

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 30 May 2011, the *Four Corners* program *A Bloody Business* was televised on the ABC. The program had a major and immediate impact on the general public, animal welfare groups and the live export industry. On 7 June 2011, in response to public concerns, the Australian Government announced the temporary suspension of the live cattle export trade to Indonesia.

1.2 The Senate referred a general reference in relation to live animal export to the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee (the committee) on 16 June 2011. On 15 June and 20 June 2011 respectively the two private Senator's bills, The Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2] and the Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2], were introduced into the Senate. The bills were both referred to the committee on 23 June 2011.

1.3 This report presents the committee's findings in relation to both of the bills and the general reference.

Terms of Reference

1.4 As noted above, on 16 June 2011, the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee (the committee) for inquiry and report:

1. Investigate and report into the role and effectiveness of Government, Meat and Livestock Australia, LiveCorp and relevant industry bodies in improving animal welfare standards in Australia's live export markets, including:
 - a) The level, nature and effectiveness of expenditure and efforts to promote or improve animal welfare standards with respect to all Australian live export market countries;
 - i) expenditure and efforts on marketing and promoting live export to Australian producers;
 - ii) ongoing monitoring of the subscription to, and practise of, animal welfare standards in all live export market countries;
 - iii) actions to improve animal welfare outcomes in all other live export market countries and the evidence base for these actions.
 - b) The extent of knowledge of animal welfare practices in Australia's live export markets including:
 - i) formal and informal monitoring and reporting structures;
 - ii) formal and informal processes for reporting and addressing poor animal welfare practices.

2. Investigate and report on the domestic economic impact of the live export trade within Australia including:
 - a) Impact on regional and remote employment especially in northern Australia;
 - b) Impact and role of the industry on local livestock production and prices;
 - c) Impact on the processing of livestock within Australia.
3. Other related matters.

1.5 The initial reporting date for the reference inquiry was 25 August 2011. The reporting date was subsequently extended twice, with the final report date being 9 November 2011.

Related Private Senators' Bills

1.6 As noted above, on 23 June 2011, the Senate jointly referred the Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2] and the Live Animal Export Restriction and Prohibition Bill 2011 [No. 2] to the committee for inquiry and report.

1.7 The committee made the decision to conduct the reference inquiry and the bills' inquiry concurrently.

1.8 The initial reporting date for the bills' inquiry was 16 August 2011. The reporting date was subsequently extended twice, with the final report date being 9 November 2011.

1.9 Details of the committee's examination and findings in relation to the bills is contained in Chapter 2 of this report.

Conduct of the Inquiry

1.10 The inquiry was advertised in *The Australian* on the 22 June 2011, and in the *Alice Springs Centralian Advocate* and the *Northern Territory News* on 28 June 2011. It was also advertised in *The Land*, *The Country Life*, *The Stock and Land*, *The Stock Journal*, *The Farm Weekly*, *The North Queensland Register* and *The Countryman* on 30 June 2011 and *Tasmanian Country* on 1 July 2011. The inquiry was also advertised on the committee's website.

1.11 In addition, the committee wrote to a number of key stakeholder groups, state and Commonwealth government departments, authorities and individuals inviting submissions. The committee continued to accept submissions throughout the inquiry.

1.12 The committee received 426 public and 17 in-camera submissions. A list of individuals and organisations that made public submissions to the inquiry (together with other information authorised for publication) is at Appendix 1.

1.13 The committee held public hearings in Darwin on 4 August 2011, Broome on 1 September 2011, Katherine on 2 September 2011, and in Canberra on 10 August, 14 September and 20 September 2011. A list of the witnesses who gave evidence at public hearings is available at Appendix 2.

Acknowledgements

1.14 The committee acknowledges the contribution of all those individuals and organisations who prepared written submissions and those who appeared as witnesses. In particular, the committee acknowledges the significant distances that some witnesses travelled in order to assist the committee.

1.15 The committee regrets that it was unable to hear evidence from all those who wished to appear in person during hearings and appreciates the effort made by individuals and organisations in providing extensive information to assist the committee's consideration of this matter.

