

## **Exporters welcome McCarthy findings and embrace need for industry reform**

AUSTRALIAN Livestock Exporters' Council independent chairman Simon Crean today welcomed the release of the McCarthy Review findings and announced major changes in industry governance to complement Federal reforms arising from the Review.

"Exporters acknowledge that when any exporter has failed to uphold its welfare obligations, compelling questions arise about the ethics of the entire livestock export industry," Mr Crean said.

"We thank Minister Littleproud and Dr McCarthy for the speed with which they have acted to address public concerns raised by the whistleblower footage and provide a way forward for our industry.

"The footage demonstrated a critical failure by our industry to meet community expectations. We know we need to improve and will work cooperatively with the Government to implement the necessary reforms."

Complementing the McCarthy Review recommendations, Mr Crean also announced today a series of industry-wide initiatives which will embed rigorous governance and ethics standards into the livestock export industry.

"ALEC is commissioning an independent review of its governance structures, to make recommendations about a new ALEC Code of Conduct and an Independent Industry Reform and Ethics Committee," he said.

"The harsh lessons learned when our industry has not called out past welfare failures must be acted on. We must be prepared to call out welfare failures and lead the cultural change required to win back public confidence.

"We have a clear responsibility to deliver change and improve welfare outcomes because the jobs of thousands of regional Australians are at stake, as are the food security needs of our trading partners.

"ALEC recognises it needs to overcome its past reluctance to fully engage with animal welfare groups. We acknowledge the role played by whistleblowers in calling out poor performance and that exporters must be more proactive in monitoring their own performance and demonstrate genuine accountability for any failures.

"Our reform agenda embraces greater transparency via initiatives such as the Livestock Global Assurance Program, which will strengthen welfare safeguards and promote continual supply chain improvements."

Another key initiative will be requiring ALEC members to collect and publish animal welfare data for Middle East sheep exports. This data, derived from welfare indicators built on extensive academic research, will mean any ongoing reviews of stocking densities and on-board conditions will have greater scientific rigour.

"To improve animal welfare outcomes and modernise supply chains in the world's growing livestock export trade, Australia must continue to be an active participant and act as the lead agent for change," Mr Crean said.

"For that to occur, ALEC must proactively maintain an ethically sustainable trade in a way which gives long-term confidence to the public, Australian livestock producers and our food security-conscious customers overseas."