

From Jo Bloomfield Hodgson River station Katherine NT

Attention 4 Corners, Lateline, Sarah Ferguson and Tony Jones

It appears that yet again you wish to denigrate the live export industry with another program concerning the treatment of Australian animals sold to foreign countries. I would like to make some suggestions regarding potential stories the ABC may wish to pursue and a couple of retractions that as a taxpayer I would appreciate being made. I would also like an explanation as to the relevance of the points raised in regards to the ABC's Editorial Policies – Principles and Standards.

- **Like many others in the live animal export industry my taxes contribute to the ABC via parliamentary funding. The ABC Editorial Policies – Principles and Standards state that they:**

**“are to be applied in ways that maintain independence and integrity, preserve trust and do not unduly constrain journalistic enquiry or artistic expression. However, all who are involved with content for the ABC are required to act with integrity and take account of likely harms in exercising their power and responsibility.”**

*Could the ABC please explain how it complied with the Principles and Standards outlined in the ABC Editorial Policies for both the Four Corners ‘A Bloody Business’ which aired 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011 and Lateline ‘New footage of abuse in Indonesian abattoirs’ which aired 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012.*

*Will these standards and principles be complied with when Four Corners airs ‘Another Bloody Business’ November 2012?*

- **At the Senate Inquiry, 14th September 2011, Sarah Ferguson admitted that interviewees were not shown the ‘A Bloody Business’ footage obtained in Indonesia prior to the interview. Sarah Ferguson only verbally explained the footage to the interviewees prior to the interview.**

*Please disclose publicly if it is standard practice when interviewing for a story you are filming to not show the interviewee the film footage that your questions are based on, considering standard 5.1 of the ABC Editorial Policies which states:*

*“5.1 Participants in ABC content should normally be informed of the general nature of their participation.”*

- **A formal complaint was lodged against the ABC by Rohan Sullivan, President of the Northern Territory Cattleman's Association, regarding his interview on ‘A Bloody Business’. Luke Bowen, Executive Director of the Northern Territory Cattleman's Association, has also spoken about his comments being taken out of context (QLD Country Life, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011)**

*Please disclose publicly if 4Corners will ensure that it complies with standard 5.3 of the ABC Editorial Policies which states:*

*“5.3 Where allegations are made about a person or organisation, make reasonable efforts in the circumstances to provide a fair opportunity to respond.”*

*and ensure that a fair opportunity is given to these people and other industry representatives, to respond through your program, in regards to ‘A Bloody Business’. Particularly in relation to the effects on northern Australia and improvements made in Indonesian cattle exports.*

- **The animal shown in the 60Minutes footage shown on ‘A Bloody Business’ was not an Australian Animal and this was admitted by Sarah Ferguson at the Senate Inquiry, 14th September 2011.**

Sarah Ferguson stated:

*“It is a small error based on taking something from somebody else’s program and we can correct that easily”.*

Unfortunately Australian viewers thought it was an Australian animal and continue to do so.

*Taking into account ABC Editorial Policies Principle 2 which states that:*

*“The ABC has a statutory duty to ensure that the gathering and presentation of news and information is accurate according to the recognised standards of objective journalism. Credibility depends heavily on factual accuracy.”*

*and, standards 2.1 and 2.2, which state:*

*“2.1 Make reasonable efforts to ensure that material facts are accurate and presented in context.*

*2.2 Do not present factual content in a way that will materially mislead the audience.”*

*please disclose this error publicly in ‘Another Bloody Business’ and make a retraction.*

- **The footage filmed by Animals Australia was misleading:**
- **The abattoir located in Taliwang, West Nusa Tenggara, Lombok, had NEVER received Australian cattle and this was not clearly stated in your program.**
  - **The abattoir Terpadu, Bogar, West Java, had not received any Australian cattle since early 2011, it had no plans to use Australian cattle and it was unlikely that footage taken there showed Australian cattle.**

*Taking into account ABC Editorial Policies, Principle 3 which states that:*

*“A commitment to accuracy includes a willingness to correct errors and clarify ambiguous or otherwise misleading information. Swift correction can reduce harmful reliance on inaccurate information, especially given content can be quickly, widely and permanently disseminated.”*

*and standards 3.1a and 3.1b which state that:*

*“3.1 Acknowledge and correct or clarify, in an appropriate manner as soon as reasonably practicable:*

*a. significant material errors that are readily apparent or have been demonstrated; or*

*b. information that is likely to significantly and materially mislead.”*

*please publicly disclose that this footage was misleading and make a retraction.*

Please also note that footage supplied by Animals Australia is not always what it is purported to depict. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries found that the ear tag in the animal shown in the ‘new’ Indonesian footage supplied to Lateline by Lyn White in January 2012 was in fact from an animal slaughtered some weeks before the footage was supposedly filmed. This was confirmed by ESCAS. Additionally footage purported to be from ECAS approved abattoirs was in fact not from approved abattoirs.

“Two abattoirs were not part of approved supply chains controlled by Australian exporters, nor were the animals seen in the footage sourced from Australia”.

<http://www.daff.gov.au/agis/export/live-animals/livestock/investigation-report>.

- **In 2011 4Corners filmed in excess of 15 hours footage on Indonesian soil and in Indonesian abattoirs for ‘A bloody business’. Approximately 15 ½ minutes of this footage was aired, with only 35 seconds shown of the ‘stunning’ process.**

Vast improvements have been made in Indonesia abattoirs, slaughter houses and exporter supply lines. For example, footage from the Jalan Abattoir, Near Medan, Sumatra, showed a black steer trembling in a raceway before slaughter. This abattoirs lairage has now been altered to ensure improved handling, with water and feed available right up to point of slaughter. Improvements have also been made in regards to knocking boxes dependent on the form of stunning used. Some exporters have adopted a policy 100% stunning with their clients.

*Therefore, in the ‘thoroughness of the journalistic effort’ (Sarah Ferguson, Senate Inquiry, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011) please return to Indonesia and film improvements made since June 2011. Please also publicly disclose and credit the improvements that had already been implemented by the industry prior to the Live Export Ban being put in place in June 2011.*

*Additionally, Animals Australia and RSPCA have stated their clear objectives to ‘Ban Live Exports’, please explain ABC’s decisions to use so much of their film footage and views considering ABC Editorial Policies standards 1.3 which states*

*“1.3 Ensure editorial decisions are not properly influenced by political, sectional, commercial or personal interests.”*

- **40% of the Indonesian population is involved with Agriculture in some way and the reductions in the animal import permits and loss of income in already poor rural areas has affected them adversely.**

*Please return to Indonesia and shoot a 4Corners exposé on the effect of the reduction of animal import permits and the loss of income on an already poor rural population. Please interview the Indonesian public and workers in the agriculture industry*

- **'A Bloody Business' has created a platform for political grandstanding by politicians and other public figures. Greens Senator Lee Rhiannon sponsored the Live Animal Export (Slaughter) Prohibition Bill 2012. This bill would have a devastating impact on northern Australia. Recognising this, 25 questions regarding the effects of the proposed ban were posted on the Facebook page 'Ban Live Exports Now' created by Senator Rhiannon. These were posed to question Senator Rhiannon's understanding of the consequences of a ban on animals, land, economics and people. Senator Lee Rhiannon has made a half-hearted attempt to answer the first 14 questions and to date, has refused to answer anymore.**

*Please visit northern Australia, and shoot a 4Corners exposé on the effect of a ban on live animal export. Please ensure the exposé covers all aspects of a potential ban, including the effect on animals, the land, economics and people, to ensure that the people of Australia gain a more in-depth understanding of this complex issue.*

- **People will be watching the Four Corners Monday program 'Another Bloody Business' with great interest. Not only at the actual content of the program but how ABC portrays the industry. Some members of the industry affected by the live export ban imposed June 2011, which resulted from 'A Bloody Business' have begun legal proceedings in a class action against the Federal Government.**

*Is the ABC concerned that the next Four Corners program 'Another Bloody business' may be regarded as damaging to the live export industry and that the ABC may also risk legal action from industry members for damage to their business and livelihoods?*