



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources**

Dr Sue Foster
Spokesperson
Vets Against Live Export
via email: info@vale.org.au

Dear Dr Foster

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 October 2017 to the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) Dr Mark Schipp about mortality investigation report 65. I am responding as the matters you raise are managed by the live animal export branch. I apologise for the delay in replying to your letter.

Section 57 AA (3) of the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997* (enclosed) requires information about the export of livestock by sea to be based on reporting by the ship's master. The Report to Parliament for the period 1 July to 31 December 2016 originally published a mortality rate of 4.36 per cent for a voyage of the *Al Messilah*. That rate was calculated using the number loaded and the number discharged instead of the mortality rate reported by the ship's master as required by legislation. The department subsequently amended the report to reflect the 2.51 per cent mortality rate provided in the master's report.

The voyage exceeded the reportable level of two percent and therefore an investigation was undertaken. The findings of the investigation were published in mortality investigation report 65. Your letter drew my attention to the fact that there was no clear statement in the report about the differing mortality figures for this voyage. I agree that we should have been clearer that the department considered the mortality for the voyage was likely to be closer to 4.36 per cent than 2.51 per cent. The report has been amended accordingly.

With reference to your comments about the Australian Standards for Export of Livestock (ASEL) spacing allowance, the department has committed to review ASEL and selection of the technical advisory committee has commenced. Within the review process, the committee will engage directly with a reference group, including representatives from key animal welfare organisations, industry and producer bodies and the veterinary profession. Full details of the review process are available on the department's website.

Thank you for raising VALE's concerns with the department.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Narelle Clegg'.

Narelle Clegg
Assistant Secretary
Live Animal Export Branch
4 January 2018

Enc: Section 57 AA (3) of the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997*.