

LIVE EXPORT — INQUIRY

**39. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to the minister's media release of 16 February 2018, instructing the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to investigate an August 2017 live export voyage from Fremantle to Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

- (1) Given the live export trade is federally controlled, why is a state-initiated inquiry required?
- (2) Who will form the inquirers in the investigation?
- (3) What travel will these inquirers undertake to perform their duties?
- (4) What is the budget allocation for this investigation?
- (5) What are the anticipated benefits of this investigation?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question.

- (1) Like many areas of legislative responsibility, there are overlapping federal and state responsibilities. There are federal live export standards, such as the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock, which coexist with the state Animal Welfare Act 2002. Our advice from the Solicitor-General is that generally the two regimes are not inconsistent for the purposes of section 109 of the commonwealth Constitution. We believe we have responsibility to give effect to our laws, particularly as it appears the commonwealth is not prepared to take action to deal with the severe animal welfare problems being experienced with vessels coming from southern Australian ports to the Middle Eastern high summer.
- (2) The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has assigned an experienced investigation team, bringing together highly skilled officers involved in the investigation of animal welfare, serious fisheries offences and complex biosecurity breaches. The department will be, and has been, liaising with the Australian government's Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, which has commenced an investigation into this voyage. I add that I have also written to the federal minister, seeking that we have a cooperative approach to this.
- (3)–(4) The investigation is in its preliminary stages and the requested information is not available.
- (5) The benefits of the investigation will be a better understanding of what happens on voyages, leading to improved animal welfare outcomes.

For the member, I seek leave to table this 2013 report from Meat and Livestock Australia, which sets out many of the concerns about the way in which the animals leaving southern Australian ports in winter months are arriving in the Middle East.

Leave granted. [See paper 1137.]