




Speech by

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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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LIVE CATTLE TRADE

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (8.36 pm): I would also like to speak on the imminent collapse of the live export industry, an industry worth over \$350 million to the national economy and over \$100 million to the Queensland economy. The images that were displayed on the *Four Corners* program two weeks ago were disturbing, appalling and unacceptable, but the program represented only one side of the story. The rash decision by the federal Labor government and the feeble acceptance by this state Labor government on the basis of a single TV program can only be described as foolish and disastrous.

Our state has been hit by successive natural disasters and many small businesses and industries are struggling, and now because of a non-thought-out, knee-jerk reaction we are facing the imminent collapse of a \$100 million Queensland industry and the best this government can do is say, 'We'll look into other markets for you'. This is a bad move by the federal government which has caused shock waves through the meat industry. The government's handling of this issue is very poor. It should have been worked through with Indonesia to improve some of their abattoir standards. We all agree it was shocking footage of the treatment of Australian live export cattle as they were beaten, kicked and whipped prior to slaughter. But the ban on live cattle export to Indonesia will only encourage Indonesia to source cattle from elsewhere and it will do nothing to address the problem of abattoir standards.

There are 700 abattoirs in Indonesia. Obviously certain abattoirs do not meet appropriate international standards, but do not shut down the entire industry—which costs local jobs and causes confusion—without working through a resolution. The ban has serious ramifications on cattle producers, employees on properties, contract musterers, ringers, helicopter pilots, transport operators, produce stores, saleyard operators and businesses supplying and servicing the industry. If there is genuine interest in animal welfare, the best chance for cattle to be treated humanely in Indonesian abattoirs is through the participation of Australian live cattle. No other country exporting live cattle spends money raised by levies on domestic producers to educate their customers in the humane treatment of animals. Even Elders' Indonesian feedlot and abattoir operations already operate at the level expected by the Australian market, having spent 10 years investing in infrastructure and training. They have been penalised through this ban and their operation is at world's best standards.

There are tens of thousands of cattle stranded throughout northern Australia as a result of a bad decision and there are current animal welfare issues for these stranded cattle. The Gillard government cannot blame anyone else for their actions. They must compensate the industry for their incompetence. The Bligh government should also stand up for Queensland cattle producers and demand that the Gillard government reopen appropriately controlled export trade to Indonesia right now. Both state and federal governments should hang their heads in shame and come up with actions to support the processing industry as well.

(Time expired)