

Thursday 3 May 2018
For immediate release

MEDIA RELEASE

RSPCA pledges \$500K toward ending live sheep export

The RSPCA has today pledged \$500,000 towards ending the suffering of Australian sheep on long-haul live export voyages, in an effort to kick-start the nation's move away from the cruel trade.

Making the extraordinary announcement at Australia's Parliament House today, RSPCA Australia Chair Gary Humphries also urged the federal government, along with the Western Australian and South Australian governments, to bring forward-thinking farmers and others together to talk about what's needed to move on from this practice.

"The response of our supporters to this issue, and to this latest crisis, has been unprecedented," said Mr Humphries.

"And this has made the RSPCA even more resolute in doing absolutely everything we can to stop this cruelty,

"Now that the Australian public, the Government and farmers all know about the conditions for Australian sheep on long-haul live export voyages - even under Australia's standards - it can't be ignored," he said.

The RSPCA is one of two animal welfare charities who have today pledged \$500,000 towards ending the long-haul live sheep trade, with Animals Australia also committing the same amount, for a combined \$1 million head start on stopping live export cruelty.

"It's time to chart a course beyond the inherent cruelty of live animal exports,

"It's time now to shift the conversation from 'if' to 'how',

"And we believe that 'how', these adjustment efforts, must include greater investment in in-market development for Australian meat. That's where our resources should be focused," he said.

"What farmers need to understand is, the landscape for live sheep export as they knew it has already changed forever,

"At the very minimum, there are going to have to be substantial improvements to standards - the government has made that very clear,

“These will inevitably impose greater costs on live exporters, who have been doing the wrong thing for years,

“And so the small premium that has been paid to farmers will disappear - if not immediately, then very soon.”

The RSPCA’s pledge of \$500,000 comes after independent polling showed around 3 in 4 Australians want to end live export.

Opposition to live exports was strongest in South Australia (4 in 5), and also strong in Western Australia (almost 7 in 10), from where most live exported sheep are sourced.

The poll also found that nationally, more than 9 in 10 Australians want to see long-haul live export standards improved so all animals can lie down and access food and water easily; and these numbers are consistent or even greater in rural/country areas and towns.

“The community wants live sheep exports to end, our supporters overwhelmingly want live sheep export to end - and so, I’m proud to make this pledge on their behalf, and on behalf of our eight state and territory based member Societies,” said Mr Humphries.

“In reality, farmers are already moving on from live sheep export, and have been for over a decade,

“This is just a continuation of those adjustments,

“What we’re talking about here is bringing forward the end of a sunset industry, and greater investment in sustainable markets for Australian meat,”

“If these funds can help bring this cruel trade to an end, it will be money very well spent,” said Mr Humphries.

Tens of thousands of Australians continue to express their opposition to live exports at liveexport.rspca.org.au/take-action.

The RSPCA is Australia’s leading animal welfare organisation and one of Australia’s most trusted charities. The RSPCA works to prevent cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection.

For all the latest RSPCA Australia news, visit www.rspca.org.au or follow RSPCA Australia on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

For more information or an interview with an RSPCA Australia spokesperson, please contact:

Jane Speechley, Communications and Campaigns Lead, RSPCA Australia

Email: jspeechley@rspca.org.au

Mobile: 0419 748 907