

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Positive industry outlook leads to expansion of LSS fleet**

Livestock Shipping Services (LSS) and the Hijazi and Ghosheh Group (HG Group) are pleased to announce the construction of two new dedicated state of the art livestock vessels to add to the existing fleet in Australia.

Managing Director of LSS, Mr Ahmad Ghosheh, said the Federal Government's support for the live export industry, coupled with the opening of new markets around the world, has contributed to their decision to expand their fleet.

"This is an exciting time for the live export industry and Australian producers, with farm gate prices for Australian livestock extremely strong as a result of export demand.

"I believe that we will see livestock demand drive prices to never before seen highs in the market, and we want our partnership with Australian producers to go from strength to strength into the future," said Mr Ghosheh.

The design and development of the two new vessels is already underway, with both sister ships due for delivery and commencement of Australian trade from June 2015.

The construction of the two new sister ships will take the total livestock fleet operating from Australia to six vessels - adding a total of 15,000 square metres of livestock transport space to the existing fleet.

"This will take our total capacity for livestock transport from Australia to 112,500 square metres of pen space, increasing its capability to 340,000 sheep or 150,000 sheep and 60,000 cattle at any one time," said Mr Ahmad Ghosheh.

The addition of the ships to the fleet will make this the largest single Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) approved fleet for one single private operator.

One of the crowning glories of the new vessel construction is the patented design of the vessel ventilation system, developed by fleet engineer Mr Ayed Shawkat.

"A livestock vessel in full operation is like a living breathing being, where the ventilation is the lungs of the ship. If this is working at top efficiency as our design allows, then fuel consumption is reduced, speed is increased and the ability to provide maximum comfort and welfare for our livestock passengers is enhanced, in addition to being good for the environment," said Mr Shawkat.

LSS will not be the only company to benefit from the inclusion of these new vessels into the broader shipping fleet from Australia. Other Australian exporting partners who currently charter vessels from the HG Group shipping division to capture the booming demand for Australian cattle in Asia and China will also benefit.

“Live cattle exports have doubled in the last 14 months to 1.4 million head, and directing our surplus capacity to work in these markets has contributed hugely to the regional success story for the trade in Asia.

The construction of the sister ships represent a direct expenditure of \$102 million dollars, which will support a global increase in demand for Australian livestock around the world.

“LSS has exported directly to 11 different countries in the last 18 months and our vessels have travelled to a further five destinations for other exporters, so it’s a fantastic environment to be bringing new vessels onto the run,” said Mr Ghosheh.

LSS has a strong relationship with Australian producers and the addition of these new vessels, and investment by the HG Group more broadly, will further strengthen and support this relationship, providing more markets, more opportunities and better farm gate returns across Australia for all livestock types.

*LSS is an Australian company based in Perth, Western Australia. Established in 1998, LSS delivers world’s best-practice animal live export services to a range of customers around the globe. LSS globally, has over 20 years’ experience in the animal live export market, is a member of the Australian Live Export Council, and a corporate member and sponsor of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia. LSS employs 120 staff throughout Australia within its export business, farms, feedlots and abattoirs.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LSS:**

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