

Government Response to the Moss Review

Australians were appalled earlier this year when they saw footage of sheep dying on voyages to the Middle East on the MV *Awassi Express* in 2017.

Many were further angered by their assessment the mortality incident report relating to that voyage did not match the footage.

Australians need to be able to have confidence in the independent regulation of the live export industry and certainty that the regulator will hold that industry to account. It was clear we needed an independent inquiry into the capability and culture of the regulator.

I thank Mr Philip Moss AM for his review of the regulatory capability and culture of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources in the regulation of live animal exports. I accept his findings and agree to support the implementation of his recommendations.

Mr Moss identified shortcomings in the way the Department organises itself as a regulator and undertakes its regulatory functions. There is significant work for the Department to comprehensively implement the recommendations and I have asked the Department to respond directly and to do so as quickly as practicably possible. Work has commenced to improve internal regulatory practice, performance and culture and I expect the new position of Principal Regulatory Officer to drive a greater culture of professionalism, cohesion and a contemporary regulatory approach as a priority.

The recommendation to develop welfare indicators and use these as part of the regulatory framework will be an important step in regulatory practice. Transparency of animal welfare practices along the live export supply chain is necessary and critical, particularly shifting from a mortality to wellbeing based approach to animal welfare. This insight can provide substance to both the Department and industry's commitment to improve animal welfare outcomes.

I accept the recommendation to establish an animal welfare branch within the Department and work will begin on this immediately.

I explicitly asked Mr Moss to advise me on the merits of an Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports. He has recommended an independent entity of this kind to report to the Minister and the public as an additional layer of accountability for the regulator. I agree to establish an Inspector General of Live Animal Exports and will bring forward legislative amendments to establish the position. The live export industry needs a strong 'cop on the beat' and the Department must reform as a capable, trusted and effective regulator.

The Australian community, our trading partners, producers and exporters all need clarity and certainty about the management of live animal exports, in particular how the welfare of animals is assured in the export supply chain. This required cultural shift involves change both internally and externally and I welcome improved engagement between the regulator, the export industry, producers, welfare groups and other stakeholders.

Hon David Littleproud MP

Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

October 2018