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MEDIA RELEASE

WILKIE MISLEADS ON LIVE EXPORTS – AGAIN

Comments by Mr Andrew Wilkie MP today that the live export industry has effectively withdrawn an offer for a livestock export voyage do not reflect the full context of the discussion held today with industry, the Chairman of the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council, Peter Kane said today.

"The Chairman of the Northern Territory Livestock Exporters' Association and myself met with Mr Wilkie today in Brisbane to discuss the offer of a voyage on a livestock export vessel.

"While the meeting was amiable, it was clear that Mr Wilkie had already determined how he would characterise the discussion and showed little sign of goodwill for industry's efforts to enable him to experience the livestock export trade first hand.

"Our approach to Mr Wilkie was to attempt to explain livestock export arrangements prior to and on board the voyage. This is important for any lay person to understand all the animal handling and welfare processes on a vessel.

"Additionally, when Mr Wilkie visited the Northern Territory to meet with people involved in the live trade, he expressed some goodwill in wanting to better understand the live trade from the industry's perspective. Only days later he introduced a bill to ban the trade.

"In this context, today we had hoped he would explain his contradictory actions and give us confidence that he was genuinely interested in using the visit to further his knowledge of the trade, rather than use the visit simply to continue his misrepresentations."

Mr Kane said that Mr Wilkie's attitude to travelling on a livestock export vessel reflects his lack of understanding of the complexity of arranging shipments and welfare requirements of livestock from preparation to loading to on board care.

"Reflecting this, we offered as a starting point of his journey of understanding the trade, and as a gesture to build trust between him and the industry, to arrange for a visit to a loading of livestock at a port and inspection of a vessel to see conditions, facilities and processes on board. This could occur at a port closer to his Tasmanian home.

"Mr Wilkie rejected this genuine effort by industry to engage and show him a more comprehensive insight into the workings of the livestock export trade.

"Our offer remains on the table but we are disappointed that Mr Wilkie has couched our discussions today in the terms that he has.

Ends

Peter Kane: 0423 338 995