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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Vets bullied by live export trade

Dr Lynn Simpson is not the first veterinarian to be silenced by the live export industry, and unless the trade stops she will not be the last, according to Dr Sue Foster, spokesperson for Vets Against Live Export.

“Mr Crean [Chair of ALEC] denies that the industry bullies shipboard veterinarians, but bullying has been a systemic part of the trade for decades,” she said.

Dr Foster highlighted a number of instances.

- In 1998 Dr David Marshall was requested to falsify mortality figures by an industry player (still operating today). The Department of Agriculture did not respond to his report.
- In 2001 Dr Tony Hill blew the whistle about a serious mortality incident in the Middle East, but the Department did next to nothing.
- In 2008 Dr Lloyd Reeve-Johnson, former Head of Veterinary School at the University of Queensland, was removed from a ship after reporting high mortality, with the express knowledge of the government. His end-of-voyage report was then altered by the exporters.
- Most recently, Dr Peter Calder was threatened by the Department with criminal prosecution after he was strongly critical of the state of cattle loaded for a shipment to the Middle East.

Dr Foster said “Sticking to the line that incidents like Dr Simpson’s are ‘outdated’ just shows Mr Crean’s tenuous knowledge of the industry he supports.

“Very little has changed in the last 15 years. Most of the major exporters are the same and most of the ships are the same. The space allowances are exactly the same as they were in 1998. The only thing that has changed on ships is the class of stock and a slightly increased space allowance for stock heading into a Middle East summer. Both decisions were about reducing mortality rates, a commercial advantage. Nothing has changed to improve to suffering or animal welfare on these voyages.

“If government and industry were truly committed to animal welfare they would have an independent veterinarian on every ship.”

**ENDS.**

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