

WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA BOARD

Executive Summary

10 August 2023 | Queensland Farmers Federation, 183 N Quay, Brisbane QLD 4000

Welcome

Meeting opened

The President opened the meeting at 8.30am and welcomed attendees.

Presidents Report

The report was taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

- WPA circulates a weekly schedule, however industry engagement changes quickly due to the large range of work WPA undertakes.
- IWTO Congress
- Australian Sheep and Wool Show at Bendigo
- Mulesing and pain relief

CEO report

The CEO report was taken as read with the following verbal additions:

- WPA is starting to provide more briefings to SFOs and encouraged more face-to-face engagement annually.
- National Wool Harvesting and Training (NWHAT) Advisory Group (Wool TAG). WPA has provided semi-regular briefings to a federal Liberal MP who has raised the labour shortage issue in parliament and WPA has also been in contact with Home Affairs looking at other visa pathways
- The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry visited India with an industry delegation, but wool was not invited as it had more of a food focus. No follow up from government was received, however the Indian wool Industry will have a delegation visit Australia in the near future.
- WPA, GICA & SPA will meet to review jurisdictional comments on the NLIS Standards and aim to circulate a draft report to SFOs august for feedback during the week of 21 August 2023. Feedback will be incorporated in the response to the Jurisdictional Working Group.
- Consultation interviews on the national tag procurement project being conducted by SPA will be undertaken in the next fortnight.
- WPA would not agree to the latest set of principles presented at the recent Sheep and Goat Traceability Taskforce meeting due to not supporting a phase out date of 1 Jan 2027. WPA requested the reference to 2027 be removed, however 3 states, with support from state implementation committees have already agreed to this in their state timelines. The CEO urged these states to reconsider this position as it will cause enormous cost and resources to producers for no net benefit.
- It was also noted that there is a traceability system in place that does work. If there is an incursion in the near future, we can still trace animals, this does not seem to be recognised at the SGTTF and at some jurisdictional levels. A phased in approach to electronic tagging with each drop of lambs is the only sensible approach.
- WPA will not agree to support anything compelling growers to double tag, however it was noted that WPA are the only organisation taking this stance at the national level.

General Managers Report

The Board noted the report and the GM highlighted the following points:

- The GM participated in a briefing arranged by Cattle Australia by Prof. Myles Allen of Oxford University. Professor Allen spoke to the merits of GWP* in quantifying global warming impact of various emissions along with the flaws in comparing emissions originating from the geosphere to those originating from the biosphere.
- A meeting was held with an international wool processor recently. Animal welfare issues, particularly relating to mulesing is seeing Australian wool at a disadvantage, with two of their recent clients specifically requesting non-Australian wool (instead of just non-mulesed wool). Customers are now chasing non-

mulesed lanolin, which is problematic to this processor continuing to source Australian wool. Based on their customers desires, South African wool is viewed as superior – more consistent quality, including strength and length attributes too.

- GM presented at an Elders forum held in Dubbo and spoke about Trust in Australian Wool and the Sheep Sustainability Framework

MEMBER ISSUES

VFF – Mulesing

Action: WPA to respond to VFF noting collaboration from MLA & AWI.

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Director Elections

The Board acknowledged the timeline, noting public calls for nominations for three Independent Director positions will commence shortly. A media release will be circulated and available on the WPA website from 4th September 2023.

Action: Directors to request SFOs circulate to members/disseminate information.

Policy Determination

Health & Welfare Resolutions/Discussions

The Board again discussed the pain relief policy and reaffirmed the current policy for mandatory pain relief mulesing.

The Board also discussed the issues with the timing of the Biosecurity Protection Levy (BPL) announcement and the scheduled 2024 WoolPoll and how this will impact the chances of the establishment of the EADR levy. WPA has always been cognisant of the impact of trying to establish a levy too close to WoolPoll so as to not jeopardise/unfairly influence the outcome of WoolPoll 2024, which is why it was anticipated that our process would commence earlier this year, however with the announcement of the BPL in the budget and the proposed implementation date of 1 July, 2024, this process was parked until the Board could provide direction.

It was agreed that the attempt at establishing the EADR levy be shelved until at least after the WoolPoll 2024, while also noting that this is not ideal in terms of ensuring that the wool industry can meet its cost-sharing obligations in the event of a serious EAD incursion.

AHA – CONFIDENTIAL

The Board noted the update.

AWI

WICP – CONFIDENTIAL

The Board noted the papers.

Agsector Methane Policy

Dr Stephen Wiedemann, Integrity Ag and Environment, joined the meeting in person and presented to the Board regarding work that he had undertaken to investigate pathways for methane reductions using the sheep industry as an example.

AgCare

Peter Mahoney joined the board meeting and provided a presentation on Queensland's AgCare program.

The Board agreed to be proactive in regard to social licensing by creating industry definitions around what regen or ethical wool is. It was noted that this was raised with AWI at the WICP as a way of developing a strategy to deal with these issues, which was rejected.

Trade Update – CONFIDENTIAL

The papers were taken as read with the following key points raised:

Vietnam

Kelvin Le is exploring barriers to opportunities to bringing early-stage processing to Vietnam. He has made good industry contacts locally.

Bangladesh

The growth and modernisation of the Bangladesh textile industry in the last ten years is extremely impressive and is now known for its quality, representing a significant long-term opportunity for wool.

The current Australian ambassador is apparently a huge supporter of wool, a delegation visit will be pursued.

NWD Review

The Board noted the paper and the discussion held at the H&WAC committee meeting the day prior regarding 4 proposed changes.

It was noted that there were action items relating to this issue from the H&WAC meeting:

H&W Action: CEO to circulate an Out-Of-Session paper to the Committee including the offer for a 30-minute Out-Of-Session meeting to discuss the issue if required.

H&W Action: Committee to provide feedback within 1 week of circulation.

The Board raised concern with the proposed ceased mulesed status which would undermine the integrity of the NWD.

WIA/IWTO

The GM presented to the Board on a recent trip to Japan to attend the 2023 IWTO.

The Chair also provided an update on monthly IWTO 2024 planning meetings, noting the aim was to reduce the conference to 2 days and provide access at grower-friendly price between \$300-\$500 due to high level of sponsorship.

There was also a push to revamp the Young Professional Program for the 2024 IWTO due to a level of disorganisation in previous years.

WPA will present on Trust in Australian wool and the Sheep Sustainability Framework will also feature.

AWEX Update

Mark Grave, CEO AWEX joined the meeting virtually and provided an update on industry matters relating to AWEX, including eBale, SustainaWOOL and WoolClip.

NFF Committee Updates

Farming Systems Standing Committee

The government might politicise the APVMA instead of remaining an industry body. It was noted that the APVMA is fully funded by industry so should stay industry governed. Maintain a watching brief.

Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports Amendment (Animal Welfare) Bill 2023 - RRAT Senate Committee have a consultation paper out (only 10 days) WPA will provide a submission into this process to ensure that there is no scope creep of this role outside of live animal exports.

Action: WPA to provide a submission into the inquiry into the role of the Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports Amendment (Animal Welfare) Bill 2023

Economic Policy and Farm Business Committee

Future drought fund (Chair attending forum). Draft strategy comes out of forum. Consultation during Oct-Nov 2023,

then strategy released in Feb.

Instant asset write off has been abolished and it is not likely to be reintroduced.

Workforce Standing Committee

Equal work for equal pay legislation may cause issues in ag.

Visas - PALM scheme now requires minimum guaranteed 30 hours a week, along with other provisions that is making the application of this harder for the ag sector and impossible for the wool harvesting sector.

Farm safety is a focus of the committee, along with vocational training and education.

Trade Standing Committee

No deal with the EU FTA, conditions for market access weren't good enough. Looking to recommence negotiations this month. Important to note EU Parliament term ends in June 2024. Most EU work will stop in March, noting the new parliament might have new priorities. Main interest is ensuring animal welfare or sustainability equivalencies aren't a requirement. WPA are in close contact with DAFF and DFAT as these negotiations develop.

India – importers are moving towards quality not quantity across commodities.

General Business

Other Business:

Textile Exchange Animal Fibre Welfare Working Group

Action: WPA to write to Textile Exchange outlining concerns with the process and working group but remain involved at this point in time.

Next meeting

9 November, 2023

Meeting closed at 2.45pm