



AUSTRALIAN LIVESTOCK  
EXPORTERS COUNCIL

## Code of Conduct for ALEC Members

All members of ALEC must adhere to the Code of Conduct. Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct may result in suspension or revocation of membership.

### Background

- ALEC members acknowledge the live animal export industry is subject to (appropriately) high standards and that the actions (or inactions) of an individual industry participant that compromise these high standards can have implications for the whole industry. A single negative incident in relation to animal welfare or the general conduct of an industry participant at any point in a live export supply chain could have a material adverse impact on the entire industry rather than being limited to the individual party responsible for that incident or conduct.
- ALEC members recognise they have an individual but also a collective responsibility to ensure animal welfare standards and general standards of conduct are met across the supply chain.
- ALEC members recognise that as exporters they have a broad responsibility base. They need to respect and be aware of the obligations they may have (consequences if they do not meet those obligations) to stakeholders including:
  - (a) the Australian producer (and their livestock);
  - (b) the government (through regulation and its facilitation of business in foreign jurisdictions);
  - (c) the Australian public (by maintaining a social license for the live export industry to operate);
  - (d) the Members' respective staff;
  - (e) industry and business stakeholders (including industry service providers);
  - (f) each other (fellow exporters); and
  - (g) the Market (sustainable dependable supply)
- The nature of the industry whereby industry participant's singular responsibility have collective consequences means the industry needs to create a framework to break this nexus and create an environment of "collective responsibility"; this Code of Conduct aims to contribute to that explicit shift.

## 1. ALEC's Vision and Principles

**Vision:** *Through active and strategic leadership, assist Australian livestock exporters in the sustainable export of livestock and continual improvement in animal health and welfare and supporting our markets' food security needs. Throughout all export operations members will strive to ensure no fear, no pain for all animals.*

- **Principle 1:** Comply with applicable laws, regulations and business ethics that govern the industry.
- **Principle 2:** Act transparently and be accountable for the welfare of exported livestock through publicly available verifiable indicators of welfare and increased information about supply chain activities.
- **Principle 3:** Drive innovative practices and adopt new practices through research, development and extension in ways that create continuous improvement in animal health and welfare.
- **Principle 4:** Engage confidently about our values with Government, industry, stakeholders and the public on issues of mutual concern.
- **Principle 5:** Build and grow value for Australian supply chain participants through the consistent delivery of healthy and disease-free livestock.
- **Principle 6:** Respect the wide variety of cultural and religious contexts in which the industry operates.
- **Principle 7:** Strive for supply chain integrity and industry best practice.

## 2. Purpose of Code of Conduct

The ALEC Code of Conduct is designed to:

- Underpin and promote high standards of animal welfare and general conduct across all live export supply chains and contribute toward restoring and maintaining the industry's social license to operate thereby supporting the sustainability of the industry
- Provide a framework to "institutionalise" collective responsibility and clearly articulate what the industry as a collective expects from all members of ALEC as core conditions of membership.
- Drive cultural change in the industry.
- Require members to proactively address and report on animal welfare issues, evaluating performance for further improvement.
- Earn community trust.
- Ensure the highest standards of integrity, accountability and transparency are maintained by ALEC members and that members are meeting their regulatory obligations.
- Protect and enhance the reputation and integrity of the live export industry.

## 3. Code of Conduct– Requirements on ALEC members

### (i) Adherence to regulatory obligations

- At a minimum adhere to all applicable international and national laws, regulations and codes that govern the industry.
- Proactively monitor animal welfare outcomes within the supply chain and, as required by regulation, immediately report poor animal welfare outcomes to the regulator.
- Implement effective and transparent engagement, open and honest communications with regulators.

- (ii) Continual improvement to best practice in management
  - Notwithstanding the commitment to adhere to applicable regulations, members will also seek continual improved in animal welfare outcomes in their operations.
  - Participate and assist in the collection of animal welfare indicators.
  - Where possible proactively benchmark animal welfare outcomes in their operations and act on this information to continually improve results achieved.
  - Where possible cooperate and participate in research and development activities that will enhance the sustainability of the industry and improve animal welfare outcomes.
  - Be open to adopting new research and development results that aim to improve the performance of the industry.
  - Share knowledge to encourage widespread adoption of best practices.
- (iii) Implement effective and transparent reporting
  - Implement effective and transparent engagement, open and honest communications with the community.
  - Be publicly accountable for animal welfare outcomes achieved within each member's company operations.
  - Members must pro-actively "tell my story and control my business' reputation" – and not outsource this to Government or others.
  - Fully cooperate in Government or industry investigations of complaints on poor live export animal welfare outcomes.
- (iv) General obligations
  - Must act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of ALEC and the live export industry.
  - Should not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon ALEC or the live export industry.
  - Encourage other live exporters to act responsibly, within the provisions of this Code, and to become members of ALEC.
  - Convey the benefits of live exports, both economic and in securing animal welfare improvements, to the public.
  - Have an obligation, at all times, to comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of regulation and with the principles of this Code.

#### **4. Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

If you believe a breach of the Code has occurred or you are concerned about a Member's behaviour, you may inform the Conduct Committee by notifying them at the dedicated email address. The "Reporting a breach of the Code of Conduct" Form must be completed before the issue will be considered by the Committee.

Actions which may trigger a breach of the Code of Conduct include:

- requesting others to breach the Code of Conduct;
- failing to raise promptly any known or suspected breaches;
- failing to cooperate in investigations of possible breaches;
- engaging in conduct likely to bring discredit upon ALEC or the live export industry;
- retaliating against another Member for reporting a business conduct concern;
- failing to demonstrate leadership and diligence to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct; and/or

- An external report being provided to an ALEC regulator relating to a member's poor conduct. The Committee may subsequently defer to the regulator if deemed appropriate.
- The Conduct Committee will review the issue and the nature of any disciplinary or corrective action will be determined by the Committee which may include suspension, revocation of membership, recommendations to regulators to revoke export licences and publishing on the ALEC website details of sanctions taken against Members. The Committee's decisions will be recommended by the Committee to the ALEC Board and ALEC Risk Committee. If the issue relates to violation of the law, the matter may be referred to the appropriate regulatory authorities. The details of industry and regulatory whistleblower program contact details are provided on the ALEC website.
- Corrective actions depend on the seriousness of the breach and other relevant circumstances. Our expectations of you as a Member is to always abide by the Code, raise concerns promptly and fully cooperate with the Conduct Committee requests for assistance when they are conducting reviews or obtaining information for Committee purposes.

## **5. Administration**

The Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually by the ALEC Board on advice from the Conduct Committee.

