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MEDIA RELEASE

Lateline footage confirms need for independent animal health and welfare assessment

The recently-released footage of animal cruelty broadcast by ABC's Lateline program confirms that the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) system has failed, and it is time for independent veterinarians to assess the health and welfare of animals exported overseas for slaughter.

Repeated confirmed reports show that many Australian animals are being slaughtered outside the approved supply chain and have been subjected to unacceptable cruelty. The reports involve animals sent from Australia to Malaysia, Gaza, Kuwait and Jordan, among others. Animals are being slaughtered in streets, backyards and outside mosques.

Vets Against Live Export has called for the existing ESCAS audit system, in which the exporter appoints an auditor, to be replaced by a system whereby the importing country's facilities are inspected, approved and monitored by independent Australian veterinarians. The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) has also previously called for an independent animal welfare auditing process.

VALE spokesperson Dr Sue Foster said, "Both the AVA and VALE have long maintained that ship veterinarians should be independent of the exporter in addition to requesting independent auditing overseas. Australian governments have consistently ignored the advice from the profession best qualified to assess health and welfare of animals."

ENDS

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