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ALEC welcomes appointment of ASEL review committee

AUSTRALIAN livestock exporters have welcomed confirmation today of Dr Chris Back's appointment by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) as the independent Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee to conduct the review of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL).

ASEL is mandated by the Federal Government and regulates the handling of animals in Australia's livestock export supply chains, from pre-export preparation to the point of discharge in the importing country.

Dr Back, a former Western Australian Senator, graduated in Veterinary Science at the University of Queensland in 1971 and retains his Veterinary Surgeons Board of WA registration, backed by many years of experience working as a livestock veterinarian and university lecturer.

Australian Livestock Exporters' Council CEO Simon Westaway said the appointment of Dr Back and the other Technical Advisory Committee members was a positive step in the review process.

"This review is strongly supported by ALEC because it will ensure ASEL reflects new technology and research and that existing high industry standards continue to be aligned with community expectations," he said.

"ALEC wants ASEL to remain a benchmark which promotes a sustainable and growing live trade for Australia."

The committee, which will ultimately provide recommendations to DAWR, also comprises animal welfare experts Dr Teresa Collins and Dr Hugh Millar, regulation specialist Russell Phillips and livestock export industry expert Kevin Shiell. The committee will be supported by an ASEL Reference Group comprising representative bodies including ALEC, the RSPCA, the Australian Veterinary Association and livestock producer groups.

"Australia has been long recognised as the global leader in animal welfare and ASEL is regarded as the international gold standard in terms of the global livestock export trade," Mr Westaway said.

"But exporters are never complacent about the need for ongoing improvement. The standards governing the live trade must continue to represent regulatory best practice and support our long-term sustainability."

Further details: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/animal/welfare/export-trade/review-asel/tac-review-asel>