



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard 10 September 2003

LIVE CATTLE EXPORTS

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.00 p.m.): I rise to speak about the live cattle export trade. There are two aspects of this particular issue. One relates to the evergrowing concern about animal cruelty and, secondly, the correlation between this trade and the loss of meatworkers' jobs in the state and in Australia generally. I feel very qualified to speak about this issue because I grew up under the spectre of the Lakes Creek Meatworks. My father worked there for 51 years and I started work there as a schoolboy. It was my father's view that to start there would encourage me to concentrate on my studies, and it worked.

This is a very complex issue and it is controversial in the sense that essentially no-one knows whether there is a strong correlation between the export of live cattle and the loss of jobs. Apparently there is no comprehensive study that establishes that. However, the anecdotal evidence would appear to indicate that there is adequate grounds for concern. In response to a question in the federal parliament, the federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Mr Anderson said—

Some estimates indicate that the equivalent of throughput for some seven to 10 works are now leaving the country in live form, and that is understandably putting some pressure on domestic works. I note that processors have expressed some concern about that in recent times.

That is a fair indication that this is a real issue. However, previous indications, particularly from Rutherford's paper, indicate that valueadding and the potential trade-offs between Australia's beef and live cattle exports have been examined. There is some suggestion that segmentation of those markets does not mean that they overlap and that there is even some encouragement to future exports from this trade. However, this is not conclusive.

I believe that we have to maintain a strong stand against live cattle exports. We must not turn a blind eye to this issue. We must not accept it as a given. We must initiate actions and strategies for the future. I believe that this is a national and state as well as an international issue. I believe that one of the areas that needs to be examined is the prospect of looking at international initiatives to perhaps set up treaties in terms of the international treatment of cattle being exported overseas so that equivalent standards are agreed internationally on the way cattle are treated and exported. Obviously, there are concerns about cruelty to those animals when they are slaughtered in other countries as well.