

ONLINE ARTICLE

Title:	"RSPCA livestock inspections to occur at Eucla"
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Transported livestock will be inspected at Eucla, near the southern Western Australian border, the RSPCA said today.

The charity is also a body delegated by government to undertake official inspections.

"The best way to pick up any potential animal-welfare issues is at the border," RSPCA spokesman Tim Mayne says.

"RSPCA Inspectors will be setting up an inspection point in the Eucla area.

"The inspection point will have a two-fold effect – to prevent any issues relating to animal welfare and to ensure transport operators are aware of their responsibilities for long-distance animal transport and to take action if necessary."

Australian Livestock Transporters' Association (ALTA) Executive Director Philip Halton says the fact that 1.1 million head of livestock, mostly sheep, had been transported in the past year, with only a single farmer being prosecuted over animal welfare issues was testament to the professionalism and care displayed by the sector.

The effort had been bolstered by senior operators, mindful of the scrutiny the sector would be under during such a huge undertaking, doing the trip themselves and highlighting the need for care amongst drivers.

Just before Christmas, South Australian Agriculture Minister Michael O'Brien marked the millionth sheep to cross the WA border and last month said he had been impressed at the performance of transport companies in what he believes has been the largest stock movement of its kind the country has yet seen.

Halton says ALTA had worked "quite closely" with the animal welfare lobby and the unofficial feedback had been positive from this traditionally critical quarter.

ALTA is waiting keenly to see if the Western Australian Government will invest in a watering point with holding yard near the border, to further strengthen the welfare aspect of cross-border livestock transport.