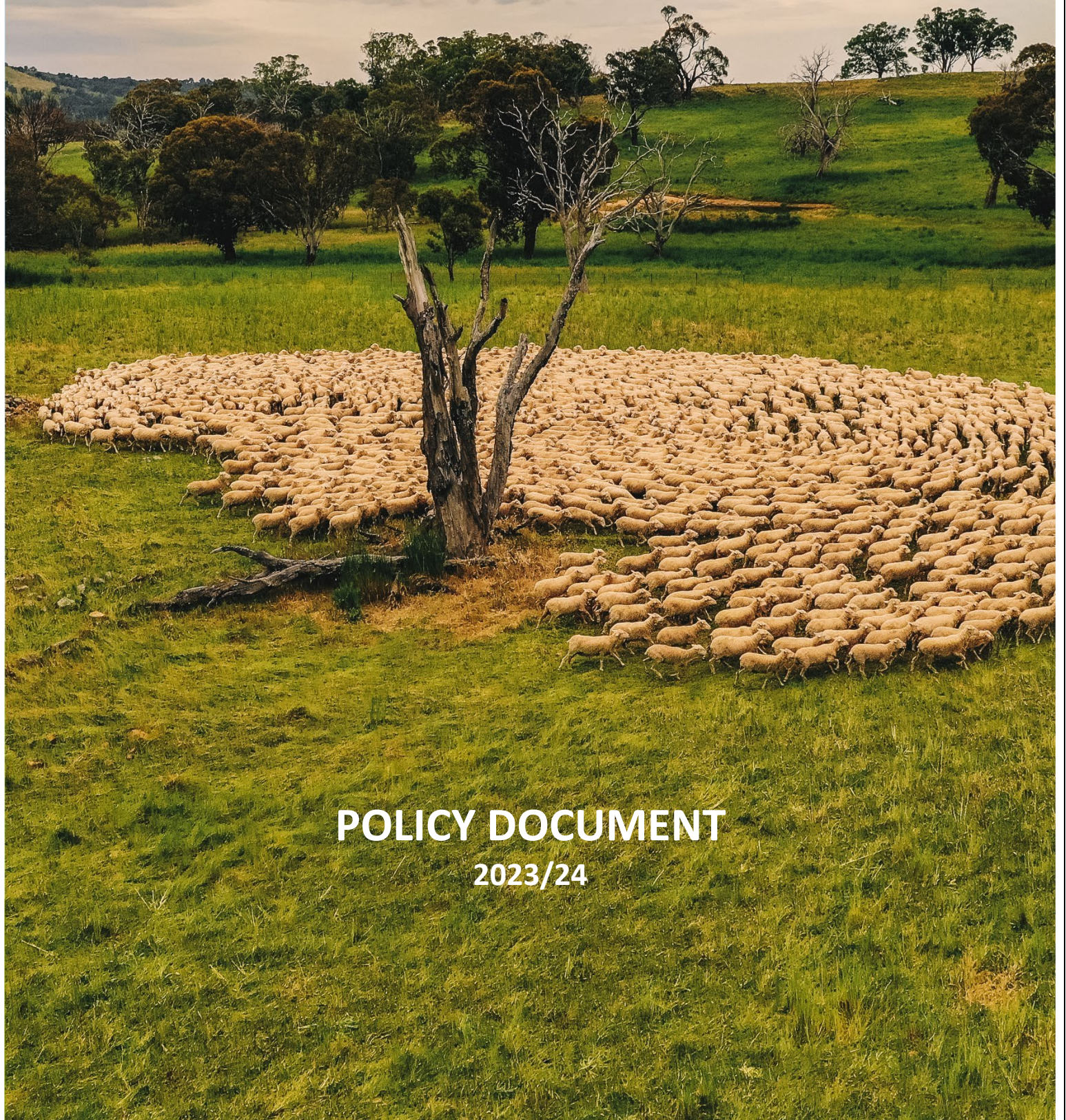


# WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA



**POLICY DOCUMENT**  
2023/24



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## INTRODUCTION

WoolProducers Australia (WoolProducers) is the peak national body for the wool producing industry in Australia, representing woolgrowers.

WoolProducers is the national voice on behalf of producers, advocating their interests to both the Federal Government and internationally and providing a strong, unified voice that enables woolgrowers to determine policy and drive change in their industry.

WoolProducers is led by a National Executive made up of woolgrowers from around Australia. Each state farmer organisation member is represented on the Executive, while another three members are directly elected by growers Australia-wide. Democratically elected independent members provide anyone involved with wool growing in Australia the opportunity to be a part of the leadership team. This sets WoolProducers apart from other grower groups and gives it the mantle of the true democratic voice of the Australian wool industry.

This structure is also unique amongst other similar livestock representative bodies in Australia, to which membership is often only available through state farmer organisations. WoolProducers is the only national organisation that can speak on behalf of the mainstream wool industry and represent the concerns and hopes of wool growers.

WoolProducers plays a key role in working with the companies that are funded by grower funds - whether they are compulsory levies or fees for service - to develop constructive and profitable outcomes for industry. WoolProducers carries the responsibility of appointing a director to the Australian Wool Exchange and the Australia Wool Testing Authority, promoting good corporate governance and ensuring that the interests of growers are paramount.

WoolProducers maintains a working relationship with Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) as the voice on behalf of their shareholders. WoolProducers aims to contribute to AWI's programs for the benefit of growers, promoting responsible use of levy funds and ensuring good corporate governance.

WoolProducers is the sole wool industry member of Animal Health Australia, and as such, carries a significant responsibility for decision making on behalf of the industry in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak. WoolProducers also provides advice to AHA on behalf of the wool industry on a day-to-day basis through its representation on national animal health and welfare committees.

WoolProducers also works closely with the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment on key issues such as animal health, emergency animal disease outbreak preparedness and industry development.

As the only woolgrower organisation with membership of the National Farmers' Federation, WPA is responsible for providing key policy advice on behalf of our members to Australia's peak farm body. The policy contribution to the National Farmers Federation includes environmental laws and regulations, climate change, water, industrial relations, taxation, international trade issues, economics and training.

WoolProducers endeavours to always work in the best interests of Australian wool growers and the Australian wool industry.

WoolProducers is supportive and a promoter of innovative technology and programs that increases woolgrowers' productivity and profitability,

WoolProducers is a promoter of continued good environmental practice. Woolgrowers are preeminent custodians of their land and wool continues to be the world's most environmentally sustainable fibre.

WoolProducers liaises with numerous internal and external industry partners. There is a need for two-way, transparent communication with all bodies.

## **WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA LTD VISION**

An Australian wool growing industry that is financially, socially, ethically and environmentally sustainable.

## **WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA LTD OBJECTIVES**

To represent all Australian woolgrowers by providing them with a unified policy forum on national wool issues.

To promote and carry on those activities necessary or advisable for the benefit and advancement of Australian woolgrowers social and economic well-being.

To maintain WoolProducers Australia Ltd as the recognised peak national body for the Australian wool-growing industry.

## **WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA LTD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- I. Ensuring efficient and accountable expenditure of compulsory levies or fees paid by wool growers and to seek constructive and profitable returns on these investments.
- II. Representation of wool growers in respect to national animal health and welfare priorities
- III. Membership of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) on behalf of wool growers.
- IV. Developing policy and strongly advocate to government and other stakeholders on domestic and international issues that may affect the profitability of our wool growing members.
- V. Participation in national training and educational activities that support and promote on-farm business and profitability.
- VI. Efficient, effective and professional management of WoolProducers Australia Ltd, and maintaining a high profile as Australia's peak wool grower body.

This document will outline WoolProducers Australia's policies in accordance with our strategic priorities.



**I. ENSURING EFFICIENT AND ACCOUNTABLE EXPENDITURE OF COMPULSORY LEVIES OR FEES PAID BY WOOL GROWERS AND TO SEEK CONSTRUCTIVE AND PROFITABLE RETURNS ON THESE INVESTMENTS**

WoolProducers plays a key role in working with the companies that are financed by grower funds - whether they are compulsory levies or fees for service - to develop constructive and profitable outcomes for industry.

WoolProducers provides guidance on the expenditure of wool health and welfare levies held by Animal Health Australia.

The organisation holds Board positions on both the Australian Wool Exchange and the Australian Wool Testing Authority, promoting and monitoring responsible behaviour in these companies.

WoolProducers also has a working relationship with both Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and as such represents members at AWI's Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel (WICP).

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Ensuring that all service providers to the wool industry that collect compulsory levies or fees from wool growers operate in an efficient, effective, transparent and accountable manner
- Ensuring that wool growers are adequately represented and considered in domestic supply chain considerations

**AUSTRALIAN WOOL INNOVATION**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Pursuing adequate reporting and consultation mechanisms within AWI
- The establishment of WoolProducers as the prescribed industry body
- Supporting the WoolPoll process being conducted in the most effective manner possible, including the frequency of the Poll to be changed to every 5 years, contingent on alignment with the Meat and Livestock Australia's strategic planning cycle
- Supporting the R&D levy for wool to be collected from all wool regardless of harvesting method.
- Ensuring that the AWI Statutory Funding Agreement and Constitution guarantees the appropriate use of grower funds and minimises subjective interpretation of general clauses by the board
- Advocating that AWI are meeting all statutory and shareholder requirements as outlined under their Statutory Funding Agreement and Constitution
- Ensuring that the structure and governance model of AWI to be in accordance with best practice governance
- Ensuring that the investment into research and development is based on program areas, opportunities and market failure, and the potential return to growers, as opposed to a deliberate allocation of investment between on-farm and off-farm research.
- Reinforcing the view that AWI should operate as a market failure focussed Company, as opposed to a commercially focussed Company.
- Advocating that AWI determines the IP and investment arrangements for each individual project

## **ANIMAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA**

### **Advice on Animal Health and Welfare Levy**

WoolProducers Australia is charged with providing advice on the expenditure of the compulsory animal health and welfare levy on behalf of Australian wool growers.

To demonstrate this commitment WoolProducers Australia has agreed to establish the WoolProducers Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Committee. The membership of this Advisory Committee includes:

- The WoolProducers Executive
- Australian Superfine Wool Growers Association
- MerinoLink
- SRS Genetics Ltd
- Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders
- Australian Stud Sheep Breeders
- Australian Veterinarian Association – Sheep Vets Special Interest Group (Technical Advisor/Observer)
- Animal Health Australia (Observer)
- Australian Wool Innovation (Observer)

The WoolProducers Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Committee provides recommendation on the expenditure of the wool portion of the animal health and welfare levy administered by AHA to the WoolProducers Executive.

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND ENVIRONMENT**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Maintaining a robust working relationship with the Department across all issues affecting the Australian wool industry

## **WOOL INDUSTRIES AUSTRALIA**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Opposing any proposal for WIA (FAWO) to collect a levy to fund industry good activities.

## **SHEEP PRODUCERS AUSTRALIA**

WoolProducers Australia supports:

- Investigation of an effective representation model for Australian wool growers
- Combined efforts with SPA where practical on behalf of the national wool and sheep industries



## II. Representation of Australian wool growers in respect to national animal health and welfare priorities.

WoolProducers is the sole woolgrower representative member of Animal Health Australia, and as such, carries a significant responsibility for key decisions made on behalf of the industry in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak as outlined in the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement.

WoolProducers also provides advice to AHA on behalf of the industry on a day-to-day basis through its representation on national animal health and welfare committees.

Animal welfare is a key priority for WoolProducers and the greater wool industry. Significant resources will be invested into continuous improvement to the already high animal welfare practices conducted by wool growers.

The organisation also works closely with the federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment on key issues such as animal health, emergency animal disease outbreak prevention, preparedness and industry development.

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Agreeing to the principle of funding AHA programs deemed relevant by the Executive on a GVP basis, unless circumstances specific to that program dictate otherwise.
- Ensuring that AHA operates the industry level reserve equivalent to 90-120% of 12 months of expenditure with expenditure calculated on a 5-year average
- Increasing the maximum reserves policy for the Sheep Industry Health and Welfare Trust Fund to 25% of \$14M (maximum of \$17.5M)
- Maintaining the Wool Industry Reserves Deed to secure wool industry levies to be spent on wool industry activities only
  - WoolProducers agree to the following purpose of the deed:
    - Any activity associated with biosecurity, animal health, welfare and emergency response to pest or disease in sheep in Australia.<sup>1</sup>
  - With the secondary purpose to be:
    - any activity associated with the eradication, prevention or control of any pest or disease in sheep and/or other to Australia, whether endemic or not;
    - any activity associated with the eradication, prevention or control of any other factor affecting the health of sheep and/or other in Australia;
      - any activity associated with the conduct of research into any pest or disease in sheep or other factors which may affect the health of sheep and/or other in Australia;
    - any activity associated with conduct of research into pests or diseases which may or may not occur in sheep, but which may affect the Australian wool industry; or
    - any other activity associated with sheep and/or other health, welfare or related to the above activities which, in the opinion of AHA, is likely to benefit or enhance the Australian wool industry.
- WoolProducers determines that the following amounts be committed to the Wool Industry Reserves Deed:
  - Threshold amount - \$2.5 million
  - Contribution amount – minimum \$100,000 pa
  - Maximum amount - \$6 million

## **BIOSECURITY**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Promoting the tools and management practices to enhance biosecurity for the Australian wool industry, including the following measures outlined in this policy document pertaining to animal diseases, antimicrobial resistance, surveillance and traceability:
  - Raising awareness of the importance of biosecurity
  - Supporting the [National Biosecurity Statement](#), including acknowledging that biosecurity is the responsibility of industry, all levels of government and the general public and accepting that zero risk is not a realistic or obtainable goal.

## **EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASES**

WoolProducers Australia, as the signatory to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) on behalf of the Australian Wool Industry, is committed to fulfil the legal obligations associated with this significant role, including preparation and response commitments.

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Fulfilling all obligations under EADRA to meet the obligations of signatory, including the adequate provision of funding for all relevant activities, including but not limited to training, preparedness activities, cost-sharing

## **ENDEMIC DISEASES**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Management of endemic diseases and conditions at a property level on a risk basis without the need for national management plans
- Ensuring that producers are responsible for funding any activity that enhances their own commercial situation and does not support socialised funding be used for these activities, eg. property disease management plans, SheepMAP, biosecurity plans
- Supporting research in developing and retaining tools, eg. Vaccines, diagnostics, to assist woolgrowers manage endemic diseases and conditions in their flock
- Supporting the mandatory use of a national Sheep Health Declaration to be used as the basis for providing a statement of risk for prospective purchasers.
- Supporting the ongoing research into new diagnostics for endemic diseases and conditions
- Pursing national definitions for animal diseases across jurisdictions
- Insisting that any public comment on a possible link between Crohn's and Johne's disease should only be made by members of the Crohn's Response Team spokespeople

## **ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Encouraging best practice use of antimicrobials in Australian wool production systems
- Ensuring that Australia's high standards of antimicrobial stewardship are upheld by industry and governments



- Ensuring that irrational, increased regulatory burden surrounding the prescription, supply and use of antimicrobials is not imposed on Australian woolgrowers
- Supporting the efforts of industry, government and research to overcome the global issue of increasing antimicrobial resistance

### **SURVEILLANCE**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Utilising industry levies for abattoir surveillance being used to detect other diseases and supports that this is done across all states and to the distribution of collected data in the most cost-effective way.
- Supporting ongoing surveillance for endemic condition under the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project
- In conjunction with the Sheep Producers Australia and Animal Health Australia identifies an efficient and effective process for the collection of surveillance data.
- Engaging with the meat processing sector to ensure the ongoing access to abattoirs for the purpose of collecting surveillance data.
- Providing in principle support for participating and funding surveillance activities under the National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP); Transmissible Spongiform Encephalitis Freedom Assurance Program (TSEFAP) and Screw-worm Fly Freedom Assurance Program
- Supporting an independent chair for the Sheep Health Project

### **TRACEABILITY**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting a fully integrated national traceability system that meets the national traceability standards
- To accept the implementation of individual digital/electronic identification of livestock only when the following system enhancements have been implemented:
  - The establishment of a nationally harmonised traceability system that operates according to nationally consistent business rules,
  - Investment into a database capable of handling all farmed FMD susceptible livestock species,
  - The creation of an equitable funding arrangement for both the establishment and ongoing maintenance of an enhanced system.
- Ensuring that any national traceability system is able to incorporate technological advancements that ensures that NTPS are being met while making the system more cost competitive for producers

### **LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION ASSURANCE (LPA)**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting the mandatory use of National Vendor Declarations for all transactions of sheep.

### **ANIMAL WELFARE**

WoolProducers endorsed our [Animal Welfare Statement](#) as policy in November, 2018.

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Seeking:

- To reassure the market of Australian animal welfare standards by:
  - Endorsing voluntary self-regulatory animal welfare programs to progress best practice management;
  - Supporting minimum standards of animal management necessary to maintain basic animal health needs.
- To achieve sustainable animal welfare improvements by:
  - Pursuing objective and unbiased scientific measurement of minimum standards as is the case with animal disease;
  - Pursuing interpretation of objective and scientific measurement at the herd or flock level rather than at the individual animal level.
- To achieve animal welfare decision making mechanisms that reflects the credibility of the participants by:
  - Excluding from the decision-making table animal rights groups who have forfeited any right to make decisions on behalf of livestock industries because they do not believe in the existence of livestock industries.
  - Supporting wide consultation bounded by clear frameworks and tight timelines.
- Ensure the Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Australia, Australian Wool Innovation and other livestock R&D organisations coordinate their animal welfare research efforts.
- Being strongly opposed to the establishment of an Independent Office of Animal Welfare
- Encouraging wool growers to adopt best practice standards in animal husbandry procedures and support a culture of continual improvement
- To formulating a framework for a collaborative approach to put the wool industry in a proactive position in regard to health and welfare
- Supporting continued research and investment into animal welfare practices and tools

#### **ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES - SHEEP**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting the Sheep Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines

#### **SENTIENCE**

WoolProducers acknowledges that sheep are sentient beings that can feel and perceive the world around them through both positive and negative experiences.

Legislation and regulation to safeguard animal welfare must be based on peer-reviewed evidence informing the scientific understanding of sheep sentience.

In acknowledging sheep sentience, WoolProducers maintains that:

- Sheep **do not** have the same feelings as humans
- Sheep **can** be owned for legally permitted activities (farming and associated permitted husbandry procedures as prescribed by relevant legislation)

#### **MULESING**

The issue of mulesing is continually evolving and WoolProducers' policy must provide the flexibility to move with external forces outside of the production sector's control, while maintaining integrity and leadership on this issue. In order to achieve this there are a number of key principles that WoolProducers Australia must adhere to.

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting the phase out of surgical mulesing only when there is a universally accepted alternative
- Strongly opposing government regulation to ban the practice
- Strongly opposing the setting of another deadline for the phase out of mulesing
- Advocating for the current definition of mulesing to be retained

#### **PAIN RELIEF**

WoolProducers Australia acknowledges the importance of undertaking husbandry procedures according to best practice while continually working to reduce, refine and replace these practices in response to research, development and regulatory outcomes. This includes the administration of products that minimise the severity and duration of pain when undertaking mulesing, tail docking and castration.

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Calling for appropriate pain relief to be made mandatory when mulesing to ensure that the procedure can be done in accordance with the highest standard of animal welfare
- Supporting initiatives that encourage grower adoption of the use of appropriate pain relief products when undertaking tail docking and castration:
- Investment in research, development and extension to enhance pain management strategies when undertaking painful husbandry procedures
- Extension and advocacy to inform growers of consumer expectations and emerging regulatory pressures
- Extension and advocacy to promote Australia's world leading sheep husbandry practices, including the use of industry driven verification systems to demonstrate the use of pain relief products to downstream supply chain partners
- Advocacy to facilitate a balanced regulatory environment (safety and trade).
- Supporting the registration of new pain relief products for pain management when undertaking painful animal husbandry practices





### **III. Membership of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) on behalf of wool growers.**

As the only woolgrower organisation with membership of the National Farmers' Federation, WoolProducers is responsible for providing key policy advice on behalf of our members to Australia's peak farm body.

The policy contribution to the National Farmers Federation includes environmental laws and regulations, industrial relations, taxation, international trade issues, economics and training.

#### **NFF TRADE COMMITTEE**

WoolProducers is committed to:

- Ensuring the wool industry trade and market access interests are considered by this policy forum, and works with the NFF to progress work on industry and cross-sectoral trade issues
- Leading the development of, and engaging in, trade and market access policy and advocacy efforts

#### **ECONOMIC AND FARM BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

WoolProducers is committed to:

- Engaging with the committee to identify, work through and progress advocacy outcomes that benefit wool growers and their businesses

#### **WORKFORCE COMMITTEE**

WoolProducers is committed to:

- Advocating for policies to improve the safety and wellbeing of farmers, farm workers and families
- Fostering a productive and flexible workplace that supports diversity and participation
- Promoting agriculture as a vocation of choice

#### **DROUGHT WORKING GROUP**

WoolProducers will ensure:

- Woolgrowers' interests are pursued in a national forum regarding animal health, welfare, biosecurity, and general farming procedures

#### **FARMING SYSTEMS COMMITTEE**

WoolProducers is committed to:

- Ensuring that woolgrowers interests are pursued in a national forum regarding animal health, welfare, biosecurity, and general farming procedures

#### **IV. Develop policy and strongly advocate to government and other stakeholders on domestic and international issues that may affect the profitability of our wool producer members**

WoolProducers determines policy through our State Farming Organisation (SFO) member representatives and three democratically elected Independent Directors. Through the engagement of Independent Directors, WoolProducers is able to ascertain the needs of growers both within, and external to the SFO system.

#### **TRADE**

WoolProducers is committed to:

- Supporting favourable trade and market access for Australian wool
- Supporting and promoting a rules-based trading system for all Australian agricultural products
- Operating in accordance with the rules set out under [Article 6](#) of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture
- Acknowledging that being a strong advocate for a rules-based system carries with it a requirement to support the associated mechanisms that uphold and enforce the rules

WoolProducers supports the Australian Government in:

- Negotiating commercially advantageous bilateral trade agreements
- Ensuring that trade agreements that do not require equivalencies or standard setting in regard to on-farm practices addressed by sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures
- Reviewing, and where necessary, renegotiate existing bilateral agreements to ensure that Australian wool has the most favourable access rights
- Ensuring that trade agreements do not dilute Australia's biosecurity requirements
- Protecting our production capacity and access to international markets by safeguarding Australia's reputation for clean, safe, environmentally sustainable food and fibre products through robust, evidence-based biosecurity systems, underpinned by strong science and risk management
- Utilising the full suite of measures available in the WTO to pursue the interests of Australian agricultural producers, including more active use of the dispute settlement mechanisms (either as a complainant or a third party)
- Supporting the role played by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in providing a forum for the ongoing liberalisation of global trade and in setting the rules by which countries trade

#### **CLIMATE CHANGE**

WoolProducers ratified our [Climate Change](#) policy in August, 2020

#### **INDUSTRY SYSTEMS**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Seeking that the NWD become a condition of sale supported by an education program
- Supporting the use of standardised documentation across the industry

#### **RESIDUES**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting the continuing availability of chemicals for viable wool production

- Seeking the wider adoption of the concept of verifying wool (chemical) residues.

#### **LIVE EXPORT**

- The wool industry continues to support the live export of sheep contingent on adherence to animal welfare standards underpinned by science.

#### **SUPPLY CHAIN**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Encouraging the commercial evolution of an environment for trading greasy wool that is consistent with:
  - Centralising the information required to affect any relevant change of ownership;
  - Presenting the product to the widest possible range of domestic and international interests; and,
  - Facilitating speedy delivery and minimising supply chain costs to all parties.

#### **VERTEBRATE PESTS**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting national coordination activities for vertebrate pest mitigation
- Strongly lobbying against the import of all exotic hybrid pets from the feline and canine family into Australia.

#### **FARM SAFETY**

WoolProducers is committed to:

- Encouraging woolgrowers to protect all workers, including family, full-time, part time, casual and contract labour by:
  - Eliminating [hazards](#), which means getting rid of things that can kill or hurt workers. If that is not possible then you must minimise the [risks](#), so far as is reasonably practicable.
  - Choosing the safest equipment for your farm's needs and ensure it is well maintained.
  - Choosing the safest chemicals and closely follow the manufacturers' instructions.
  - Ensuring all workers and visitors know about the [risks](#) on the farm and how to manage these.
  - Ensuring workers have the skills to work safely, for example when handling animals and using farm equipment.
  - Closely supervise new and inexperienced workers.



## **V. NATIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT AND PROMOTE ON-FARM BUSINESS AND PROFITABILITY.**

Wool producer input into any national area that supports, helps or promotes on-farm wool business. This includes developing and accessing training programs, obtaining useful financial and genetic benchmarks, quality assurance development and support, land conservation, vermin control and agricultural chemicals.

### **SHEARER/SHEDHAND**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting a nationwide system for ensuring standards across the AWI Shearer and Shedhand Training Program.
- Strongly promoting to producers, contractors, shed staff and training providers, accredited shearer and shedhand training in an effort to improve the quality of wool handling and clip preparation in the Australian wool clip.

### **MULESING**

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- Supporting the development of a nationally recognised mulesing accreditation course, based on recognised prior learning.
- Ensuring that mulesing training should be voluntary only.
- Providing in-principle support to LCA and WoolProducers pursuing project funding through AHA

### **YOUTH AMBASSADOR**

WoolProducers is committed to:

- The continuation of the Youth Ambassadorship on an ongoing basis past the Leadership in Agriculture Fund project.

