

LIVE EXPORT — INQUIRY

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

I refer to the state government launching an investigation into the 3 July 2016 live export voyage of *Al Messilah*, which was the subject of an Australian Maritime Safety Authority inspection on 20 October 2017.

- (1) Given that the live export trade is federally controlled, why is it necessary for a state inquiry?
- (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?
- (6) Has the minister received any legal advice; and, if so, what does it entail?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(6) What makes the member think that I have launched an investigation into that vessel and that voyage?

**Hon Rick Mazza:** It was reported in the newspaper that you had.

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** No. I ask this because I suspect—well, I know—that the owners of the vessel have on a number of occasions sought to mislead people about this by suggesting that we are investigating the trip that took place in 2016 when, in fact, we are not. As I said when I addressed the livestock exporters' conference in October last year, we have had advice that there is no constitutional barrier to us enforcing the Animal Welfare Act; indeed, we have an obligation to enforce the Animal Welfare Act if it applies. The advice I have had from the Solicitor-General is that it does apply to these vessels at the point of loading and up to 200 kilometres out to sea. As I said to the livestock industry, we have had advice that these are serious matters. I was not going to go back in history and look at the approximately 10 cases from Emanuel Exports in which there were deaths and a very high mortality rate —

**Hon Martin Aldridge:** Your media statement says you're investigating a single voyage.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The minister is providing a response.

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** It is really important that the member understands this, because I understand people out there are trying to confuse the matter. I said in 2017 I would not be prosecuting that event that occurred in 2016, but that if there were subsequent breaches, then, certainly, that is something we would consider. Lo and behold, when the reports came out in January this year from the federal government, we found that that same company, under very, very similar circumstances, sailing into the hottest period of the Middle East, had, we believe now, around 2 600 sheep deaths, well above the reportable rate. Our understanding is that those animals, again, effectively, were boiled—they died of severe heat stress. Of course, we have an obligation to apply the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act. I say this: if members look back at the record on this, Meat and Livestock Australia have for a number of years been reporting on the need to do something about these ships going into the Middle East in high summer and that we need to do something about the stocking density. Also, the federal government's own expert committee, made up of industry and its own science experts, recommended that these rules be radically changed to deal with live export during that time of the year.

**Hon Michael Mischin** interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** It is all right.

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN:** Member, we are launching an investigation into not the 2016 event, but the 2017 event. Why are we doing it? We are doing it because it is very, very clear that the federal government is not taking its responsibility seriously.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! This is the first day back and people will settle back into a routine. I am sure we will get back to short questions and concise responses.