

SA should take lead with planning a transition from live sheep exports

RSPCA South Australia supports inquiry proposal as “proactive and wise” in face of dying, despised trade

A State Government inquiry designed to determine how South Australia can capitalise on a transition from exports of live sheep to chilled sheep-meat makes sound economic sense, according to RSPCA South Australia’s CEO Paul Stevenson.

Mr Stevenson was responding to news that the State Labor Opposition has put forward a motion to establish a Select Committee tasked with assisting SA sheep farmers and livestock transporters during the predicted phase-out of live sheep exports.

“It’s no longer a case of if these long-haul live sheep shipments will end, but when they will end, and we should now be preparing for this transition,” Mr Stevenson said.

“With good planning, the small number of South Australians deriving parts of their incomes from this already declining trade can adjust and potentially profit from its end.”

More than 60,000 Australian sheep (approximately an entire shipload) have died onboard live export ships in the past five years. Most deaths occur during the Middle East’s summer months due to the extreme heat and humidity. In its submission to the recent federal government review into the live sheep trade during the northern summer, the Australian Veterinary Association stated *“voyages carrying live sheep to the Middle East during May to October cannot be recommended”*. The federal government has ignored this advice.

The latest live export ship to leave Port Adelaide with South Australian sheep onboard, the Al Shuwaikh, is currently docked in Qatar’s port city of Doha. Temperatures forecast for Doha this week range from 41C to 44C.

“Although the federal government is currently allowing this trade to continue, we remain confident the full transition to chilled sheep-meat exports is coming – Australians have simply had enough and don’t want to see more evidence of this trade’s inherent cruelty,” Mr Stevenson said.

“We hope this Inquiry goes ahead so our State can be on the front foot, demonstrate sound leadership and oversee the process in a strategic and efficient manner.”

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