



The Hon. David Littleproud MP

Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref: MC18-002596

Dr Sue Foster
Vets Against Live Export
c/o Lady Barron Post Office
FLINDERS ISLAND TAS 7255

21 JUN 2018

Dear Dr Foster

Thank you for your letter of 10 April 2018 offering VALE's assistance in reviews of the livestock export trade and attaching your submission to stage 1 of the review of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I appreciate your offer of assistance and note VALE members' broad range of experience around livestock health and welfare. As you are aware, the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) are under review by an independent technical advisory committee. On 24 May 2018 I announced the acceleration of this review, to now report before the end of 2018.

I encourage VALE to continue to contribute your specialist expertise to the review through the upcoming consultation process. I also encourage you to engage with the Australia Veterinary Association, as the representative organisation for the veterinary profession on the reference group for the review.

As you would be aware I commissioned a short, sharp review by veterinarian Dr Michael McCarthy to assure the health and welfare for sheep being transported to the Middle East during the northern hemisphere summer. I am advised that the submission you provided to me was considered by Dr McCarthy as part of his review and was referenced within the report.

The Coalition Government has accepted all 23 recommendations made by Dr McCarthy, subject to further testing and consultation regarding a recommendation relating to the heat stress risk assessment model. Changes to the regulation of the trade include:

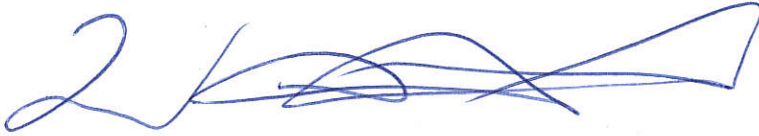
- A reduction in stocking densities so less sheep will be carried on a vessel at any given time. This means sheep will get up to 39 per cent more space (with stocking densities being reduced by up to 28 per cent).
- The reportable mortality level will be halved from 2 to 1 per cent, which means if more than 1 per cent of sheep die it must be reported and investigated.
- Tough new penalties on exporters who put profit before animal welfare and break the rules.
- Independent observers will be placed on every voyage carrying either sheep or cattle - not just the sheep voyages during the northern summer - reporting back daily to the independent regulator.

Some changes will take more time to implement including a revised heat stress risk assessment model that focuses on animal welfare, rather than mortality. These changes represent a seismic shift and give exporters an incentive to invest in improving boats which improve animal welfare, rather than incentive to run old boats at bigger profit margins at the cost of animal welfare.

As you know, I have also instigated a review into the capabilities, investigative capacity and culture of the department in regulating live animal exports. I understand you met with Mr Philip Moss AM, the independent reviewer, in Fremantle to discuss this and I appreciate your contribution to this review. I am committed to ensuring regulation of live animal export provides assurance to the government and the community that our nation's high standards for animal welfare are being met.

Thank you for writing to me about this importance matter. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Littleproud', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP