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Submission to the Heat Stress Risk Assessment (HSRA) Draft Report

Dear Technical Reference Panel members,

I am writing to convey my support for all eight recommendations made by the Panel in the review of the Heat Stress Risk Assessment model for live sheep export. The implementation of these recommendations is crucial to the welfare of Australian sheep and to prevent further suffering.

Whenever any animal is subjected to live export from Australia by sea, it is my expectation their treatment and conditions will meet evidence-based animal welfare standards to protect them from harm and distress.

It is shocking to me that the current HSRA model is based on mortality rates rather than animal welfare indicators. This approach has effectively excluded the severe suffering of many thousands of animals that have experienced moderate to extreme heat stress but have not actually died during the voyages.

The industry's own research reports have acknowledged this reality for many years yet it has failed to act. Instead, exporters have continued sending millions of Australian sheep into climatic conditions where they know the animals will suffer.

This is not acceptable to me, nor is it consistent with Australian values toward animal welfare. It is time for change.

I therefore applaud Panel members for acting on the science and evidence to better protect animal welfare. I support all 8 recommendations made by the Panel. In particular, I express my strong support for:

- moving the HSRA framework from one that is focused on mortality to one that is focused on animal welfare;
- acknowledging the Heat Stress Threshold for the standard export sheep and setting a Wet Bulb Temperature (WBT) limit of 28°C;
- setting the risk limit for voyages at less than 2% probability of exceeding 28°C WBT;
- incorporating the environmental conditions at the destination in the risk assessment; and
- recording other factors such as CO₂ and ammonia and factoring these measures into the risk assessment.

These improvements are the least we can do to improve the welfare of animals subject to live export. It is my expectation that these recommendations will be implemented immediately by the Australian Government so that animals can benefit from the improvements and their suffering can be mitigated as soon as possible.

I eagerly await the Government's implementation of all 8 recommendations.

Kind regards,

[add your name and contact details here]