



May 2023

# Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports: Thematic Consultation Summary

The Australian Government has made a commitment to establish an Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports (IGAWLAE), by building upon the existing regulatory oversight to strengthen animal welfare and increase accountability and transparency for animal welfare in livestock exports. This will be implemented by expanding the current office of the Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports to include animal welfare related objectives and functions.

Public consultation was open on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website between 2 February 2023 and 9 March 2023, for all interested parties to have their say through a written submission. Feedback was sought on additional animal welfare related objectives, functions and expertise that could form the new role. A total of 24 submissions were received from industry groups, animal welfare organisations, and other interested parties via the website, as well as by direct email.

A high-level summary report of submissions by theme, as well as the department's position on each theme, are below. Feedback described in this document has been de-identified.

## Summary of Themes and Responses

### 1. Inspector-General's Scope

A range of feedback was received through submissions on the proposed IGAWLAE's livestock export animal welfare scope, including:

- that the scope of the Inspector-General should remain contained to the export of livestock;
- that the IGAWLAE's scope should be expanded to include the animal welfare of all live animal exports, such as trade in non-livestock and wildlife;
- that the IGAWLAE's scope should be expanded beyond exports, including that the IGAWLAE should play some role in the forthcoming renewal of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS).

The government has announced the IGAWLAE will expand on the current Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports (IGLAE), and include additional animal welfare objectives for exported livestock. This is the basis upon which the consultation paper was developed.

Expanding on the IGLAE's established role will help to ensure that the IGAWLAE focusses on the Commonwealth's regulatory responsibilities for animal welfare in livestock exports.

As Australia's states and territories regulate domestic animal production and welfare laws, the IGAWLAE's responsibilities will not encompass state and territory responsibilities.

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening animal welfare and has committed to renew the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). This is being progressed separately to the establishment of the IGAWLAE, given the IGAWLAE's scope and the domestic-focussed role of the AAWS.

## **2. Animal Welfare Reporting**

Many submissions called for more granular and detailed reporting relating to animal welfare either by the IGAWLAE, or by the department.

Submissions also called for a reconsideration of what reporting currently occurs, for example, whether indicators other than mortality may be warranted.

However, some submissions recommended careful consideration before amending current reporting arrangements, and a view that any current or future reporting must guarantee privacy and confidentiality.

Overall, and given the range of views put forward, it is proposed that the IGAWLAE's scope includes reviewing the Commonwealth's reporting on livestock exports under the *Export Control Act 2020*.

## **3. Qualifications and expertise**

Feedback was sought on qualifications and expertise that might be required for an Inspector-General, and relevant officers. The majority of submissions provided a comment or view on required qualifications and expertise that an Inspector-General, and/or staff, should hold. Some submissions also called for the IGAWLAE to undertake responsibilities using a science-based approach.

Submissions were consistent with the view that practical and demonstrated animal welfare understanding and experience was necessary, either through past experience within the livestock export supply chain, and/or post-graduate experience in animal welfare science, law or policy. Memberships to professional organisations, such as the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists, were also suggested.

A process to recruit an IGAWLAE will commence once the role is established. The feedback on qualifications and expertise will be considered as part of the ensuing process.

## **4. Independence**

Many submissions provided a relatively consistent view around the importance of independence and transparency of an IGAWLAE, including independence from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and the Australian Government, with a view to public confidence through independent oversight of the regulator. Some submissions also suggested there be an independent regulatory and advisory authority.

The government has announced that the IGAWLAE will be implemented through an expansion of the current IGLAE role. The IGLAE is a statutory appointment. There are transparent provisions in legislation around how the Minister can appoint an office holder as the IGLAE. In addition, one of the current objects of the IGLAE is to provide accountability and assurance over the regulation of Australia's livestock exports.

Implementation of the IGAWLAE will clarify independence and transparency as much as practicable.

## More information

Learn more about the [Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports](#).

Web: [agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/animal-welfare/igaw](http://agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/animal-welfare/igaw)

Email: [IGAWLAE@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:IGAWLAE@agriculture.gov.au)

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2023

Unless otherwise noted, copyright (and any other intellectual property rights) in this publication is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia (referred to as the Commonwealth).

All material in this publication is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence](#) except content supplied by third parties, logos and the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

The Australian Government acting through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has exercised due care and skill in preparing and compiling the information and data in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence and for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying on any of the information or data in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by law.