



The Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP
Minister for Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

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New Independent Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports

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The Rudd Government will establish a new independent position to review and audit Australia's live animal export trade processes and systems to strengthen our animal welfare assurance system.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Joel Fitzgibbon announced the measure today at the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy National Workshop in Surfers Paradise.

The Independent Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports will be an independent, statutory office holder, reporting directly to the Minister.

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"Australia has the strongest animal welfare assurance system in the world and we are the only country that requires specific animal welfare conditions are met for exported livestock," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

"Since becoming Minister, my priority has been to review our live export system and restore public confidence.

"The Independent Inspector-General will audit and review the live animal export regulator across the supply chain, including our investigation and compliance procedures, adding an important layer of independence to the regulatory system to ensure it delivers animal welfare outcomes."

The Independent Inspector-General builds on measures already put in place by the Australian Government to regulate animal welfare in the live animal export trade, including:

- The implementation of a world-leading animal welfare assurance system, known as the Export Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS)
- Funding a range of projects to strengthen the implementation and delivery of ESCAS both domestically and internationally, including workshops with exporters to build community attitudes; and
- Ensuring Australia has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with new markets that take our livestock.

Mr Fitzgibbon said the appointment of the Independent Inspector-General would not create additional red-tape or regulatory burden for farmers or the broader industry.

"This is a sensible extension to a world-leading system that adheres to international animal welfare standards, while not overloading industry with unnecessary regulation," he said.

"The Independent Inspector-General will provide assurance and oversight of the role of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as the regulator of live animal exports."

The Inspector-General will also be responsible for reviewing two national animal welfare committees and ensuring they deliver against their workplans.

Draft legislation will now be developed to define the scope and appropriate powers of the new role.

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