stunning equipment. There's people who have got - waiting on production of more stunning equipment, so the practicality of getting 100 stunners into this market isn't up to scratch.

So the Government and farmers annual budget can well afford to purchase 100 stunners (even weekly) - then the cost is not the issue, stunners are not the problem, the MLA know it's the practises, preferences and laws.

Is this not criminal and prosecutable executive behaviour - does the Australian Government in partnership not wish to inform their taxpayers, stop the funding and prevent the Australian offshore cruelty continuing?

"But we're confident we can direct the majority of the cattle through key facilities where we're working. We'll ensure the welfare there. The individual operators will work hard and get their own facilities up and running and you'll see higher through-put through the current facilities.

There's definitely extra capacity available at the current facilities, so we'll work on just getting more cattle to the right places."

If the key facilities do not stun and are still being brought up to scratch, how can the MLA plan to see most cattle exported to these very few better facilities - which may finally approach basic OIE standards - with rope slaughter and no stunning?

Does this fourteen year plan make any sense in terms of the mounting decades of immeasurable suffering to Australian Animals?

TONY JONES: "You're talking about sending in trainers to train people yet again, but as we know, Australian trainers from MLA had recently visited two of the worst abattoirs that Four Corners filmed at, and the worst of them all, the Gudrun abattoir, had had six visits by Australian experts like yourself in the previous 14 months.

This whole process seems not to have worked at all.

So the MLA engaged an elderly retired veterinary professor on their inspection team who would ordain the reports - he had inspected the boxes, the practices in the above abattoir and saw the footage but stated that he:

"Did not know if those practices would cause stress or pain to the animal."

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That was a pretty poor sort of vet – we know many graduates and academics who taught them who would know that - but they also turn down the jobs which the MLA and the LiveCorp ships offer and pay handsomely for.

Most Australian vets’ seem to hold disdain for live animal export (for slaughter) - as did all the academics that trained them.

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “Well what we've learned is that we need more intense training, we need more regular presence there. We need a lot more adoption of what we do.”

Has this taken fourteen years for the MLA on site export team and executive to work this out?

“So we've now got a program where we're rotating a team through the abattoirs on a regular nightly basis. They're out there every night. We'll rotate them through the facilities, we'll have regular training, there'll be more presence.”

So Mr Finucan admits his team are all fully familiar with the practises in all the abattoirs that the MLA use.

How can the problem be not enough people out there, on the budget that the MLA and Government provide solely for this objective? Where are these funds all being spent – a comprehensive breakdown is asked for?

“We're committing to putting animal welfare officers in these 25 abattoirs in the short term to make sure they are there every night helping these guys getting it right.”

TONY JONES: “So, are you saying that trade should not have been stopped, that you've actually solved the problem already. Is that your - is that the way you look at it?”

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “I think the stopping of the trade is going to hurt a lot of people in northern Australia and we're confident that we can direct the cattle to the right places and have a system in place.

There's already systems in place here, Tony, that have stunning; they have an accredited supply chain the whole way through. So we're confident that the Indonesian market can accept cattle and manage them appropriately. There's more work to do in.”

Well Australians have heard the advent of that word stunning now for fourteen years - of course that would have been dumped by now.

Mr Finucan confirms they were aware that having a supply chain would provide tracking and traceability of animals – so that each animal recognised all the way through and protected. Why then after fourteen years was this nowhere to be found?

Was it not that animals could not be traced or inspected in abattoirs - that required the whole trade to be suspended?

SUBMISSION SENATE INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE
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TONY JONES: “Well, I mean, I've got to interrupt you there because, I mean, you've just made the point yourself that it's very difficult to get the stunning devices out to large numbers of abattoirs. Only a tiny handful of them use the stunning equipment so far. The stunning equipment would possibly be a solution, but the problem is that Meat and Livestock Australia and LiveCorp have invented this steel box, which according to the leading expert in the world actually is responsible for the torture of animals.”

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “Yeah, look, that piece of equipment needs to be used appropriately and properly and by well-trained people and we didn't see that on Monday night last week. What we saw were people misusing it and actual brutal cruelty, and that is not acceptable and that does not occur in most of the places.

We've got a system whereby we use it well and it works well. But, saying that, we are committed to upgrading it and getting a better piece that controls the animal better - it's better control for the animal, and therefore the animal welfare experts will be able to be there and help the butchers correctly process cattle.”

Mr Finucan admits repeatedly to having a system - but can he explain why the Government found only after fourteen years that it did not work - after the painful end to millions of animals and its dynamic growth path by the organisation ?

TONY JONES: “The cattle industry respects the advice of the American expert Temple Grandin, doesn't it? She's one of the world's leading experts on cattle management and the way to slaughter cattle humanely.

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “Yes, we do. MLA's had a long relationship with Temple Grandin. She's got a non-stun slaughter box on her website which uses principles that are around the world where people use non-stun processing, and so we'll be working to developing something similar and get it into many of these abattoirs.”

TONY JONES: “But Michael, if you've seen what she said on the Four Corners program, she looked at the Australian design, the MLA LiveCorp-designed steel boxes and she said they were atrocious. They shouldn't be used by a civilised country. She was outraged by them because they caused animals to drop out of the side of the box on their heads, to break their legs and hurt themselves and that was part of the design.”

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “The box is designed for a developing country with limited infrastructure and equipment in these facilities. There's limited power. So you need a system where the butchers working in the abattoirs can control the animals, get them on their side and slaughter them appropriately.”

“We need to make sure they do that quickly in a more controlled manner. That's what we're working on now, but we're committed to better designs and getting better equipment into these abattoirs.”

So Indonesia, Mr Finucan believes is at the stage of development which is not even yet basic OIE standards – as confirmed by research from Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Scientist of the RSPCA - and may not reach this until 2014 .

The MLA therefore designed, installed restraint boxes throughout Indonesian abattoirs aimed at the future of approaching OIE standards – or traditional roping

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slaughter which has very cruel consequences for each animal

TONY JONES: “But why didn't anyone figure out that the designs of these things in the first place with their 45 degree concrete inclines were pretty much purpose-built to make animals fall over and crack their heads on concrete?”

The Australian manufacturer have affirmed that they proposed designing the Mark 1 restraint boxes differently and more humanely, but that is what the MLA stated was best and it would introduce across Indonesia .

MICHAEL FINUCAN: “Look, we've had independent people come through the market and assess the welfare programs and the equipment. They've said that, used properly, it is an improvement on traditional slaughter and other methods used in the region.

We've also committed additional funds to other programs. We've had a number of designs that we've trialled up here and we've been working on an additional design which is a box that controls the animal a lot more. It uses hydraulics and electricity and it's got a lot more moving parts that can have issues.”

So after fourteen years the MLA considered the Mark 1 box was suited to making Indonesian practices more humane.

Can the taxpayers be advised as to what other programmes the MLA said it had committed additional funds, as these boxes were seen widely introduced?

“So - but we are focused on getting a better designed piece of equipment that meets this market's needs. It's a developing country. We're working in a growing nation and we need to help put the right piece of equipment in there so that they can have access to cattle and then access to beef.”

The MLA export manager has expressed that Australia – as the world's leading exporter of live animals - must simply be encouraged to increase its exports even more because it is in the stated terms a highly successful business. It was also noted as necessary to provide Indonesians more access to beef.

It is widely recognised that the diet of Indonesians, largely on subsistence, is commonly vegetarian but relies on rice, vegetables, pulses, fish and chickens and small livestock they rear themselves. The Indonesian poor are not fed by Australian beef, as they could not afford anyway. It is the top 10 percent of Indonesia income earners and restaurants, that in fact buy Australian beef – which do not buy from village or rudimentary “wet markets”. There may be an oversupply problem here.

Mr Finucan's statements would support that it is the MLA and industry push that is driving this live animal export market for the Australian business or vested interests - its profitability, rapid turnover of younger, under-mature animals.

Is that not completely inhumane and grossly irresponsible executive behaviour - and which seems to allocate a large budget to mislead Australians?

TONY JONES: “If the Australian cattle farmers are badly hurt by this trade, very

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briefly, do you think the - your industry association, which presumably has a stockpile of resources, money, should actually be paying the compensation?"

MICHAEL FINUCAN: "Oh, look, that's something for the board and the senior management. I'm here to deliver these improvement programs up here. That's what I'm committed to. Got a good team of people working here and we're focused on doing that - get this trade re-opened."

The MLA was quick to respond to Australia that it was offended that it may be expected to compensate for the animals hardship - heedless irresponsibility in driving the live animal trade into Indonesia.

TONY JONES: "OK, Michael Finucan, we'll have to leave you there. We thank you very much for fronting up tonight. Thank you for joining us."

MICHAEL FINUCAN: "OK. Thank you, Tony".

JULIA GILLARD P.M. has since said that her "government warned beef exporters six months ago about Indonesian cruelty but the industry failed to act." (Lateline 9/6/2011)

That would have been a final warning - to all Australian records.

The industry and MLA thus have failed to produce humane slaughter assurances after fourteen years in their care.

JENNIFER SAFFIN MP clarified in her speech to the House of Representatives – Proof of Adjournment on February 28th, 2011 Page Electorate: Meat and Livestock Australia

"(The MLA) has particular research and promotional responsibilities and, from her reading, those responsibilities are mandated by the legislation and the relationship of the levies that are paid by the beef producers across Australia."

It is Australian export producers that have a duty of care and responsibility for their animals' welfare outcome in the conduct of their business. The MLA is merely their marketing and export vehicle; exporters vote and elect their representatives to their association.

Live export growth is the result of an Australian industry push and not an Indonesian demand. It was chilled beef that was sought from New Zealand after the suspension and not live cattle from South America.

It is another MLA excuse and myth that Australia largely provides live animals to Indonesia to protect itself from foot and mouth entering Indonesia. Foot and mouth disease has long been prevalent in Western Indonesia - as is also just across the water from the eastern islands.

Past records show that Indonesia has only approached Argentina or South America for boxed or frozen beef - for one or more reasons - and *not* for live cattle from where the trip is long,. There is no reason to believe they would now wish to change that outcome.

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Dr Chris Back ,the WA Liberal and veterinarian outspoken on this issue, widely states he has special interests in cattle and the Australian Indonesian cattle business . Whatever that connection, the Indonesian cattle slaughter trade has overwhelmingly affirmed that vets and professionals paid, or associated with, the “Indonesian cattle business” or MLA have not reported objectively.

Australia must determine its beef market, product and refrigeration issues - which to date has been simply a matter of strong live exporters push heedless of the serious humanitarian issues.

The MLA, for all its heavy animal welfare funding, has not improved the widespread reliance of Indonesian abattoirs on cruel traditional roping slaughter practices which Dr Bidda Jones has researched do not even come close to meeting the most basic OIE standards - the starting point for an underdeveloped country – and that would not be achievable before 2014.
The Indonesian state they intend to be self sufficient in cattle and not require imports by 2014.

This is a recognised no-winner for both the Australian industry and its humane objectives with animals.

Mr Finucan, live export executive on site in Jakarta has confirmed that the animal protection activities of the MLA have been an utter failure. It would be unethical for the MLA to continue to arrange and promote the exportation of live animals to Indonesia. The MLA should be disbanded and its taxpayer funding withdrawn and directed towards the adjustment of the cattle industry towards its sustainability and future.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Gillot

Please find below the report from a veterinary practitioner which was published in the Australian on 13th July 2011 and is highly relevant to the inquiry. It is possible that this may have been already submitted by De Reeve Johnson or other readers as you might check.

Dr Johnson worked for the department of quarantine and live export industry and has had enormous trouble getting his first hand and professional reports concerning deaths of sheep in shipment recorded accurately after his reports were tampered with. He expresses his great concern about the integrity of the live export industry and the deliberate distortion of reports and altered records by the industry and related government departments.

The experiences simply confirms what is very common knowledge amongst most veterinary professionals and those colleagues, who have worked in the industry at some time, and largely express their disdain for live animal exportation and offshore slaughter.

The Australian 13 July 2011

LLOYD Reeve-Johnson, a veterinary surgeon accredited with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, has alleged government officials charged with overseeing the live export industry have repeatedly failed to address conflicts of interest within the system.

Dr Reeve-Johnson said he had witnessed first-hand the inner workings of the "fundamentally flawed" live export industry where livestock companies were allowed to be self-policing.

He had a blunt warning for Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig: ensure exporters cannot directly employ or pay the officials who should be providing independent advice on animal welfare standards -- whether in foreign abattoirs or on the ships that take the animals there.

In 2008, Dr Reeve-Johnson was one of several vets trained by AQIS to verify animal welfare standards on export ships in the wake of the death of more than 5600 sheep on the Cormo Express in 2003. It was carrying 50,000 sheep.

On his second journey on a livestock ship, Dr Reeve-Johnson kept daily records of the conditions of the animals. When more than 2 per cent of the goats on board died, he followed AQIS protocol and notified the commonwealth quarantine body immediately.

Dr Reeve-Johnson has alleged that when he compiled his "end of journey" report for AQIS, the livestock company instructed him not to record any of the additional goats that died as they were being unloaded from the ship. It is a claim denied by the company.

Dr Reeve-Johnson alleges he refused to alter his report and sent it to AQIS with his tally of 18 goat mortalities. He said he was disturbed to discover the exporter had also sent a copy of his report -- on his letterhead -- declaring only 11 goats had died.

A spokesman for the exporter last night maintained the company had provided AQIS with accurate numbers and Dr Reeve-Johnson had miscalculated the mortalities.

An AQIS spokesman said an investigation was conducted into Dr Reeve-Johnson's allegations, but "on the evidence obtained, the matter was closed".

Speaking to The Australian, Dr Reeve-Johnson said that while ever exporters employed independent auditors or vets charged with verifying animal welfare standards, the industry remained at risk of a conflict of interest.

"There is a fundamental problem in the way the industry is run," he said. "It's been given the trust of being self-policing and with that comes responsibility which I don't think is being taken."

While continuing to work as a private consultant, Dr Reeve-Johnson has spent three years trying to raise the issue in AQIS, and the Agriculture Department.

He even wrote to former agriculture minister Tony Burke, warning him: "The transparency of a government-legislated system and its integrity are undermined by the lack of independence and potential for a repetitive conflict of interest."

Animal rights law expert Malcolm Caulfield said the model for the resumption of the live cattle trade to Indonesia, announced last week by Senator Ludwig, was problematic because the exporters would select and pay auditors, just they are able to select and pay AQIS vets.

A spokesman for Senator Ludwig last night defended the rigour of the audit processes and said it would be "totally inappropriate" if taxpayers, rather than exporters, had to pay auditors to verify standards in foreign abattoirs.

"It is very important to understand that the audit and verification process will not be conducted by the industry or its employees," he said.

Yours Sincerely,

Pamela Gillot