

WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

WoolProducers Australia Policy Advisory Committee

12.00pm-5.04pm 6 August & 8.30am-11.15am 7 August 2025 | Brisbane

Presidents Report

The presidents report outlined key takeaways from the IWTO Congress that was held in France at the end of May:

- Australia had the opportunity to showcase advancements in wool traceability and our biosecurity system and Emergency Animal Disease preparedness efforts, with WoolProducers representing the Australian wool industry in this regard.
- Chinese statements of their growing preference for South African and New Zealand wool, due to increased availability of certified wool.
- Dr. Paul Swan presented on the progress of the IWTO Green Book project, that proposes a science based approach for accurately representing Agricultural greenhouse gas emissions.
- We need to modernise the way that we market wool. Philippe Strehle asked the congress why “we are marketing wool as if it is 1995”?

The presidents report also discussed ongoing dry conditions in many wool growing areas and the compounding effect that sustained low wool prices are having on producer profitability and sentiment within the Australian wool industry.

CEO's Report

- The committee were provided with an update on the Sheep sustainability Framework.
- CEO sought member feedback for upcoming attendance at the Agricultural Productivity Roundtable, including trade diversification, workforce challenges, and regulatory burdens.
- WPA wrote to Screen Australia to raise disappointment about the portrayal of the wool industry in the Netflix program *North Shore*.

GM's Report

- AWEX Mulesing Status Reports now include state breakdowns and percentage-based reporting.
- National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy has now been finalised; Wool Industry Post-farmgate RD&E EAD strategy is in final stages of review and will also be published shortly.
- Continued work happening with Australian Wool Traceability Hub to enable Property Identification Code validation by January 2026.
- Concerns were raised about inconsistencies in wool certification schemes and the transition from Responsible Wool Standard to the Materials Matter Standard.

MEMBERS BUSINESS

Mulesing definitions

Recommendation:

WPA to seek a definition of mulesing from other wool producing countries and subsequently hold further discussions with the Committee.

Cost of Gudair vaccine

Committee members raised concerns in relation to the cost of Gudair vaccine in the context of current low wool prices. A discussion was also in relation to the cost of increasing disease incidence within flocks when vaccination is not undertaken. Opportunities to undertake grower education will be pursued.

General business

All committee members discussed priority issues for their woolgrowing constituents to inform for forward committee work plan and future discussions.

SPECIAL INTEREST TOPIC – DIVERSIFIED WOOL PROCESSING

- John Abbott, Chairman of QWool presented on the Blackall wool scouring project.
- Kelvin Le, WoolProducers' representative in Vietnam provided an update on his work to date and ongoing opportunities for direct trade of Australian wool (greasy and scoured) to Vietnam.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

- The committee received an update on Phase 1 of the Best Practice Lamb Marking Project. The report will be used by WoolProducers and Sheep Producers in discussions with AWI and MLA to develop strategies to encourage the uptake of Best Practice Lamb Marking.
- An update was provided on WoolProducers work to progress registration of the Custom Footrot Vaccine. Work is underway with the University of Sydney Commercialisation team to undertake an approach to market to identify suitable partners to progress research and development needs and subsequent registration and manufacture of the vaccine.
- The committee received an update from Mark Ferguson on the Foot Health project and discussed potential future opportunities to undertake work relating to breeding sheep that are more resistant to infectious diseases and parasites in general.
- The committee received an update on the Kangaroo Island Sterile Insect Technique for Sheep Blowfly project.
- The committee held a discussion on the need to industry-wide discussions in relation to mulesing.

Recommendation:

WPA to approach WIA to hold an industry-wide strategic discussion regarding mulesing and related market access challenges.

MATTERS FOR DECISION AND DISCUSSION

Policy Advocacy priorities

The committee endorsed the following advocacy strategy documents:

- Promotion of biogenic carbon modelling
- The establishment of the Wool Trade Policy Programme
- The establishment of government wool procurement guidelines

A comprehensive discussion will take place to review the WoolProducers Policy register at the November 2025 committee meeting.

POST FARMGATE UPDATES

AWEX: Recently appointed AWEX CEO, Charlie McElhone joined the meeting to discuss AWEX matters and sought WoolProducers support for the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme.

AWI: The committee discussed the AWI strategic priorities against those presented by WoolProducers during the consultation phase. The benefits to industry will largely depend on Annual Operating Plans and their delivery over the term of the strategic plan.

AWTA: Discussion took place on the sale and relocation of the Melbourne AWTA facilities.

ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

- WoolProducers will hold elections for 3 independent directors' positions in November 2025. Formal communications will be released in the first half of September.
- WoolProducers will undertake a formal review of the constitution to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and relevant to the needs of the company.

NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting will be held on 12-13 November 2025 in conjunction with the AGM.