

SUBMISSION ON THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION DRAFT REPORT “REGULATION OF AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE”

Dear Sir/Madam

I strongly support Recommendations 5.1 and 5.2 of the Draft Report-Regulation of Farm Animal Welfare.

We urgently need an independent body to develop animal welfare standards that are based on current animal welfare science and community expectations.

However, the suffering of animals is obvious to the observer. It does not require a “scientific” brain to determine that cattle are suffering in the disgusting conditions of the live export trade, or that pigs are suffering in the horrific sow stalls, or the sheep, goats, chickens and all other commercial animals are suffering needlessly.

Community expectations are linked to knowledge and education. When animal cruelty is exposed our community is rightly horrified. By hiding animal cruelty those industries think the community does not care. But this is NOT the case, as repeatedly demonstrated when cruelty investigations are aired. In fact, community expectations are increasing with every expose. Examples include cage free/free range eggs, sow stall free pork, suspending live animal export to some countries, food retailers ceasing to use cage eggs- ALL demanded by consumers.

The independent body should also be responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of the live export regulation and animal welfare enforcement at a state level.

Greater resources must be dedicated to animal welfare policy and enforcement at federal and state levels. These reforms will help improve consumer and community confidence in Australian livestock industries and the government’s commitment to animal welfare.

I strongly support RSPCA and Animals Australia in their endeavors to improve animal welfare standards in Australia and in the live export trade. These bodies must be heard and followed in this reform process.

There must be legally enforceable standards for the welfare of ALL animals, whether classed as companion or commercial or any other arbitrary name. The commercial farmers/exporters have shown countless times that they do NOT abide by “guidelines” or any self regulation.

There must be a separation of powers between the setting of these standards and the industries associated.

There must be a separation of powers for the auditing and enforcement of these regulations and the industries involved.

There must be clear powers at a local, state and federal government level for enforcement bodies.

There must be adequate funding for enforcement bodies.

One final point:

Humans are carnivores, but we must not allow the torture of our animals before killing them - either deliberately or by omission of protection measures or by lack of enforcement and prosecution.