

## Thousands of Australian sheep cooked alive at sea in “entirely predictable circumstances”

*Renewed calls for live export to cease*

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A whistle-blower on-board five separate shipments of Australian sheep has exposed the horrific consequences of sending animals from an Adelaide winter into the Middle East’s summer.

RSPCA South Australia says shipments of live sheep from Port Adelaide to the Middle East must cease after footage taken between May and October 2017 aired on Channel Nine’s 60 Minutes program last night, showing dead and dying sheep on board the live export carrier Awassi Express.

The modified container vessel, capable of carrying more than 60,000 sheep, is part of the fleet of ships used by WA-based exporter, Emanuel Exports. The footage showed three of the journeys which left directly from Fremantle in Western Australia, the other two also first loaded from Port Adelaide, South Australia.

“Despite a long history of breaching standards, it is astonishing that Emanuel Exports has not had its license to export revoked,” said RSPCA South Australia Animal Welfare Advocate Dr Rebekah Evers.

“By failing to stop non-compliant exporters from operating, our Federal Department of Agriculture has allowed animals in live export to suffer for decades.”

Although sheep suffered and died on all of these journeys, only one had triggered an investigation by the federal regulator because mortalities exceeded reportable levels (these require over 2% of sheep to die).

“Here we have five routine shipments of sheep to the Middle East where sheep are crammed in so tightly that many can’t reach food or water or lie down, and are often standing up to their bellies in excrement,” said Dr Evers.

“The stress causes many sheep to stop eating, while others suffer infections and sickness, and with the exporter employing just one vet to deal with over 60,000 sheep on multiple decks, veterinary care is minimal.

“Tragically, it is no surprise to us that this footage has proven the horrifying experiences these animals endure while at sea for three to four weeks.

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“This is what the live export industry self-describe as ‘world leading’ standards look like in action. This evidence proves the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock cannot protect the health and welfare of Australian animals in long-haul live exports.

“This isn’t just one bad journey, one bad exporter, or a few animals slipping outside the supply chain. We have no reason to believe this isn’t the experience for most of the 2 million sheep exported from Australia each year.

“Regulation requires the federal Government to refuse live export permits if travel arrangements and conditions on-board may cause the health or condition of animals on-board to deteriorate.

“Based on current evidence, the federal Government must now exercise its legal and moral duty to permanently stop issuing permits for the export of live sheep to the Middle East, knowing this is the inevitable consequence of their action.”

For more information and to take action against live exports, visit:

[www.rspca.org.au/campaigns/live-animal-export](http://www.rspca.org.au/campaigns/live-animal-export)

To view footage and images from on board the live export ship: <https://bit.ly/2GJlmA9>

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### **About RSPCA:**

The RSPCA is an animal welfare organisation with a mission to prevent cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection.

To achieve this, the RSPCA works to enforce animal cruelty laws and prompt new legislation where required. In addition, the RSPCA works with government and industry to establish standards for better animal care.

The RSPCA also operates animal care and adoption facilities, and seeks to raise community awareness regarding the humane treatment of animals.

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