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## **GOVERNMENT SANCTIONED CRUELTY – FIVE VOYAGES OVER 7 MONTHS**

Last night, 60 Minutes showed the world the standards that are regarded by the Australian Government and the Australian livestock exporters as “the best in the world”. A young, articulate naval training officer from Pakistan filmed conditions on five voyages aboard the *Awassi Express* in 2017. One of these voyages was a high mortality incident. Four of them were “routine”.

VALE Spokesperson Dr Sue Foster said, “Apart from the body count, the footage on all voyages was remarkably similar – sheep stocked to Australian Standards of 0.308m<sup>2</sup> per 47kg sheep, unable to reach food and water troughs, unable to lie down and suffering heat stress: gasping for breath, bogged in their own manure, dying.

“The footage is entirely consistent with VALE’s published science, that the export of sheep to the Middle East (ME) during the northern summer is associated with unspeakable animal cruelty.

“It has taken this brave young man risking his life to bring out the truth.”

Under Australian domestic law, heat stress in one dog left in a hot car constitutes cruelty, whether the dog lives or dies. On a live export ship, thousands of sheep can die in a day. VALE’s legal advice is that even if the exporter is prosecuted, they will successfully defend themselves by saying they did their best. This is Australian-Government-sanctioned cruelty.

VALE insists that the law must be changed to stop live export to the ME in the northern summer. There must be at least one independent vet on every voyage, who should report to the Department on animal welfare. Those reports on every voyage must be made public.

“The proposal from the exporter to give the animals more space is nonsensical. The science is clear that once humidity and temperature get too high the animals cannot control their body temperature and just cook from the inside,” said Dr Foster.

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