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MEDIA RELEASE

MOSS REPORT INTO LIVE ANIMAL EXPORTS – GOOD BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH

31 October 2018

The central message of the Moss Report into Live Animal Exports is that the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is not fit to regulate the live sheep trade.

Therefore when the Senate resumes on November 12th I plan to take action to establish a statutory corporation, the Australian Commission for Animal Welfare, as recommended by the Productivity Commission nearly two years ago and yet to be acted on by the government.

The PC recommended that as one of its first tasks the proposed ACAW should review “the efficiency and effectiveness of the livestock export system.”

Had that review taken place the worst excesses of the live sheep trade exposed earlier this year may have been curtailed and the cruelty to animals reduced.

Philip Moss is to be congratulated for exposing in great detail the shortcomings of the Department in monitoring a trade which has a poor track record in animal welfare.

However, his recommendations for the re-establishment of an Animal Welfare Branch within the Department and for the appointment of an Inspector General of Live Animal Exports, answerable to the Minister do not go far enough.

As the review notes, the Department “lacked the skills” to protect animals going overseas.

One, but not the only, reason is that the former Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce closed down the Animal Welfare Branch.

The report also points out that “the focus on trade facilitation and industry regulation appears to have had a negative impact [on] the department’s culture as a regulator.”

Given trouble with trade stretching back at least 15 years and three critical official reports now is not the time to trust the Department and the Minister, whatever their stated good intentions.

As I have said before the live sheep trade is cruel and inhumane. It must be phased out.

The steps I am proposing will ensure that until that happens the business will be properly regulated and independently scrutinised.

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