

# WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Executive Summary

9 May 2024 | Teams

### WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:03am and welcomed attendees to the inaugural Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting noting the final format and TOR would be finalised after consultation with the committee.

### MATTERS FOR DECISION

#### WPA Policy Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

The CEO spoke to the new meeting format and advised that PAC funding will need to address at some point. The Committee discussed the proposed Terms of Reference and provided feedback for consideration.

**Action: CEO to adjust the PAC TOR out of session and present it for endorsement either via email or at the next PAC meeting.**

### MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

#### President/CEO Report

##### President

The President provided a verbal report outlining the following key matters:

- Current production costs are making wool production challenging for growers, especially in the current economic climate
- Production is down, which is having an impact on service providers (AWEX, AWTA)
- WPA Staff have been working very hard including travel to attend both IWTO in Adelaide and SaigonTex in Vietnam
- There has been a lot of feedback that IWTO was the best one held so far. David Michell undertook significant work and investment to make it a success.
- TIAW campaign has been a success with booklets being popular at both SaigonTex and IWTO
- The WPA newsletter has been well received and covers a large number of subjects including the high level of involvement WPA have in the industry
- WoolPoll is on the horizon and WPA will wait until full information is received before making a recommendation on a levy rate

##### CEO

The Committee noted and discussed the CEO's report that touched on matters WPA have been involved in throughout the year including:

- Biosecurity Protection Levy,
- Trade
- SAFEMEAT membership and
- NWD

##### **AWI**

The Chair mentioned he had meetings with several AWI Directors at IWTO.

##### WICP/ WCG

The minutes from the last meetings, both held on 18 April were noted. SFO EOs advised that they receive minutes from their respective representatives and discuss outcomes as appropriate and required.

## WOOLPOLL

The committee provided feedback on current narratives around WoolPoll.

The Executive stated that as per the usual process, the WoolProducers Board will only consider taking a position once costings and forecast data is provided by AWI and the Board have had time to discuss the information. The Board may not take a position, instead opting to encourage more information from AWI to provide to growers in order to facilitate a more informed vote.

The Committee suggested publishing an interim comment.

## **AHA**

The Committee noted the paper as well as the AHA letter attachment and AOP summarising AHA's intended use of WPA's subscription.

The CEO highlighted that subscriptions had dropped due to the three-year GDP reducing and that the three-year rolling average is declining.

## **Member Issues**

### NSWF Raised: WoolProducers' membership to SAFEMEAT and Integrity Systems company

The CEO outlined that WPA have been attempting to engage SAFEMEAT for membership and an equitable say for a number of years since the remit has shifted to include biosecurity and traceability.

## **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

### **Update - Trade**

The paper was taken as read and the GM noted traction gained with French Ecobalysis Labelling, once WPA facilitated important connections between Australian and French stakeholders.

The CEO noted that the trend decline reflects a temporarily increase in wool purchasing immediately after the India FTA ratification that is now normalising. She added that if India engages Australia to help meet their ambitious goals of a \$100 billion export textile industry by 2030 and a near tripling of wool exports, it will hopefully be reflected in a trend increase in the coming years.

### **Update – Australian Wool Traceability Hub**

The CEO offered to take questions out of session on the IWTO presentation included in the papers that summarised WPAs involvement to date.

### **Update - AWTA**

The President provided a verbal update on AWTA issues.

### **Update - AWEX**

The President provided a verbal update on AWEX issues.

### **Update – WIA / IWTO**

The papers were taken as read and the President expanded on the following points:

IWTO – The IWTO conference was considered one of the best held to date, however there are areas that could be improved including the Young Professionals program. A debrief meeting will be held in a few weeks. Next year's IWTO will be in north France.

WIA – Wool week is now a one-day event in July which clashes with the Bendigo Sheep show.

### **Update – Sheep Sustainability Framework (SSF)**

The president and CEO summarised the paper. The following points were noted:

- There is a desire for more growers to attend the SSF industry forums.
- The SSF Board considered metrics being used in the 2024 annual report and will look to start a process to reduce and refine the number of metrics used.
- The Framework closely aligns with SustainaWool around key themes.
- There is reoccurring feedback from SFOs that the framework doesn't focus enough on theme three and four (*Looking after our people, our customers and the community; Ensuring a financially resilient industry*) as much as theme one and two (*Caring for our Sheep; Enhancing the Environment and Climate*).

It was observed that some SFOs did not receive invitations to engage in the forums, and that the aim is to ensure all of industry is equitably engaged and have the opportunity to provide feedback and input.

It was also observed that there were no government representatives at the SSF Consultative Committee meeting in October 2023, and that it would be beneficial to include them.

### **Update – NFF Committees**

Committee members provided verbal updates on key issues being discussed within each NFF committee.

#### Farming Systems Standing Committee

The primary issue of concern discussed has largely been the Biosecurity Protection Levy (BPL). WPA has advocated for our position which is echoed by all committee members.

The committee understands WPA's reasons for joining the Sustainable Funding Consultation Panel, however WPA made it clear that did not signify support of the BPL.

#### Economic Policy and Farm Business Committee

The last meeting was held during WPA's trip to Vietnam, so was not attended by present PAC committee members. An update will be provided at the next PAC meeting.

#### Workforce Standing Committee

The committee meetings this year have all clashed with other industry meetings, so attendance has been minimal. The CEO noted attendance on 29 April where Jobs & Skills Australia presented on the Wool Skills Occupation List currently being reviewed. Shearing is not on the list at all, so WPA will put a submission and request the National Wool Harvesting and Training Group Chair Don MacDonald to put in a submission too.

#### Trade Standing Committee

The last meeting was held immediately after IWTO. The Committee will transition to shorter, more frequent meetings.

There is a clear desire among a lot of commodities, for government investment in the trade space. As such, the trade committee needs to actively push for government support and cross-sectoral coordination.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **General Business**

The changing science around methane and what WPA we do to get ahead of the issue was raised.

The GM suggested a WPA representative join the NFF Sustainable Development and Climate Change Committee, however noted there is currently not enough staff capacity or resource to join. There were no volunteers.

The executive noted the committee's feedback including pushing the biodiversity credentials of sheep and wool production instead of focusing on carbon and to potentially raise this issue as a standing agenda item.

**Meeting closed 11:35pm (AEDT)**