

LIVE CATTLE TRANSPORT SHIP — *PEARL OF PARA*

555. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I note that some of the answers to this question were given in the minister's ministerial statement.

- (1) How long has the cattle export vessel *Pearl of Para* been delayed due to mechanical problems?
- (2) Is the ship still awaiting repairs near Fremantle port?
- (3) Was the ship inspected for seaworthiness before departure from Fremantle; and, if not, when was the last time the ship was inspected for seaworthiness?
- (4) What is the condition of the cattle aboard?
- (5) How long have they been aboard?
- (6) Please detail the animal welfare inspections that have taken place or are planned, and by which authorities?
- (7) Will the minister provide the Legislative Council with the veterinary reports on the condition of the animals as soon as possible?
- (8) Should any cattle be diagnosed as unfit for travel to Israel, will they be unloaded in Fremantle?
- (9) If yes to (8), where will they be taken?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) *Pearl of Para* departed from Fremantle harbour on 4 September 2013. After encountering a propeller shaft coupling problem on one of its propulsion units, the captain decided, on 7 September 2013, to return to Fremantle because this was the best way to protect the welfare of the cattle and crew while conducting repairs.
- (2) Yes. The vessel is at anchor off Fremantle, awaiting the manufacture of a replacement coupling.
- (3) The vessel is fully compliant with Australian Maritime Safety Authority regulatory standards. It holds a full-term Australian certificate for the carriage of livestock issued by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the body that controls the standard of vessels licensed to carry Australian livestock.
- (4) The cattle continue to be under the care of an Australian government-approved veterinarian on board, who reports to a Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Food veterinarian on shore two to three times a day. All reports confirm the cattle to be in good condition and that their welfare status is not compromised.
- (5) The cattle were loaded onto the vessel on Monday, 2 September, and Tuesday, 3 September, before sailing on 4 September, so the longest any cattle have been on board is 15 days.
- (6) In addition to 24/7 onboard supervision by an experienced Australian government-approved veterinarian, a senior compliance inspector from the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food boarded the vessel on Friday, 13 September 2013, and undertook a detailed inspection of all animals on all decks. No breaches of the Animal Welfare Act 2002 were detected. Further, the inspector was of the opinion that the animals were being provided a high standard of care and that there were no discernible animal welfare issues. A further inspection by a DAFWA inspector will be undertaken when the vessel enters Fremantle harbour to load fodder, water and other supplies before resuming its voyage to Israel. It is understood the RSPCA has made arrangements with the exporter to inspect the vessel and cargo when it is in Fremantle harbour.
- (7) DAFWA's livestock compliance unit does not make specific details of its inspection available to the public as this information is obtained using an inspector's powers under the Animal Welfare Act 2002. To ensure compliance with section 91, "Improper use of information", and section 48(6)(c)—minimise disruption to a business activity—DAFWA's livestock compliance unit only provides a basic statement; for example, no breaches or ongoing investigation.
- (8) The cattle cannot be unloaded without an import order. The vessel is equipped to deal with any animal welfare issues, including by treatment or euthanasia, or by the AA veterinarian.
- (9) Treated animals will continue on the voyage; euthanised animals will be disposed of according to standard protocols.