

Fiona McQuade

The House Standing Committee on Agriculture
Australian Parliament
Canberra
A.C.T.

5th June 2024

Subject: Inquiry into the Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024

Dear Sirs,

I understand that the inquiry mentioned above was commenced today and will run until Tuesday 11th June 2024. In addition, I read that you are seeking input from stakeholders and for this reason, as a long-time Fremantle resident, I am making this submission.

Firstly, I am extremely grateful that after extensive and exhaustive consideration and a promise at the last election, the Labor Government has finally committed to ending the live export of sheep by sea on 1st May 2028. For too many years I have witnessed endless sheep trucks heading for the port where these poor animals are then herded onto ships often in very hot temperatures, not fed or watered for hours before commencing the journey from Hell. It is heartbreaking to watch, and I didn't think things could get any worse for the sheep, but then came the M.V. Bahijah debacle which was for me the straw that broke the camel's back. Those poor animals first boarded the ship in late January and apart from a short resting period didn't disembark in Port Haifa, Israel until 5th April. This was an unacceptable state of affairs, especially considering the utterly damning report published by the RSPCA last week. This detailed extreme animal suffering on 53 vessels between 2018 and 2023. But, the poor animals on the M V Bahijah had a far longer journey to endure due to conflict in the Middle East. One can only imagine how truly awful their suffering must have been.

Secondly, I wish to make it clear that I appreciate the hard work that farmers do, without them society couldn't function. Furthermore, I recognise that they have been doing it even tougher than usual of late due to economic and weather-related factors. Therefore, I fully support the Government's transitional assistance package to help the sector move away from live exports and into a humane sheep-meat industry which is the way of the future.

Finally, while I acknowledge that moving away from live exports may be extremely challenging for some farmers and the sector in general, it must be done, for we cannot defend the indefensible. The evidence of animal cruelty during live exports is overwhelming and potential economic hardships cannot be used as a reason to continue this trade.

Thank you for reading my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Fiona McQuade

Kind regards,

Fiona McQuade

