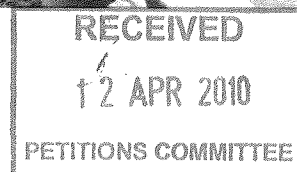




**The Hon. Tony Burke MP**

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry



30 MAR 2010

Ms Julia Irwin MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Irwin *Julia*

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 February 2009 on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions concerning a petition about livestock exports.

The Australian Government supports a vibrant and growing livestock sector, and an important part of it is the livestock export industry. The industry's earnings reached \$996.5 million in 2009, underpinning employment of around 10 000 people in rural and regional Australia.

The government recognises that this sector comes with challenges and responsibilities different from those in some other export industries. Being part of the international live export trade means Australia can help improve the way it operates—benefiting not just our animals but those from other countries as well. The government and those involved in the live export trade are continuing to work on improvements throughout the supply chain.

Since the beginning of 2008 I have approved projects worth more than \$2.4 million under the Live Animal Trade Program to further improve animal welfare in importing countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. The funding has supported upgrades in livestock facilities in the Middle East and Asia to meet international animal welfare guidelines.

I recently announced the three-year \$3.2 million Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership, which is to be funded in equal parts by the government and Australia's livestock export industry. This new program is an unprecedented example of government and industry working together to support Australian agriculture and trade.

The government has consulted scientists and animal welfare organisations like the RSPCA in introducing the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock. These are regularly updated and are available at [www.daff.gov.au/livestockexportstandards](http://www.daff.gov.au/livestockexportstandards).

The government acknowledges that some people would prefer Australia to export meat rather than live animals. However, a 2008 report from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics concluded that restrictions on the export of live animals would not increase sales of chilled beef, veal or sheep meat. Instead, the countries involved would be likely to source live animals from elsewhere. The report is at [www.abare.gov.au/publications\\_html/livestock/livestock\\_08/LiveExports.pdf](http://www.abare.gov.au/publications_html/livestock/livestock_08/LiveExports.pdf).

Further information on the live animal trade that may be helpful is available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website at [www.daff.gov.au/livetrade](http://www.daff.gov.au/livetrade).

Thank you for writing to me about this petition. I trust you will find this information of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Tony Burke