Where does your MP stand on live export? 

Step-by-step lobbying toolkit

For all caring Australians opposed to the cruelty of live animal export.

- How to arrange a meeting with your local MP
- Factsheets
- Petition to end live exports
**Meet Your MP**

With the Bills to end live export to be voted on in Parliament on August 18th, it is essential that elected representatives hear that their constituents want them to support a ban. The best way to leave a strong and lasting impression with your MP is to meet with them personally to ask them to support this legislation.

It is easy for MPs to hide behind party policies in written communication. A face to face meeting enables you to seek their personal views and receive a direct response to your request that they support legislation that will see live export phased out over three years. This is an eminently reasonable piece of legislation that gives producers time to adjust their business focus.

A personal meeting also provides the opportunity to:

- Clearly emphasise your concerns and views directly to your MP.
- Set the record straight on some of the most common misconceptions about the live export trade (with a little help from the enclosed fact sheets), and
- To provide your MP with investigation footage (details on how to get this footage are below) to remind them what supporting live exports means for animals.

We understand that meeting with your MP might feel a bit daunting, but they are just ordinary people, whose responsibility it is to represent the views of their constituents in their electorates. They know that they have been voted in by people like you – therefore they will want to listen to your concerns.

This simple step-by-step guide will arm you with all the information and tools you need to have a productive meeting.

### Arranging Your Meeting //

**Find your MP**

You can find contact details for your MP’s office with this link: [www.BanLiveExport.com/mp](http://www.BanLiveExport.com/mp)

**Put it in writing**

Even if you call your MP’s office, they are likely to ask you to put your request for a meeting in a letter, email or fax. Your message doesn't need to be long. Simply include:

- who you are
- the fact you live in your electorate
- what you wish to discuss: i.e. live export and the Bills to ban the trade
- that you request a meeting before August 18th (the date set for the vote)
- who else, if anyone, will be attending the meeting with you, and
- your contact details for them to respond and arrange the meeting.

**Follow up with a call**

Demonstrate how important getting a meeting is to you by following up your letter with a phone call. Simply confirm that they received your letter and tell them that you are looking forward to their response.

**Be persistent**

Sometimes securing a meeting with an MP can take persistence. If you haven't received a response within 5 days of writing, then follow up with another phone call. Ask to speak to their personal assistant or diary manager. And if at first your request is rejected, don’t give up. Every letter and phone call you make to try to secure a meeting is in itself a reminder to them that people are concerned about live export. By persisting and being friendly and respectful, you’ve got a good chance of securing a meeting.

### Before Your Meeting //

**If you can - gather support: Local Petition**

There is no better way to show your MP that many people in their electorate are concerned about live export than by starting a local petition calling on your MP to support the legislation. Even people signing from your own street will create an impression. Enclosed in this pack is a petition that you can photocopy and use to gather support. Already some 300,000 Australians have signed petitions to ban live export. So many people in your community will be willing to sign.

**Know your facts**

The enclosed fact sheet will give you a good background on live animal export. Don’t worry, you don’t need to know everything! However, you will feel more confident and get your message across better if you have an understanding of the issue.

There are a number of claims that the industry and some politicians commonly use to defend live export. The enclosed fact sheet will give you good answers to address these points.

**Get to know your MP**

To get the most out of your meeting it’s a good idea to do a little research on your MP. You can find out information about your MP through their party’s website, or they may even have their own site.

Here are a few things that would be very helpful to know:

- which party they are in
- how to pronounce their name
- how to address them (eg. Minister, Dr, Mr, Ms)
- how long they’ve been in Parliament
- whether they hold any position in Parliament
- whether they are on any relevant committees, and
- whether they have stated a public position on live export.

**Get footage to provide to your MP**

A picture speaks a thousand words, and when confronted with footage of the brutal fate that awaits Australian animals in the live export industry, nobody can deny the cruelty. So having investigation footage to provide to your MP is an important way to remind them about the urgent need to act on this issue. In your meeting you can ask your MP for their personal commitment to watch this footage.

If you know how to burn a video file to a DVD, please use the below link to download footage from our most recent investigations in Indonesia (March 2011) and Kuwait (November 2010) to provide to your MP. [www.banliveexport.com/lobbying-video](http://www.banliveexport.com/lobbying-video)

If you would like a copy posted to you please phone Animals Australia (03 9329 6333) or RSPCA Australia (02 6282 8300).
At Your Meeting //

Team up?
If you have friends in your electorate who also feel passionately about live export, then you might like to invite them to come with you. A group of roughly 2 to 4 people is ideal—but it is also absolutely fine if you want to attend this meeting on your own. You will just need to advise your MP’s office in advance of all those attending the meeting.

First impressions count
First impressions can make all the difference to how well your message is received. When you first meet your MP, introduce yourself and thank them for their time. Speak clearly and keep good eye contact. While your passion for the cause will help convey your concern and leave a lasting impression, remember to balance that passion with a polite manner.

Have a clear message
Before going into the meeting with your MP, make sure you are clear on the key message/questions you want to get across. In the lead up to voting on the Bills it is important for politicians to know their electorate wants them to support a ban on live export.

The all important question
While both major parties in Australia support live export, the personal opinions of politicians within these parties varies greatly. Ask your MP how they feel about animal cruelty. It is highly likely that they will say that they abhor it. Then ask your MP for their personal position on live export and whether they will support the Bills to ban live export—a trade that is condemned by every animal welfare group internationally for causing unnecessary suffering. The most important part of this meeting is to establish their personal position (not just party lines). If they state that they won’t support the Bill—ask them whether they will change their mind if they become aware that the majority of their electorate wants them to, so that they are accurately representing the views of their constituents.

Highlight the benefits of supporting a ban
Offer compelling reasons for why they should support an end to the trade. Highlight the fact the community is appalled by this cruel trade and tell them that their constituents will support them for taking a stand against animal cruelty. If you have gathered signatures—use your local petition to emphasise the fact that locals support a ban. The more local support you can show for your position, the greater the impact your meeting will have.

Get a commitment
You want your MP to go away from the meeting thinking about live export, and not to put it out of mind. So as you’re finishing the conversation provide them with your DVD of investigation footage and ask them to guarantee that they will watch this footage and get back to you to offer their honest personal response to what they have watched.

Key issues and questions to cover
• Live export is a cruel trade. We can never justify providing animals to countries where there are no laws to protect them from cruelty.
• I know your party’s policy on live export, but I want to know: What is your personal position on live export?
• Australians and your own constituents overwhelmingly want live export to end—will you be supporting the Bill to end live export which very reasonably allow for a phase out over 3 years?
• If the answer is ‘no’. Ask them why, as your political representative, they won’t be honestly reflecting the position of their constituents on this issue.
• Last year, there was further evidence of terrible cruelty to Australian sheep documented in Kuwait. Can you guarantee that our animals will be protected this year?
• Can you guarantee that no further Australian cattle will be subjected to brutal treatment in Indonesia?
• Reiterate again (if required) your request for your MP to rethink their position—and support the legislation to ban live export as there will be immense disappointment in the electorate if they fail to do so.
• Provide your MP with investigation footage and ask them to guarantee that they will watch it prior to voting on the Bills to ban live export.

Leave a positive impression
At the end of your meeting—regardless of how it went—thank your MP once again for taking the time to see you; ask for the business cards of any advisors present; and re-emphasise the key point to your MP that when the Bills come to a vote, Australians are counting on MPs to honestly reflect their concerns and support an end to live export.

Follow up
Send a follow up email/letter to your MP, thanking them for the meeting. Outline your key message again, include any further information you promised to send to them and tell them that you look forward to hearing from them once they’ve watched the investigation footage.

Tell us how you went
We would love to hear how you went! If you were able to find out your MP’s personal position on live export, please let us know. We’d also welcome any other feedback or impressions on the experience and the tools we’ve provided. Please send any feedback to: feedback@banliveexport.com

If you’ve made it through these steps and met with your MP, then we’d like to extend a big “Thank You”. You have provided a strong voice for animals.

Time to Lobby Your Senators
So you’ve met with your MP and are wondering how else to support the campaign? MPs are not the only politicians who will have a say in whether the Bills get passed. The animals also need the support of Senators if they are to have hope for a kinder future.

The below link will help you find Senators in your state, so that you can send an email, write a letter, and phone their office urging them to support the Bills to ban live export: www.BanLiveExport.com/senators

If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to call Animals Australia (03 9329 6333) or RSPCA Australia (02 6282 8300).
The Facts //
- During the last 30 years, Australia has sent more than 160 million sheep and cattle to be slaughtered in other parts of the world, such as the Middle East and South East Asia.

- Depending on their destination, the journey by boat can take up to 3 weeks, during which time the animals remain in cramped conditions and must endure all weather extremes.

- Every year, thousands of animals die during the journey. In 2010, just under 30,000 sheep died en route to the Middle East and 1,000 cattle died on ships.

- The majority of countries importing Australian animals have no laws to protect animals from cruelty.

- Sheep exported to the Middle East, are routinely mishandled, dragged, and many have their legs bound together and are thrown in the boots of cars, in a region that often has temperatures hovering near 50°C in summer.

- Cattle exported to Indonesia are routinely treated brutally prior to slaughter, including being tripped to the floor by ropes. Common abuses documented include: eye gouging, being whipped, hit and kicked, having their tail broken and even having their leg tendons slashed. Similar abuse of cattle has been documented in the Middle East.

- The vast majority of Australian animals exported to the Middle East and South East Asian countries, including Indonesia, are slaughtered whilst fully conscious.

- The recent investigation in Indonesia revealed cattle were suffering an average of 11 cuts to the throat and often many minutes of pain, thrashing and bellowing before losing consciousness.

By remaining in the market we can improve animal welfare in importing markets //
That is PR spin. Indonesia fully revealed the live export industry’s willingness to supply animals to the most brutal of treatment – and to even go so far as to facilitate it by supplying cruel restraint boxes. They have no interest in animal welfare, only in facilitating the trade in live animals. The only importing market where there have been any improvements is in Jordan, where as a result of Animals Australia’s work, 80% of animals are now stunned prior to slaughter. In other Middle Eastern countries animals will be killed whilst fully conscious despite decades of industry involvement.

Religious slaughter without stunning is allowed in Australia //
By law, all animals must be stunned in Australia. All cattle in Australia are either stunned prior to, or immediately after the throat cut. There are a small number of exemptions that have been provided relating to sheep, which are being vigorously opposed by animal protection groups and the Australian Meat Industry Council.

Live exports underpin 10,000 jobs in the rural sector //
This is incorrect. The vast majority of these jobs – producers, truck drivers, stockmen etc. would remain if animals were processed in local facilities. The only jobs specific to the live trade are in exporters offices, agents, feedlots and feed manufacturers for feedlots – not more than a few hundred. The AMIEU (Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union) states tens of thousands of jobs have been lost as a result of live export.

Live export is critical to Australia’s economy //
Some 20% of all beef produced in Australia is processed in feedlots – not more than a few thousands of jobs have been lost as a result of live export.

Importing countries want live animals and freshly killed meat //
All importing countries already take Australian chilled or frozen meat and this figure is growing significantly each year. Last year sheep meat exports to the Middle East were worth 511 million more than live export. Some 800,000 more sheep were sent in carcass form than live showing the increasing willingness of the region to take boxed meat. This will only grow further if Australia wasn’t supplying the option of live animals. When Bahrain was unable to import enough live sheep due to drought they entered into contracts to import Australian boxed meat instead. Indonesia has just increased its imports of boxed meat by 50,000 tonnes. Only the wealthiest 10% of the Indonesian population can afford beef – the same demographic that has refrigerators.

If Australia doesn’t supply live animals, other countries will //
No other country can supply sheep of the size, type and price that Australia can (sheep from the horn of Africa are more like goats. Australia is also the only country that can supply Indonesia with the volume of disease free cattle they require.

Live export underpins the price that producers receive for their livestock //
Beef and sheep meat prices are underpinned by the global meat price. The high Australian dollar and slump in Japanese demand for beef are both key factors affecting beef prices at the moment. The reality is that Australian producers have been receiving premium prices for their livestock over the last year regardless of live export.

Producers in the north have no other option but live export //
The Indonesian government has already signalled its intention to become self-sufficient in cattle production by 2014 – so this trade already has an end date on it.

Australia has the best shipping standards //
Tens of thousands of animals continue to die en route to destinations each year as a result of failing to eat and stress related diseases of the stomach. The industry has never been able to address this.
We the undersigned residents call on our local federal MP to represent the concerns of your constituents and support an end to the export of live animals for slaughter from Australia.

We believe that animals raised into Australian care should never be sent to be killed in countries where there are no laws to protect them from cruelty. Investigations have revealed brutal treatment of Australian exported animals is widespread and routine. By phasing out the inherently cruel live export trade and replacing it with a meat only trade, Australia will help protect the welfare of animals, keep jobs in Australia, and help restore our reputation as an ethical and compassionate nation.

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