

July 1st, 2011

Re: Senate Inquiry – Improvements in animal welfare for Australian live exports

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this submission relating to the above inquiry, one that comes about a decade too late. I find it completely inconceivable that the Government would even consider leaving these issues in the hands of an industry that has clearly shown they are completely incapable of raising animal welfare standards in Australia's export markets to an acceptable level. Australia should NOT and CANNOT put its faith in them to do so. Their complete lack of accountability, so far, is a disgrace and their pockets are lined with the blood and the money made from millions of unnecessary, brutal slaughters of Australian animals.

The factual reality is that there are no enforceable animal welfare regulations or penalties in the importing countries. The cultural differences and obvious mindset of these countries are issues that no amount of time or money can ever change, this has already been proven time and time again.

I find it totally unacceptable for Australia to continue the live animal export trade in the knowledge that we can NEVER ensure the wellbeing of our animals once they leave our shores.

Reports freely available on MLA website show the industry first recognised the need to improve the treatment of exported livestock in 2000, after it emerged that Australian beef was being discounted by up to 30% due to chemical changes associated with stress during the slaughter process. Eleven years on and the same levels of stress during slaughter are occurring, proven by continual documented footage, and yet the industry is still trying to convince the Australian public they can 'fix' an obviously irreparable system.

The fact that MLA planned to spend \$3.4million on improving animal welfare in 2010-2011 compared with \$23million on marketing beef exports, out of total expected earnings of \$173million, paints a very clear picture of the industry's priorities. There is no evidence to suggest that the industry deserve, or are even capable, of being given yet another chance to right this very disturbing and shameful wrong.

Three separate independent economic reports over the past two years have found that live exports are undermining Australia's meat processing industry. Without bias, Australia's major meat processors have confirmed that Australia has the capacity to process all cattle and sheep currently going to live export. Contrary to industry claims, live export does not underpin thousands of jobs in the rural sector. The majority of those jobs would remain if animals were processed in Australia. In fact thousands of jobs would be created by increased domestic processing.

There is only one option to assure the Australian public that our animals are receiving the correct level of treatment, **BAN ALL LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS** and process all our animals on Australian soil.

This trade continues to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Australian Government and relevant industry bodies control over animal welfare issues.

Yours sincerely,

Donna Perkins