

media release

MINISTERS TO RETHINK UN-STUNNED SLAUGHTER EXEMPTIONS

Primary Industries Ministers will meet in Melbourne tomorrow to consider removing exemptions that currently allow the slaughter of fully conscious animals to meet a small demand for religious slaughter in Australia.

“Contrary to recent claims, stunning is mandatory in Australia. Australian law requires all animals to be stunned unconscious before slaughter and this is the case for 99% of animals killed in Australia every year,” said RSPCA Australia Scientific Officer Melina Tensen.

“That’s because our law recognises that cutting the throat of a conscious animal is cruel and results in a painful, distressing and prolonged death. All available scientific evidence backs this up.

“There are a small number of abattoirs however (in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales) that have obtained exemptions to this law, allowing them to kill animals (mostly sheep) without stunning them. This satisfies a small demand for Kosher and some Halal meat.

“The slaughter of conscious animals is completely unnecessary in Australia. Stunning is widely accepted by Islamic authorities and Jewish authorities accept the stunning of cattle.

“There is no reason why 250,000 sheep every year should continue to suffer through the pain and distress of dying while fully conscious when 99% of their counterparts are shielded from this horror.

“Primary industries and agriculture ministers from around the country will meet tomorrow to consider removing these exemptions.

“Our information is that there is widespread support within most states to remove all religious slaughter exemptions however pressure from New South Wales and Victoria could force a decision to allow un-stunned slaughter to continue.

“The RSPCA is appealing to those two states to look at the science, consider the widespread acceptance of stunning by religious authorities and represent the views of Australians who now, after witnessing the reality of un-stunned slaughter, have overwhelmingly rejected it.”