

Beyond the bale

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PROTECTING FLOCKS FROM FLYSTRIKE



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PRODUCTIVITY

Beyond thebale

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FRONT COVER

Protecting the national flock against flystrike.
At this year's 2018 Breech Flystrike RD&E Technical Update, held in June in Sydney and attended by 115 industry stakeholders, significant and incremental progress was reported from a wide spectrum of research projects and trials conducted on farms and in laboratories. **See page 48 for details.**



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- Marketing
- Sheep Production
- Woolgrower Services
- Processing Innovation & Education Extension
- Business Services

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View Beyond the Bale online with image galleries and video at <http://beyondthebale.wool.com>

GETTING ON WITH BUSINESS

We are continuing with initiatives to help increase the demand for wool through investments in marketing and R&D – from farm to fashion.



Stuart McCullough
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Wool Innovation

DROUGHT

I am deeply concerned about the effect that the enduring drought conditions are having on many woolgrowers. AWI provides a range of drought planning and management publications, webinar recordings and other resources for woolgrowers going into, enduring or recovering from drought. On our website we also provide links to useful external resources and government agencies that provide drought assistance. View a list of available resources on the AWI website at www.wool.com/droughtresources.

HEALTHY PRICES CONTINUE

During the past few months, the EMI surpassed the \$20 mark for the very first time, and at the time of writing is \$21.16. Prices are in very healthy territory, both in absolute terms and in comparison to prices from just 12 months ago. I have always firmly believed that Merino wool is a \$20+ fibre. With supply having increased during the past couple of seasons, I consider these robust prices as fundamentally a result of a strong and consistent demand for our fibre. AWI's marketing in key northern hemisphere markets has been successfully cementing Australian wool as a premium natural fibre for which consumers are willing to pay a premium price. Although the finer microns have performed particularly well lately, the broader microns have also been rising during the past 18 months. Meanwhile, other competitive fibre prices remain relatively flat.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

AWI has published on its website an independent Review of Performance, which is required to be conducted every three years. The report, produced by Ernst & Young, will be of great benefit to AWI in refining its processes and approach going forward. I am pleased the review included important context about the scale of the Australian wool industry and the scope of AWI's role.

WOOLPOLL 2018

I encourage all eligible wool levy payers to cast their votes when the poll opens on 17 September. It is the opportunity for woolgrowers Australia-wide to choose what percentage of their clip proceeds are used to fund AWI – their research, development and marketing company – for the next three years. The ballot paper will be posted to eligible levy payers in September, along with a Voter Information Kit that outlines information about WoolPoll 2018 and how AWI proposes to invest levy funds at each levy rate option. The poll closes at 5pm (AEST) on 2 November.

AWI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The AWI 2018 AGM will be held on Friday 23 November at the Swissotel Sydney at 68 Market St, Sydney. Formal notice and meeting papers will be sent to AWI shareholders in October. AWI shareholders who are unable to attend the AGM in person will be able to view the AGM proceedings via webcast. Further details are available on the AWI website at www.wool.com/aggm. The AWI 2017/18 Annual Report will also be released in October.

REGISTER NOW FOR WOOLQ

Most of WoolQ's functionality is now complete and available on the WoolQ website. This functionality includes the industry discussion forum and ready reckoner, as well as the eSpeci (an alternative to the current paper speci) that was made available in March. The final piece of WoolQ functionality, the 'WoolQ Market', is scheduled for release towards the end of the year. I strongly encourage woolgrowers to register with WoolQ today – at www.woolq.com. Not only will you be able to use all the current functionality, but you will be kept updated on the release of the WoolQ Market.

A NEW LOOK AT SHEARING

Wool harvesting is an elaborate labour-intensive process, relying on highly trained shearers and wool handlers who work hard within a busy wool shed workplace. While AWI continues to fund shearer and wool handler training aimed at increasing productivity, skills development and professionalism, AWI is also taking a new look at automated shearing. We are spreading the investment risk across a few investments, as well as looking for additional opportunities in safe and soft robotics. See page 68 for further details.

PROTECTING AGAINST FLYSTRIKE

At this year's 2018 Breech Flystrike RD&E Technical Update attended by 115 industry stakeholders in July, significant and incremental progress was reported from a wide spectrum of research projects and trials conducted on farms and in laboratories. The presentations from the event are all available on the AWI website at www.wool.com/flystrikeRnDupdate

LIVE & BREATHE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company has launched a new global consumer campaign – the first in recent years. The Live & Breathe campaign aims to educate a lost generation on the technical performance benefits of Australian Merino wool, and to drive purchase through partners in the performance, athleisure and streetwear categories. The overarching message of the campaign – which comprises a short film, hero fashion and sportswear imagery, and additional e-commerce extensions – is that wool is breathable, making it perfect for performance. Focusing on breathability allows the campaign to talk about a number of wool's key elements in the performance category, such as temperature regulation, odour resistance and its moisture-wicking nature. For more information, visit www.woolmark.com.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE VOTE!

? What is WoolPoll?

Every three years AWI is required to conduct a poll asking woolgrowers to determine what percentage of their wool income they would like to invest in research, development (R&D) and marketing undertaken by AWI.

Why vote?

WoolPoll is your opportunity to directly influence how much funding AWI will receive for the next three years to deliver R&D and marketing services for the Australian wool industry.

Who can vote?

If you have paid \$100 or more in wool levies over the past three financial years, you are eligible to vote in WoolPoll.

Your voting entitlement is determined from records of your wool sales. If you are eligible to vote, you will have been notified of your voting entitlement in August.

How do I vote?

Your Ballot Paper will be sent to you in September. You can vote online, by mail or via fax – as per the instructions that will be sent with the Ballot Paper.

For any questions about the voting process, call the voter assistance line on **1800 990 365**.

When can I vote?

Voting opens on **17 September 2018**.

The poll closes at **5pm (AEDT) on 2 November 2018**.

WILL YOU VOTE THIS WOOLPOLL?

The 2018 WoolPoll levy rate options have been announced; voting opens on 17 September; and AWI recommends growers choose to maintain the 2% levy.

3%

2.5%

2%

The current levy rate and AWI's recommendation for WoolPoll 2018

1.5%

0%

In the coming weeks, you'll receive your Voter Information Kit, which includes your ballot papers to vote in this year's WoolPoll.

Whether wool is the primary focus of your business, part of your mixed enterprise, or just a hobby on the side, your vote counts. Don't leave it to others to decide what investment – if any – is made in future R&D and marketing for our industry.

YOUR LEVY RATE OPTIONS

The WoolPoll Regulations require AWI to propose 3 to 5 levy rates for you to vote on, including a zero option if you think investment in R&D and marketing for the industry isn't necessary.

WoolPoll 2018 asks you to consider five levy rate options:

MESSAGE FROM THE WOOLPOLL PANEL CHAIR TO WOOLGROWERS

I'm privileged to be your Panel Chair for WoolPoll 2018 and lead such a diverse Panel representing woolgrowers from all regions across Australia.

We the Panel have worked closely with AWI to ensure that the Voter Information Memorandum provides you with the information you need when deciding how to place your vote.

I encourage you to take the time to sit down as a family or a business unit and discuss the future you want for your business and your industry.

This is such a critical vote for the industry, and an opportunity we get every 3 years that other industries don't – IT'S YOUR WOOL, IT'S YOUR LEVY, IT'S YOUR VOTE!

Sydney Lawrie
Chair, 2018 WoolPoll Panel

WoolPoll Panel Chair
Sydney Lawrie.



AWI RECOMMENDS: VOTE 2% THIS WOOLPOLL

- The projects featured in this edition of *Beyond the Bale* are only a snapshot of the work AWI does on your behalf. If you see value in the projects we're funding, then we need your support at WoolPoll to continue.
- Voting 2% means we can continue to deliver your core R&D and marketing priorities – and look at investing in new projects that fill important gaps in the industry.
- 2% enables us to build resilience and future-proof.

Demand for wool has risen sharply and with it, so has the price. Many of you are taking advantage of this and investing back into your business – because we all know that choosing to invest when times are good enables us to future-proof and build resilience. With the drought biting hard across much of Eastern Australia, it's even more front of mind that we must prepare now to manage the challenges of the future.

Since late 2017, the Board has deliberated on the levy rate options and what its recommended rate should be, with extensive modelling of investment and forecasting of production and income at the various rates.

We know some parts of the industry say that cutting the levy won't hurt R&D or marketing investments, because the higher wool price will counteract any losses to AWI's funding. But a cut to the levy leaves no room in the budget to protect your investments against any future price volatility or unpredictable seasonal conditions that affect production volumes – factors which heavily impact the amount of income AWI receives.

That's why we're recommending you vote to maintain the 2% levy – so we can invest now when prices are good and build resilience to

future-proof our investments. We believe 2% is the optimum level to balance our financial responsibility with our capacity to deliver benefits for growers.

Choosing 2% means we can continue to deliver our core R&D and extension programs in areas such as managing flystrike, improving reproduction and wild dog control, to address your profitability and productivity priorities. We can also invest in new projects as they arise to help lower production costs, such as automated wool harvesting, which we couldn't do with less than 2%.

With 98% of Australian wool being exported, we need all hands on deck across the supply chain because without consumer education and awareness, people wouldn't choose to buy Australian wool. With the 2% levy, we can keep marketing Australian wool and building global demand. Just as moving between farming enterprises is relatively easy, so too is substituting wool for other fibres. If we take our foot off the pedal, we'll leave a gap in the market that will undoubtedly be filled by another fibre. It's a conscious choice, and we want to ensure wool is the final choice, right along the supply chain through to consumers.

Choosing 2% allows us to secure wool's place in the apparel and textile market of the future, by investing in product and processing innovations that revolutionise how wool is thought of and used – no longer the itchy, bulky school jumper of days gone by, but a luxurious, high performance, technical fibre for the modern consumer.

WoolPoll is your choice to invest in your industry. Your future profitability, the industry's sustainability, and the global demand for your product rests on this choice. AWI takes seriously its role in delivering R&D and marketing outcomes that benefit Australian woolgrowers – and it can only do this if you vote to maintain the 2% levy rate.

WHY WE DON'T RECOMMEND MORE THAN 2%

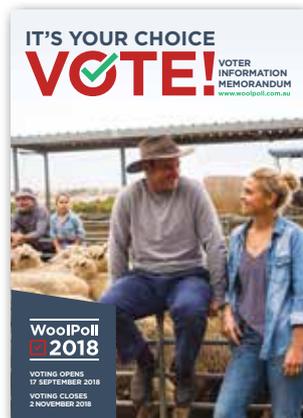
While AWI could invest even more in R&D and marketing at 3% or 2.5%, we believe 2% is the optimum level to balance our financial responsibility with our capacity to deliver benefits for growers.

WHY WE DON'T RECOMMEND 1.5%

We could not maintain the level of investment in R&D and marketing at 1.5% in the long term, nor continue to deliver R&D and marketing benefits for woolgrowers. We would have no capacity to invest in new opportunities and no buffer in our budget against future wool price volatility, meaning existing programs may have to be discontinued.

WHY WE DON'T RECOMMEND 0%

0% makes it impossible to address key woolgrower priorities that support profitability, sustainability or increased demand. We would have to abandon R&D that helps in your fight against flies, wild dogs or any future industry threats. We would stop marketing your wool, and walk away from all the ground we have gained in growing demand for Australian wool.



The **WoolPoll Voter Information Memorandum** (left) and AWI's summary of investments '**Wool is Your Choice**' (middle) will be sent with ballot papers in September to those woolgrowers eligible to vote at WoolPoll 2018. You can view them both documents online now at www.woolpoll.com.au (right).

MESSAGE FROM YOUR WOOLPOLL PANEL

WoolPoll
 2018



Sydney Lawrie, SA

"People are showing a lot more interest in WoolPoll 2018, especially the mixed farmers I've spoken to, because wool prices and sheep prices are so good...and that's making them think about how their WoolPoll money will be spent to improve the industry."



Richard Keniry, NSW

"Treat (the) WoolPoll vote like an investor...There are plenty of people now investing in new sheeyards and sheds, and so my question to them is - how much do they want to invest in the industry for the future?"



Rob Ingram, NSW

"Not voting in WoolPoll impacts directly on the bottom line of what is spent on the industry and the quality of the work. Will you criticise the industry and what it does and where it's going, or will you vote to have a say?"



Brenton Lush, SA

"We're working with AWI to ensure WoolPoll isn't Merino-centric and that there's a voice for growers of 25-30 micron wools."



Candice Roberts, Qld

"Even if it's your parents who vote, start the conversation with your family and get involved and contribute to the future of your industry."



John Hassell, WA

"The voting period comes as some growers turn their attention to cropping and harvest time - it's easy to jump on your phone when you're out and about and vote."



Steve Harrison, Vic

"It's taken a long time to get to the point where we're looking to increase flock numbers and employ a worker, but it's been a tremendous 12-18 months for wool prices...There's no better time for us to decide the future of our industry."



Ed Storey, NSW

"Vote but don't get caught up in politics... Ours is one of the only rural industries where we get to vote every three years on how much of our wool income is spent on R&D and marketing."

IT'S YOUR CHOICE
VOTE!

INDEPENDENT THREE-YEAR REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

AWI's latest three-year review of performance has stated that: AWI has performed well in many regards, but, as with most organisations, many opportunities exist for its improved performance in the future. AWI is looking to implement the review's recommendations that will help the company deliver better results for woolgrowers.

BACKGROUND

AWI has an obligation through its Statutory Funding Agreement (SFA) with the Federal Government to undergo an independent review of performance (ROP) every three years – and report the ROP to wool levy payers and the Government prior to each WoolPoll.

This year, the Government took the lead in contracting and managing the independent consultant undertaking the review (Ernst & Young). The review also considered some additional matters that were raised by industry and government.

AWI welcomed this expanded review and fully cooperated at every stage to ensure the consultants had access to all the information required to make their recommendations. Ernst & Young's thorough review of AWI's performance and governance for the period 2015-2018 resulted in a 500-page report that was released on 9 July.

In summary, 82 recommendations were suggested, with the areas of monitoring and evaluation, consultation and governance being the focus. The recommendations range in levels of importance from 'mandatory', 'critical' and 'recommended' and provide the company with timing suggestions for completion helping to pave the way for greater consultation, transparency and accountability.

REPORT WILL BENEFIT AWI AND WOOLGROWERS

In response to the report, AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said the assessment of how AWI was performing against its responsibilities will be of great benefit to AWI in refining its processes and approach going forward.

"A review of performance is a normal part of the WoolPoll cycle that AWI goes through every three years to inform woolgrowers prior to the WoolPoll vote. It's a very normal part of our life," Mr McCullough said.

"The report is complimentary on many of the things that we do, such as our strong reputation for marketing activities, but Ernst & Young's aim was to identify any problems with the business and provide suggestions

on how we can improve the business, and that's exactly what they've done.

"AWI acknowledges there are areas where we can enhance the way we operate and we look forward to improving delivery of our services to Australian woolgrowers. The report provides a detailed roadmap to assist that process."

Mr McCullough noted that AWI's review of performance process is unique in many ways.

"For woolgrowers, the report means that their company, AWI, is being well scrutinised every three years and they get to see those results and they get to judge us on our worth," he said.

"So I think that it evidences to woolgrowers that the company is being well looked at. There are many things that we've done right, and things that we can do better have been identified and will be addressed in due course."

The report highlighted that AWI's employees are of a high calibre, with a strong commitment in delivering high quality innovations and experience that spans the entirety of the wool industry value chain.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The report's recommendations can be broken into two main parts: the operations of the company and the Board. From an operational point of view, Ernst & Young identified two key areas that could be improved: one is measurement and evaluation, and the other one is consultation.

"We acknowledged at the beginning of the review that measurement and evaluation was a bit of an issue for us," Mr McCullough explained. "Because we don't sell anything, it's often hard to give to woolgrowers tangible figures of return on investment, so that's where we've got to spend some more energy and time. We need people collecting data in the northern hemisphere on a constant basis and analysts back here extrapolating that into terms that woolgrowers can understand."

Regarding consultation, the review of performance acknowledged that AWI has increased its number of engagement,

consultation and communication initiatives since the last strategic planning period, and that the addition of these methods has strengthened AWI's ability to connect with wool industry stakeholders.

"However, the report also said that more needs to be done by AWI to ensure more effective consultation is undertaken with industry representative organisations and other stakeholders," Mr McCullough said.

PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr McCullough said that, from an operational and Board perspective, AWI intends to expeditiously adopt key recommendations that will help to enhance transparency and accountability and consultation mechanisms with its shareholders and stakeholders.

"Ernst and Young did a good job with this report and they have provided us with the timings that they'd like to see the recommendations implemented," he explained.

"We can simply accept many of the recommendations outright, but there were some that warrant some more thought and potentially might require constitutional change which we've got to put to a vote of all shareholders, so there's a bit of road to go yet. But certainly the ones that we can tick off quickly we will, and we'll work on the others to get them delivered in due course."

AWI is creating a dedicated spot on its website at www.wool.com/ROP that will inform woolgrowers on the progress/status of implementing the report's recommendations. B

MORE INFORMATION

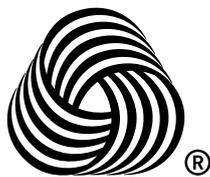
- Woolgrowers will receive a summary of the ROP report with their **WoolPoll Voter Information Kit**.
- You can download the full report and a summary report from www.wool.com/ROP
- Hear from AWI's CEO Stuart McCullough speaking about the report's recommendations and the next steps for AWI in Episode 49 of AWI's The Yarn podcast at www.wool.com/podcast





Campaign imagery highlights commercially available apparel, in this case: **Facetasm** 100% Merino wool jacket; **[sn] super.natural** 50% Merino wool crop top; and **Wilderness Wear** leggings 100% Merino wool outer.

LIVE & BREATHE



PURE NEW WOOL

LIVE & BREATHE CAMPAIGN

AWI has launched a new global marketing campaign that aims to educate a new generation of young consumers about the performance benefits of Australian Merino wool.

AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company has launched the new global consumer campaign – Live & Breathe – the first in recent years.

The campaign aims to educate a young generation of consumers, who might not have grown up with wool, about the technical performance benefits of Australian Merino wool – and drive the purchase of wool apparel and footwear products, through brand partners in the performance, athleisure and streetwear categories.

The overarching message of the campaign is that wool is breathable, making it the perfect fibre for performance and athleisure.

The campaign hones in on wool's inherent breathability to ensure the simplicity of the campaign's message has cut-through in the crowded marketplace. According to a 2017 Nielsen Report, 'breathable' and 'comfort' are the most important attributes people look for when buying sportswear – and science shows that wool is the one of the most breathable fibres.

Focusing on breathability allows the campaign to talk about a number of wool's key elements in the performance category, such as temperature regulation, odour resistance and its moisture-wicking nature.

However, secondary messages are also

layered into the campaign, such as choosing quality over quantity (reinforcing the Woolmark symbol as a mark of quality), and of choosing natural fibres to avoid the adverse environmental effects of synthetics.

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough says in a world dominated by synthetic fibres, it can be easy for millennials – the world's largest consumer group, by volume – to lose sight of the wonders of Mother Nature.

"Wool, once the fibre of choice for athletes worldwide, was overthrown by the rise of man-made fibres, but in recent years we have seen the re-emergence of Merino wool in the activewear industry," Mr McCullough said.



Example of campaign collateral being rolled out across the world. The advert features commercially available apparel: **Devold** 100% Merino wool jacket; **Actlima** 65% Merino wool crop top; **XTM** 100% Merino wool leggings; **3.1 Phillip Lim** 50% Merino wool trousers.

“The fibre’s inherent performance properties and eco-credentials have seen the fibre become prominent once again and is reaching a new generation of consumers.”

CAMPAIGN ROLLOUT

Working with award-winning global creative agency TBWA and media buying agency OMD, the campaign – which includes a short film, and hero fashion and sportswear imagery – began at the start of this month.

While the film (distributed through social media and Woolmark.com) and the out-of-home campaign (billboards, bus shelter advertising etc) serve as two hero aspects of the campaign, events, e-commerce extensions and collaborative partnerships will help to drive home the message in an impactful way.

“The campaign features a carefully curated selection of some of the most technically advanced and innovative wool and wool-rich garments commercially available on the market today,” Mr McCullough said.

A layered influencer campaign of some of the world’s leading fitness stars will help connect product to consumers in an approachable, authentic way, while custom landing pages and product hubs of wool products will be available to shop on Amazon USA and Farfetch.com.

Product launches and interactive events in the US (PE Nation workout and Erin Snow ski launches), China (Elle Fit Club events), Japan (Vogue Fashion’s Night Out and National Sports Day), and UK (Nagnata yoga launch) will localise and personalise the wool messaging. 

MORE INFORMATION

www.woolmark.com/liveandbreathe

LIVE & BREATHE CAMPAIGN FILM



Clips from the campaign film highlighting the **natural and breathable aspects of wool.**



The three-minute campaign film begins in a dystopian, industrial and gloomy city – where nature is absent, pollution hangs in the air and people have long forgotten what natural means. Clothing is no longer made from wool, but from restrictive and unbreathable plastics.

But there is hope. On the horizon just beyond the city lies the promise of a more positive, natural world – a world where Mother Nature hasn’t been replaced but rather, embraced. Here, lush, green pasture spills across the mountainside – and Merino sheep graze.

Amongst the despair of the city, the campaign’s central character – an athletic young woman who works in a giant industrial factory – magically discovers a wool running outfit.

Home alone, she puts it on and sets off running, breaking free of the city walls, and heads towards the natural horizon.

When she arrives she is breathing freely, surrounded and connected to the source of the natural fibres she wears. It is this natural, better world that the campaign’s protagonist is escaping to and leading a path for the rest of the world to follow.

“Set against an environment that is both artificial and natural, our global campaign reminds consumers of wool’s natural benefits which cannot be matched by any other fibre,” Mr McCullough added.

“Unrivalled by any man-made fibre, Merino wool’s naturally inherent qualities – breathability, odour control, moisture management – reconnects the wearer to a forgotten experience.”

PEAK PERFORMANCE FROM BLACK DIAMOND

The new **Rhythm Tee** from **Black Diamond** is perfectly suited for pursuits such as trail running and rock climbing.
PHOTO: Black Diamond



Black Diamond's **Rhythm Tee**.

Leading mountaineering and outdoor brand **Black Diamond** is making its first foray into using wool, with its millions of customers in 40+ countries across the world set to be showcased products made from the fibre, thanks to a collaboration with AWI.

Black Diamond is a global leader in mountaineering/climbing gear and apparel, with additional product lines including skiing and hiking gear/apparel. Based in Utah, USA, the company's products are available in more than 40 countries across the world, but with a primary focus in USA, Canada, Europe, UK, Asia and Australia.

The company is strategically focused on growing its apparel category and has been working with AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company to introduce wool apparel into its product range for the first time.

For the northern hemisphere Spring/Summer 2019, Black Diamond will introduce its customers to the technical advantages of Merino wool apparel, with a highly innovative 95gsm ultralight tee, for men and women. The product has incredible stretch and recovery and is perfectly suited for pursuits such as rock climbing and trail running.

This iconic brand continuously focuses on high performance and innovation in every product that it develops, and the new

ultralight Rhythm Tee will solidify Black Diamond's dedication in this regard.

It features a breakthrough co-developed Nuyarn Merino wool fabric technology at a superlight 95gsm – making it significantly lighter than other tee shirts, while increasing durability and performance. The fabric is also engineered for incredible stretch and much faster drying times making it the ultimate breathable climbing or trail running shirt. It is also machine washable.

The Woolmark Company has taken an active role in educating the internal Black Diamond development team about Merino wool, connecting the brand with the wool supply chain and supporting business units on product innovation.

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said AWI's aim with the collaboration is to increase wool consumption in the mountaineering/climbing and outdoor category.

"Collaborating with such an iconic brand as Black Diamond and its core group of

active users allows us to showcase the natural benefits of Merino wool including thermo-regulation, odour management and movement in the context of cutting edge design and innovation," he stated. "The very nature of our relationship demonstrates the versatility of Merino wool and the vision of Black Diamond's apparel design team."

The tee has been launched to a good reception at trade shows including July's Outdoor Retailer summer market in Denver, with the consumer launch to be early next year.

The collaboration between the two companies will expand for Autumn/Winter 2019/20 into further Merino wool product.

As well as Black Diamond stores and distributors in key markets, the company reaches a global audience on its website www.blackdiamondequipment.com and their products are distributed online on the websites of more than 100 global retailers. It also has a huge social media reach with more than a million followers on its channels. **B**



JENNA COMPLETES HER RUN FOR BUMS

On 14 June, Jenna Brook finished her epic four month run up the entire length of Australia from southern Tasmania to the northern tip of Queensland – all while wearing Australian Merino wool apparel from Merino Country.

4 529km, 117 days and eight pairs of shoes after starting her journey on the South East Cape of Tasmania, Jenna finished her extraordinary journey at Cape York.

Jenna began in Tasmania on 17 February, running 400km before transferring to the mainland, then 510km through Victoria and just over 1,000km through the heart of NSW, before the 2,700km trek up the length of Queensland. Finishing on 14 June, she averaged more than 38km each day, not far off a full marathon distance every day for four months.

However the run was not just a personal challenge for Jenna, there was also an important reason for the run, and one that is close to her heart. Along the way Jenna raised awareness of bowel cancer in the communities that she passed through, as well as online through social media platforms. She called her run 'Running for Bums' and she raised more than \$65,000 for Bowel Cancer Australia.

"Bowel cancer is the second biggest cancer killer in Australia, and not enough people are talking about it", Jenna said. With early detection, more than 90% of bowel cancers can be successfully treated, yet less than 40% are found early enough.

"Not enough people have the conversation about bowel cancer, most likely as a result of embarrassment and stigma, and this must change. Hopefully my run has started some conversations, as well as raising money."

UP THE COUNTRY WITH MERINO COUNTRY

Jenna, who is from Birdsville in far west Queensland, was delighted to be sponsored in her running challenge by activewear and underwear company Merino Country, whose origins are also in outback Queensland and is this year celebrating its 25th birthday.

An extension of the family Merino wool enterprise, Merino Country was established 25 years ago to vertically

integrate the supply and production chain from the raw fleece through to the end product. The business was originally based on 'Clareborough Station', outside of Richmond in North West Queensland but is now based between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

"I often got asked on my run how I could be wearing long sleeves every day, and the answer is simple: Merino wool. The truth is simply because Merino is pure gold," Jenna said.

"I was so proud to wear Merino Country clothing throughout the run, which is not only made in Australia, but also made from Australian-grown wool.

"Merino wool allows your skin to breathe, wicks away sweat, provides excellent UV protection and helps maintain a comfortable body temperature in the heat and the cool, making it far superior than any synthetic option. Also, it doesn't stink – so that's a bonus.

"The Merino gear fit the bill perfectly. Do yourself a favour and get some – there isn't any place for synthetics when you're out and about getting life done!"

Merino Country uses 100% Australian grown Merino wool and its fabrics are knitted and dyed in Australia. All garments are sewn in its own factory in Queensland, employing local people and supporting its community.

"We're very proud to have supported Jenna with our beautiful, practical and colourful Australian Merino products from 12 months out before she started the run, then from the bottom of Tasmania to the tip of Cape York," added founder and managing director of Merino Country, Kerrie Richards. **E**

MORE INFORMATION

www.facebook.com/runningforbums

www.merinocountry.com

You can donate to Bowel Cancer Australia at

www.runningforbums.com.au

For information about bowel

cancer, phone the Bowel Cancer

Australia helpline on 1800 555 494 or

visit www.bowelcanceraustralia.org



Jenna completed her 4,529km 'Running for Bums' charity run at **Cape York**.



Jenna taking the opportunity on her run to visit a **shearing shed in NSW** to see how the wool is harvested for her running gear – and to have a chat with the shearing team about bowel cancer.

EASY RIDER

BE COOL IN WOOL



Filmed on Matthew and Cherie Coddington's property 'Roseville Park' near Dubbo NSW, a new campaign from UK brand ashmei showcases the performance benefits of Merino wool.

A new video and promotional campaign by leading sportswear brand ashmei – titled 'Be Cool In Wool' – champions the performance benefits of Australian Merino wool and highlights it as a fibre for all seasons.

Since launching back in 2012, UK-based brand ashmei has established itself as producing some of the world's best activewear, known not only for its stylish designs but also for its innovative fabrics and technical performance. It has built this reputation with

the help of Australian Merino wool.

ashmei is no stranger to Australia's wool-growing industry. Previous marketing initiatives have seen the brand use the AWI-produced virtual reality headset to

transport their customers to the fibre's origins, and ashmei designer Lucy Reeve Smith has visited and worked on a wool-growing property in South Australia to better understand how wool is produced.

This year, ashmei founder Stuart Brooke visited Australia and, with the help of the in-house videography and marketing teams of AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company, has produced a stunning video and series of images championing the benefits of the fibre for cycling and running apparel in a campaign called 'Be Cool In Wool'.

Filmed on Matthew and Cherie Coddington's property 'Roseville Park' near Dubbo NSW, the film features Perth-born adventure cyclist Jack Thompson testing Merino wool gear for its breathability, odour resistance and thermoregulation properties for long distance cycling and running, particularly for the summer months. In the film, Jack plays Gareth, a fictional Australian woolgrower who is also a keen cyclist. Visiting his neighbour (played by Sam Tourle of 'Naroo'/'The Springs') 60 miles away, Gareth compares the latest Merino wool cycling and running gear with apparel made from man-made fibres. The film draws on science to showcase the performance benefits of wool and how it outperforms its synthetic counterparts.

The film features Merino wool gear being tested for running as well as cycling.



Taking advantage of the explosive growth in demand for sportswear and activewear, wool's position as a technical fibre allows it to meet increasingly demanding consumer needs for comfort and performance. Wool is recognised by leading sportswear brands – such as ashmei – and manufacturers for its technical benefits.

“You could say that Merino wool was the principal driver for me launching ashmei in the first place,” said Mr Brooke. “I found myself running in Merino ski base-layers that I'd had for years because they were keeping me more comfortable than the synthetic alternatives available at that time. At this point I identified there was a gap in the market for a sportswear brand that focused on a no-compromise approach to performance. Unsurprisingly, Merino wool was a major feature in our debut collection.

“Our recent collaboration with The Woolmark Company will help to shine a light on the benefits of using Merino wool for high aerobic exercise in warm conditions.”

The film was released in time for the northern hemisphere's summer months and has been shown on ashmei's social media channels, via 60 stores across North America, Europe and Asia and has been picked up by numerous online media outlets. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

To view the apparel and to watch the short film, visit www.ashmei.com/becoolinwool



Chinese sportswear label Particle Fever has designed a series of wool-rich garments inspired by basketball, blurring the lines between fashion and function and championing the performance benefits of Merino wool.

Following the success of AWI's collaboration with Chinese luxury sportswear label Particle Fever last year, the two brands have collaborated once again, this time unveiling a wool-rich athleisure capsule collection inspired by basketball.

To promote the 'Team Wool' collection, Particle Fever launched a pop-up basketball event in its Beijing store, featuring a hand-picked team outfitted in wool basketball jerseys and accessories with a strong visual identity.

The commercially available collection further reinforces the position of Merino wool as the ideal performance fibre as well as in the growing market of athleisure, which blurs the line between fitness and fashion.

“Ever since the first athleisure collaboration with Woolmark and Lane Crawford, we kept exploring the possibilities of wool as a functional fibre, and this time we're very excited to bring wool into basketball uniform-inspired garments,” said Particle Fever Creative

Director Lin Hai. “It's an interesting and unique combination, and even though basketball is a strenuous game, we are showing our customers that you can still feel cool whilst wearing wool.”

Particle Fever's fantasy basketball team of creative and sporty individuals showcases the benefits of wool by highlighting its beauty and how the natural fibre can be adapted to sportswear.

The sportswear collection highlights a variety of innovative techniques, patterns and textures – from contoured wool fabrics and a moisture-wicking metallic weave paneling, through to a custom houndstooth camouflage pattern. Each example reinforces the versatility and benefits of wool in the sportswear category.

“Our collaboration with Particle Fever offers our millennial customers a contemporary sportswear brand choice,” states AWI Country Manager for China, Jeff Ma. “This collection demonstrates the unique benefits and features of Merino wool.” **B**



ashmei founder **Stuart Brooke** with **Matthew Coddington** at 'Roseville Park' in May.



Matthew Coddington took the opportunity to visit the ashmei showrooms in England during a visit to the country in June.

AFL CAPTAINS' WOOLLY WESTERN DERBY

West Coast Eagles captain Shannon Hurn has joined AWI's Fibre of Football campaign – and on the eve of the Western Derby at the start of August, he caught up with Fremantle Dockers captain and fellow campaign supporter Nat Fyfe in a photoshoot to promote Australian wool.

WOOL SHOWCASE AT THE MCG

During a big weekend of footy at the MCG last month, a pop-up shop was installed selling woollen supporter gear.

Round 20 at the MCG was always going to be big – with top of the table Richmond battling Geelong on Friday night, Hawthorn taking on Essendon on Saturday, and Melbourne clashing with Gold Coast on Sunday.

Nearly 160,000 footy fans went through the turnstiles with many stopping in at a special pop-up shop installed at the ground selling Fibre of Football woollen supporter gear.

With temperatures barely scraping into double figures, the high quality woollen products – jumpers, scarves, beanies and gloves – were not only perfect as a momento of the supporters' favourite teams, but they were also ideal for keeping the fans warm at the match and onwards during the winter months.

The Hawthorn Hawks' mascots at the pop-up shop showing off the woollen supporter gear in front of the cameras.



Photographed in retro woollen footy jumpers, with some prize-winning WA Merino rams, the pair joined forces to champion Australia's wool industry – supporting the farmers, shearers, transport operators, fashion designers and retailers behind the natural product.

Since 2014, the Fibre of Football campaign has highlighted the strong and enduring connections between Australian football and the wool industry. Fremantle's Nat Fyfe, Geelong's Tom Hawkins, Hawthorn's Luke Breust, Melbourne's Bernie Vince and Channel 7 commentator Hamish McLachlan have all shared their deep connection to the fibre through a series of campaign videos.

To have wool recognised as the fibre of Australian football is only fitting given the strong social and economic ties the wool industry has had with the game from its very inception in the mid-19th century in country Victoria.

The latest footy star to join the campaign, Shannon Hurn, comes from a sheep property in the Barossa region of South Australia and returns to the farm outside the footy season to help at shearing time and to turn off lambs. He told AWI's podcast The Yarn that he is proud to back the wool industry.

"Growing up in the country, it's great to support the wool industry and the quality



West Coast Eagles captain **Shannon Hurn** and Fremantle Dockers captain **Nat Fyfe** in a Fibre of Football photoshoot promoting Australian wool.

products it creates. It's great to see the industry going well at the moment.

"We had champion Shannon Warnest shear at home for many years and when my footy career is over I'd love to return to the farm, it's a family farm and it would be great to continue it," Shannon added.

Nat's parents own a trucking company, based at Lake Grace in Western Australia, transporting sheep for a living.

"But nowadays I get to see more of the finished products, after the fibre gets turned into high-class garments and sporting apparel," Nat told AWI's The Yarn.

"I've worn Australian Merino wool every year for the past five years at the Brownlow Medal. Merino wool is a world-class premium product, and so we're grateful for all the work that our woolgrowers do across the country."

Nat attended a shearing school before he was drafted to the Dockers and says he would have a go at shearing if asked, but noted it would take him well over an hour to shear one sheep.

Posters of Shannon and Nat wearing their woollen footy jumpers with the Merino rams were distributed by the *Farm Weekly* newspaper in the week prior to the Western Derby.

WOOLLEN FOOTY SUPPORTER GEAR

AWI's Fibre of Football campaign is not only promoting the rich heritage of the Australian wool industry and Australian Football, it is also placing Merino wool back into football jumpers and supporter apparel.

The 100% Merino wool retro footy jumpers worn by Shannon and Nat in the photoshoot were signed and then later that week auctioned at the Lambex conference dinner in Perth with proceeds going to beyondblue. The Dockers guernsey went to Rachel Browne of Chirninimup Dohnes, Nyabing, for \$2,700 and the Eagles guernsey went to WAMMCO CEO Coll MacRury for an astounding \$7,000. Well done to both.

The same Eagles and Dockers footy jumpers, along with footy jumpers for the other AFL teams, are available to purchase from the official AFL online shop at www.shop.afl.com.au. Other woollen supporter gear available from the website includes scarves, beanies and gloves, kids beanie knitting kits, V-neck jumpers, and 'my first footy jumper' for babies. The woollen footy supporter gear is also available on the AFL clubs' own e-stores. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

Hear more from Shannon Hurn and Nat Fyfe in Episode 53 of AWI's The Yarn podcast at www.wool.com/podcast
www.fibreoffootball.com.au
Shop at www.shop.afl.com.au



EMMA HAWKINS

AT HOME WITH JEANSWEST

Fashion and lifestyle ambassador Emma Hawkins, the wife of AFL star and Fibre of Football supporter Tom Hawkins, recently helped promote the latest Woolmark-certified knitwear from Australian fashion brand Jeanswest.

Emma Hawkins has a long history with wool. She is the grand-daughter of legendary Boonoke studmaster Basil Clapham and she was brought up at Deniliquin in the Riverina district of NSW. Her husband, Geelong Cats footballing star Tom Hawkins, is also from the Riverina, coming from a wool, cropping and rice property in Finley.

Today they live on a small farm outside of Melbourne that contains sheep and Angus cattle – and it was against this beautiful backdrop that Emma was photographed, along with daughter Arabella, for a Mothers' Day shoot, showcasing her favourite pieces from Jeanswest's Woolmark Australian Wool Collection. The photos were promoted on the Australian fashion brand's website and social media channels.

"I feel very lucky that Jeanswest approached me for this very relaxed and candid Mothers' Day shoot to promote my favourite Woolmark knitwear from Jeanswest," Emma said. "Now it should be very clear that I am not a model and would never attempt to be one, I am actually very awkward in front of the camera! What I am, however, is a big supporter of our local farmers and the Australian Merino wool they produce."

The Jeanswest Woolmark Australian Wool Collection is crafted each year from pure new wool and wool blends. The premium knits not only look great, but are also super warm and machine washable.

As a busy working Mum, Emma believes that with the right staple items you can mix and match for most occasions. "I love black skinny leg jeans and boots worn with a delicious comfy wool jumper for ultimate winter styling – and if I am heading into work, I will add a boot with the heel and a leather jacket or long jacket over to dress up an outfit."

Emma says that living on the farm has certainly influenced what she looks for in a garment.



Emma with daughter **Arabella** on her and her husband's property. Emma is wearing (top) Jeanswest's Theresa Pullover and (bottom) Jeanswest's Nishka Crossover Pullover and Anabel Wool Blend Jacket.

"My Grandfather was a very well-known Merino Studmaster and my father always taught me the value in wearing wool from a very young age," she said. "However, now we have our own sheep I love seeing the process from start to finish, and I have definitely understood the range in quality and fabrics, and I just can't help but love home grown wool. It's a beautiful fibre and as Australians we should be very very proud of it. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.jeanswest.com.au
www.emmahawkins.com

WOOL WEEK AUSTRALIA

Retailers, shopping centres, artisans and consumers threw their support behind Australia's eighth annual Wool Week, held from 24 May to 3 June to coincide with the start of the winter retail season, with many retailers having window installations and online promotions.



A video shot at Dave and Skye Ward's wool-growing property near Goulburn was played on a giant TV billboard by **Westfield** in the atrium of its **Bondi Junction** store.

An initiative of AWI and its subsidiary The Woolmark Company, Wool Week arose from the global Campaign for Wool that aims to educate consumers about the natural benefits of wool and increase sales of wool product.

This year's campaign was joined for the third year running by shopping centre giant Westfield which aligned its own Winter 2018 fashion campaign with Wool Week to champion the natural fibre.

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough says Wool Week is an annual celebration which puts

wool at the forefront of shoppers' minds.

"Thanks to the support of leading brands and retailers, along with educational activities, Wool Week aims to reconnect consumers with the versatility and natural benefits of Australian wool and encourages conscious purchasing decisions," Mr McCullough said.

"I applaud all retailers, brands, woolgrowers and consumers who have once again thrown their support behind our annual campaign and are ultimately increasing demand for this premium fibre."



Wool Week marketing collateral on garments at **Westfield Fountain Gate**, Victoria.



Sportscraft store window created live during Wool Week by extreme knitter Jacqueline Fink.



Digital marketing from retailer **KOOKAI** sent to its online news subscribers.



M.J. Bale window display promoting the 'rebirth of wool'.



The spectacular window of **Parlour X** in Paddington (Sydney) showcasing Australian wool fleece.

RETAILERS PROMOTE OUR NATIONAL FIBRE

Westfield returned as a major partner, with 39 centres across Australia and New Zealand promoting the fibre, the woolgrowers who produce it and the retailers that sell it.

Wool Week advertising was promoted via smart screens in Westfield centres, playing short video content a total of 12.85 million times. The campaign took customers back to the source of the fibre, showcasing woolgrowers Dave and Skye Ward and family who farm near Goulburn, NSW.

Westfield's website and e-newsletters also had a wool takeover, with six articles published highlighting the Woolmark brand and designers such as Dion Lee's innovative uses of Australian Merino wool.

Fashion retailers utilising Wool Week to help them sell more wool products included CUE, David Lawrence, Helen Kaminski, Icebreaker, KOOKAI, MARCS, Otto & Spike, Oxford, Parlour X, R.M. Williams, SAAKI, SABA. These and other major retailers created window installations highlighting their latest wool products available for winter.

WOOL WEEK EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Westfields across Australia and New Zealand also hosted exclusive wool-focused activities to generate retailer and consumer interest in Wool Week.

For example, Westfield Sydney hosted esteemed artist Natalie Miller who created a live knitting installation, whilst Westfield Doncaster (Melbourne) showcased a collection of International Woolmark Prize garments, in a celebration of the world's best emerging fashion designers.

Australia's most-loved extreme knitter, Jacqueline Fink, partnered with Sportscraft to create an extreme knitting masterpiece in the main window of its Pitt St store in Sydney. Starting with one ball of wool, she spent five days displaying her craft, with passers-by treated to a unique view of extreme knitting.

In partnership with the Art Gallery of NSW, she also hosted a series of workshops in The Woolmark Company Making Space which was set up near The Lady and the Unicorn exhibition – a collection of rare French medieval masterpieces mostly made from wool and silk highlights. The exhibition was supported by The Woolmark Company and attracted more than 86,000 viewers whilst on display.

Amongst many other events across the country, St Ives Shopping Centre on Sydney's North Shore hosted knitting workshops for all ages, through which visitors could help knit scarves to do be donated with its yearly coat drive to those in need. 

MORE INFORMATION

Hear more about Wool Week in Episode 44 or The Yarn podcast available at www.wool.com/podcast



The knitting installation by **Natalie Miller** at **Westfield Sydney**.



Wool Week activities drew a crowd at **Westfield Carindale, Brisbane**.



Interior design workshop with **Nicole Vastelias** of **LuMu** at **Westfield Bondi Junction**.



At the **Art Gallery of NSW**, participants were treated to an extreme knitting masterclass by **Jacqueline Fink** using Australian Merino wool.



The **Peter Scanlan Wools** and the **Sunshine Textile Group** collection on show at Wagin Woolorama. PHOTO: Carol Telfer

WAGIN WOOLORAMA FASHION SHOW

Proudly sponsored by AWI, WA wool broker and exporter Peter Scanlan Wools and the Sunshine Textile Group, the Wagin Woolorama fashion show is an event showcasing some magnificent garments made from Western Australian wool.

In addition to AWI showcasing its Runway 101 Kit (see page 37), for the past two years Peter Scanlan Wools through its business relationship with Chinese wool processor and manufacturer Sunshine Textiles has supplied a collection of high-end woollen garments specifically designed to parade at Woolorama.

"I have been associated with Sunshine for more than 20 years and the processor is having great success with WA wools," said Peter Scanlan Wools trading manager Steve Noa.

"We supply the measurements of the Woolorama models to Sunshine and they design the outfits from their team of designers to fit them. Sunshine primarily use 18.5 to 21 micron wool which perfectly suits what we can supply consistently out of WA. The show provides an opportunity for local WA woolgrowers to see their wool in some beautiful, contemporary garments.

"We've been taking many of our growers on study tours into China. It gives them great confidence in the industry to see the investment in China and an end result for their commitment to growing wool."

SCANLAN COLLECTIVE'S LOVE FOR MERINO WOOL

A new label launched at **Wagin Woolorama in March** this year was born from the designers' love of Australian wool that began very early in their lives.

The Scanlan name is well known in Western Australia for its decades-long involvement in the wool industry. Peter Scanlan Wools is a broker with more than three decades of buying and selling West Australian wool.

However, the Scanlan name is becoming even more widely known after Peter Scanlan's daughter Emily, and her cousin Leanne, launched a new label – Scanlan Collective – that manufactures and sells products made from 100% Australian Merino wool.

"We are a new label that is designed and produced in Western Australia using Australian Merino wool, knitted and dyed in Australia," said Emily.

"Both Leanne and I are mothers of two young children, so it seemed natural that our first collection be designed for children from three months up to five years. It's a playful collection, designed with a classic and contemporary style.

"We believe in quality over quantity, in being the opposite of fast-fashion, and making products that will last a lifetime. We design to keep your little ones comfortable 100% of the time – our clothing feels luxuriously soft and gentle on the skin."

The label was born from a love of Australian wool that has shaped the lives of Emily and Leanne.

This love affair started with their grandfather, Frank Scanlan. A self-taught innovator in the wool industry in Western Australia, who experimented with wool blends and invented new ways to engineer the processing of wool.

Frank established agencies in America, Germany, Italy and India and was the biggest buyer of wool in Western Australia for many years.

His eldest son Peter Scanlan worked alongside him until retirement and since that time has continued to champion the wool industry in Western Australia.



SCANLAN COLLECTIVE PRODUCTS

Manufactured in Western Australia using machine washable Australian-made wool fabrics, the products in the Scanlan Collective range come in a gorgeous range of neutral colours.

A pocket tee, frill tee, pant, blouse, dress and 1m x 1m swaddle are available in a 145gsm lightweight Merino jersey fabric made from 100% superfine Australian Merino wool of 18.5 micron or less.

A pocket tee, frill tee, pant and romper are also available in a 195gsm fabric made from 19.5 micron or less Australian Merino wool.



Scanlan Collective designers **Emily Linke** (née Scanlan) and her cousin **Leanne Greig** (née Scanlan) with **Peter Scanlan** at the Peter Scanlan Wools store in O'Connor, Perth.



The first collection of Scanlan Collective is designed for children from three months up to five years, modelled here by the designers' children: Leanne's two girls 2 years and 4 years; and Emily's two boys 2 years and 6 years.

A 1m x 1m Merino blanket made from double Merino jersey fabric of 19.5 micron or less completes the current range.

"We all want our children to grow up in a protected, loving and nurturing atmosphere, that's why we choose the amazing natural fibres of wool," said Leanne.

"The fabrics have been stringently tested and are Woolmark-certified. We have also tested our fabrics with our own children in the environments for which they are intended – so buyers can be assured of their quality." **B**

MORE INFORMATION

The collection is available for purchase online at www.scanlancollective.com



Blogger **Jaime Ridge** wearing SABA's Paloma Classic Zip as part of SABA's Winter 2018 campaign.

SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELLING COAT

Australian fashion label SABA's winter campaign saw a Woolmark-certified coat travel the world in a global promotion of Australian wool.

Renowned Australian fashion brand, SABA, this winter ran a campaign titled Sisterhood of the Travelling Coat. Inspired by the 2005 film *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*, SABA's campaign saw six fashion/travel bloggers take the wool-rich coat on a journey across Australia, New Zealand and New York.

Starting in Sydney with Petra Mackova, the Paloma Classic Zip coat then travelled across the ditch to Jaime Ridge, who showed Auckland the luxuriousness of Australian wool. The coat then jet-setted to New York with Jasmine Garnsworthy before returning to home soil with Arianne Witt who wore it in front of the Sydney Opera House.

Holly Titheridge took the coat to Melbourne, while Emily Hutchinson wore it at the iconic Byron Bay lighthouse before it returned back to Sydney to be worn by SABA womenswear designer Billie-Estelle Wilson. The coat is now proudly on display in SABA's Sydney flagship store in the Queen Victoria Building.

"The inspiration for the Sisterhood of the Travelling Coat campaign was to make the Paloma Classic Zip coat unique whilst still staying true to the SABA brand identity," explained Billie-Estelle Wilson. "The rich burgundy colour is so striking – making it perfect for this campaign, and it's also a key colour this season. The coat design is a classic

modern silhouette made from premium Melton wool fabric, so it's also easy to pair back with any existing wardrobe."

Telling a unique story of style and travel, each ambassador's name has been printed along this single coat's internal lining, highlighting its originality and the incredible versatility and durability of this winter wardrobe essential.

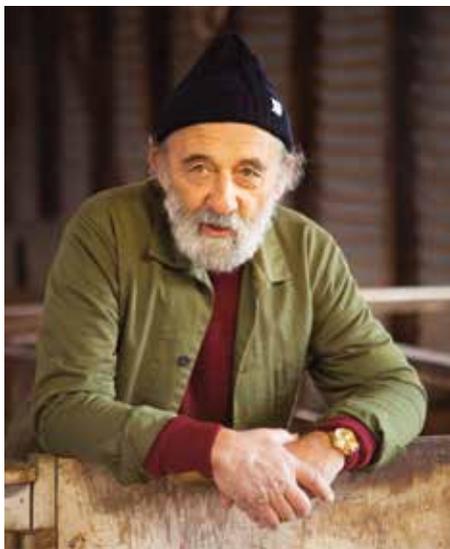
Supporting the current SABA Winter 2018 campaign, this innovative social-led activity ran throughout winter and heroes the long-standing partnership between SABA and AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company. The journey could be followed on Instagram and Facebook by the hashtag #SABAXWOOLMARK, with the campaign generating more than 100,000 impressions and inspiring influencers and consumers across the world.

"To celebrate our partnership with The Woolmark Company this season, we were excited to create a uniquely innovative social-led campaign," said SABA Brand Marketing Manager Chloe Stanford. "It was something that our customers could engage with by following the journey of this coat as it travelled across the globe, while also highlighting the quality, durability and practicality of this Woolmark-certified piece – the perfect winter wardrobe essential." **B**

McIntyre's promotional campaign for its latest collection showcases the people who produce the wool, wearing McIntyre's Woolmark-certified knitwear, pictured here on the family farm 'Glenoe'.

KNITTED IN HISTORY

New Melbourne-based knitwear label McIntyre is shining the spotlight on Australian wool – and those who produce it – creating 100 per cent Merino wool knitwear that is Woolmark-certified.



Top: 'The Maria' – McIntyre's top-selling women's cable knit made from 100% Merino wool.

Bottom: Ned's father, Richard, who has been growing Merino wool on 'Glenoe' since the early 1970s.

When Duncan McIntyre emigrated to Australia in the 1830s, he had no idea what the future would hold, or what would come of his dreams. Keen to make his mark on his new country, the enthusiastic Scotsman saw the potential of the wool industry, eventually securing land in Victoria and building a home, naming the property 'Glenoe' after the McIntyre's home in Scotland. Tragedy, however, struck in 1854, with Duncan suffering a fatal fall from a horse at the age of 40. Duncan's two brothers lived out his wish, producing Merino wool in the McIntyre name – which is still being done today.

Today, 'Glenoe' is home to about 2,000 Merinos, averaging 18.5 micron, with the property still very much in family hands in western Victoria. Ned Scholfield – who is a fifth generation descendent of Duncan – has fond memories growing up at 'Glenoe', with his passion for wool leading him down the path of starting knitwear label McIntyre.

"Growing up on a Merino farm, wool has always been part of my blood," said Ned. "I decided running the farm was not for me, and after years working in the fashion industry it seemed like a logical step to join the two together. After attending tradeshows in Europe, the USA, and Asia as a buyer and exhibitor I felt there was a gap in the global market for an iconic Australian wool brand. This planted the seed and my wife Raquel and I worked on the concept for six months before we produced anything at all."

'Australian grown and Australian made', McIntyre produces knitwear for men and women, crafted from Australian Merino wool – some of which is sourced directly from 'Glenoe' – allowing for complete traceability of the farm to fashion journey. With classic-cut jumpers and a range of accessories, Ned is keen to "make wool cool" and preserve the Australian tradition.

"Knitwear is synonymous with wool and I think this is a great place to start as you can really feel the texture of soft wool. Our target audience is 25- to 40-year-olds who live in urban areas and follow trends, but care about where and how their clothes are made. We want to introduce a new generation of customers to the wonders of wool.

"McIntyre falls into the slow-fashion category, meaning that someone investing in a piece of ours is investing in something that's going to last a long time. McIntyre makes quality Merino wool basics that can be worn with a variety of things in different seasons. Because Merino wool is a natural fibre that's breathable and moisture-wicking, you're able to wear it in both summer and winter, with each piece designed to last."

Having recently released its second collection, called Meet the Makers, McIntyre wanted to showcase the people who work behind the scenes of production. The stunning campaign was shot in two locations, 'Glenoe' and the local Peshurst wine bar Gaudenzi, shining the spotlight on the woolgrowers who lovingly produce this premium, natural fibre.

"We used the makers as our models: one is my father Richard Canapini, one is my uncle Jamie Scholfield, and another is a family friend Bill Frost."

Available for purchase online via their own web store and The Iconic along with a selection of boutiques across Australia, Ned said they were currently in talks with buyers from Europe and Asia, and have a distribution partner in Japan who will be selling the brand to Japanese retailers for winter 2019.

MORE INFORMATION
www.mcintyreaustralia.com

WAVERLEY MILLS

REMAINS A TRUE AUSTRALIAN ICON

Wool manufacturing in Australia is a far cry from its former glory. Yet one **Tasmanian mill is bucking this trend, overcoming adversity to stand tall and produce luxurious Australian wool products from start to finish.**

Tasmania's Waverley Mills has been producing high-quality wool textiles since 1874. It made textile manufacturing a dominant industry in Tasmania, but today it is the last remaining woollen mill in Australia that's still in full operation from raw wool to finished product.

Creating a stunning range of homewares and accessories – all lovingly crafted from Australian Merino wool – in recent times the mill was commissioned by the Federal Government to create a blanket for Princess Charlotte and it has also produced blankets for Qantas.

David Jones, Tait Furniture, Koskela, Space Furniture and many smaller retailers across Australia and New Zealand are just some of the places you can find beautiful products made by the Waverley Mills.

Once a dominant industry that was built on the sheep's back, wool manufacturing in Australia has gone through troubled times and to be the last remaining mill of its kind is a testament to the dedicated staff at Waverley Mills. A recent successful crowd-funding campaign to secure the future of the mill generated an overwhelming amount

of public support from Australians and surprisingly from people overseas too.

"We did the crowd-funding for a number of reasons," explains Waverley Mills CEO Andrew Cuccurullo. "We wanted to understand who our core supporters for the mill were, if there was still interest in Australian manufacture and quality products. It was an avenue for us to explore what Waverley meant to Australia.

"We raised nearly double our target. With those funds we were able to invest in wool which gave us a fantastic base for our production needs."

"Wool products can be made here, we can be innovative, and there is a market for high-quality Australian product."

Waverley Mills CEO Andrew Cuccurullo

Sourcing local Tasmanian wool along with fibre from the mainland, Waverley Mills mainly works with 18 micron fleece to ensure all blankets and throws are exceptionally soft when next to skin. "We do also work with 22 and 27 micron when required for a selection of products."

A recycled range of products also sheds light on the eco-credentials of wool's lengthy lifecycle. Incorporating off-cuts along with older blankets which have been shredded



Waverley Mills CEO **Andrew Cuccurullo** at the mill.
PHOTO: Phillip Biggs

and re-spun, the recycled wool is then blended with Waverley's softest wool yarns to create a series of products perfect for the most environmentally conscious consumers.

Mr Cuccurullo says the mill's rich history has seen it become a global leader in high-quality textile production and its pioneering spirit has ensured it remains a leader in innovative, sustainable production processes.

"It's important to remind Australia that the mill was a big part of Australian history and its products were used by the Australian army, Qantas and many other iconic Australian businesses," he said.

"Australia is able to manufacture high-quality products and we are very good at it. The fact that the mill is still going after 140 years is a testament that manufacturing quality provides longevity. The mill is very focused on innovation and pushing what can be done with wool and that's really exciting." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.waverleymills.com

Waverley Mills' 100% Merino wool
plaid throw in pink and green.
Perfect for any adventure...



INTERNATIONAL
WOOLMARK PRIZE

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE



The International Woolmark Prize is designed to generate long-term incremental demand for Australian Merino wool by increasing the knowledge of and lifetime loyalty to the fibre amongst the competition's designers and alumni across the world. After three semi-final events in July, the 12 global finalists in the 2018/19 competition have now been selected.

Following three semi-final events held in Hong Kong, London and New York, the 12 fashion labels to compete in the global final of the 2018/19 International Woolmark Prize have been decided.

Chosen from more than 300 original applicants from across 46 countries, the winners are amongst the most promising fashion design talents from across the globe. Finalists will be invited to compete in the prestigious global final to be held in London in February 2019, as well as receive mentoring support from a global panel of experts, showcasing opportunities and a Woolmark licence.

"The International Woolmark Prize is a long-term program designed to nurture and support designers throughout their career," said AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "Now in its seventh year, the AWI initiative has evolved into one of the biggest fashion awards of its calibre and so we have restructured the program to ensure our nominees and finalists receive the highest level of industry support and guidance."

This year, applications for the prestigious award were open to any brand worldwide that was able to meet the application criteria. All entries were reviewed by an expert panel of experts from across the industry, known as the Advisory Council, with the most promising 42 designers chosen for the semi-final events.

"By inviting designers to apply for the program we generated an overwhelming number of applicants, from New York, London and Tokyo through to Mexico, Russia and Nigeria," Mr McCullough said. "This reinforces our belief that the

International Woolmark Prize has no geographical borders, that fashion has no boundaries and that Australian Merino wool will remain as relevant to fashion tomorrow as it does today."

The semi-finalists were invited to attend a workshop hosted by The Woolmark Company to help prepare them for the development and manufacturing of their capsule collection. Workshops included detailed presentations by industry experts, with a focus on innovation across fabric development and processing.

"The exceptional quality demonstrated by this year's designers not only reinforces the strength of the award but also proves Australian wool's relevance on the global stage. Wool's inherent benefits combined with its eco-credentials provide designers with countless possibilities and I am excited to see what innovative designs are showcased at the global final next year."

At the global final, one menswear and one womenswear winner will be selected as well as a winner of the Innovation Award which celebrates the most innovative and creative wool fabrications, process or development. The winners will have the opportunity to have their collection distributed through the prize's prestigious international retail partner network which includes Boutique 1, Boon the Shop, David Jones, Harvey Nichols, Hudson's Bay Company, Lane Crawford, Leclaireur, Mytheresa.com, Parlour X, SSENSE.com, Sugar, Takashimaya, Tata CLIQ Luxury and ORDRE.com.

2017/18 WINNING DESIGNS IN STORES NOW

The designs of last year's International Woolmark Prize winners, BODICE STUDIO (womenswear) and Matthew Miller (menswear), are available for purchase at stores across the world, including:

- David Jones – Sydney (Matthew Miller), Melbourne (BODICE STUDIO)
- Parlour X – Sydney (BODICE STUDIO)
- Farfetch – online (both)
- MyTheresa.com – online (BODICE STUDIO)
- Hudson's Bay – Canada (Matthew Miller)
- Lane Crawford – China (Matthew Miller)
- Takashimaya – Tokyo (both)
- Tata Cliq Luxury – India (both)
- L'ecleureur – France (Matthew Miller)
- Boutique 1 – London & Dubai (BODICE STUDIO)

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmarkprize.com

HONG KONG 2018/19 SEMI-FINAL



Left: The winning designers from the semi-final held in Hong Kong: **i-am-chen** (Hong Kong), **YOHEI OHNO** (Japan), **ANGEL CHEN** (China) and **YOUSER** (Korea).



Right: The winner of the 2013/14 International Woolmark Prize womenswear competition, **Rahul Mishra** from India, was at the Hong Kong semi-final as a judge.

LONDON 2018/19 SEMI-FINAL



Left: The winning designers from the semi-final held in London: **Nicholas Daley** (UK), **Edward Crutchley** (UK), **DANIEL w. FLETCHER** (UK) and **CMMN SWDN** (Sweden).



Right: Judge **Jefferson Hack**, the maverick founder of Dazed Media, presenting a winner's prize to **Emma Hedlund** of CMMN SWDN.

NEW YORK 2018/19 SEMI-FINAL



Left: The winning designers from the semi-final held in New York: **Brandon Maxwell** (USA), **Colovos** (USA), **ALBUS LUMEN** (Australia) and **WILLY CHAVARRIA** (USA).



Right: The winner of the 2016/17 International Woolmark Prize womenswear competition, **Gabriela Hearst** from Uruguay, who is also a woolgrower, was at the New York semi-final as a judge.

AUSTRALIAN LABEL ALBUS LUMEN WINS IN NEW YORK

Australian fashion designer Marina Afonina of label ALBUS LUMEN has been selected to compete in the 2018/19 International Woolmark Prize global final in London next year. At an event in New York, ALBUS LUMEN's 80 per cent Merino wool collection, titled Pure Discovery, impressed an expert panel of judges, with the Australian label joining 11 other brands from across the globe.

ALBUS LUMEN used Australian Merino wool in a way that challenged common misconceptions about the fibre while emphasising the label's easy, free spirit. The all-white capsule collection highlights the ethereal lightness of Merino wool and focuses on the textural possibilities of the fabrics.

ALBUS LUMEN's use of small-scale quilting and the textural effects created by mixing Australian Merino wool with linen and silk blends adds subtle yet striking contrasts to the all-white palette, while shell and baroque pearl surface detailing – both ALBUS LUMEN signatures – enhance the lightness and the natural beauty of Australian Merino wool.

"It is extremely exciting to be taking ALBUS LUMEN to the next level using Merino wool and using new technologies," said designer Marina Afonina.



Australian designer **Marina Afonina** of label **ALBUS LUMEN**.

WOOLMARK PRIZE

ALUMNUS EXCELS WITH WOOL

Young Australian fashion designer and International Woolmark Prize alumnus Blair Archibald flexed his creative muscles during the recent fashion week in Sydney.

At the most important event for local designers to show their work to international buyers and press, Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Australia, young Melbourne-based designer Blair Archibald showed what was widely considered the strongest menswear collection of the week.

Titled 'The Last Knitting Mill', the collection was inspired by Archibald's journey of understanding the world of wool during his experience as a global finalist in the 2017/18 International Woolmark Prize.

The fashion show opened with a specially-made video portraying the origins and craftsmanship of the garments, including the work of Australia's woolgrowers.

The garments that followed were a clear and linear progression of the capsule range that he made for the prize earlier in the year, blending commercial appeal with high-fashion detailing and workwear references. Particularly in his fabrics, which included wool seersucker, wool denim and lightweight wool jersey from Holland & Sherry, fabric supplier to Savile Row, Archibald showed sophistication beyond his years, which was aided by AWI's marketing subsidiary The Woolmark Company's ability to facilitate connections to manufacturers normally inaccessible to emerging designers.

"Because of the support I was able to execute a show that set the standard for how I want my brand to be interpreted on an international level



and to showcase how Woolmark has played such an integral role in the development of my business," the designer said.

Given it was Archibald's first solo runway show for his eponymous label, the positive response, particularly from important international retailers, was all the more impressive. "Post show, I had appointments with Lane Crawford, Hudsons Bay and representatives from Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman," he said.

"The Woolmark Company prides itself on educating consumers and designers on the technical properties and benefits of wool and for me as a designer I have a responsibility to continue that conversation throughout my work." **B**

DION LEE

SUIT PORTRAIT SERIES



Christine Centenera: Fashion Director *Vogue Australia* and international stylist to some of Hollywood's most notable names, including Cate Blanchett, Miranda Kerr and Kim Kardashian.

To help promote the launch of his wool-rich tailored **SUIT collection**, fashion designer **Dion Lee** has released a photo-series of the women – all wearing items from his collection – who have inspired and encouraged him through his career.

Leading Australian fashion designer Dion Lee has made waves since he burst onto the scene with his eponymous label in 2009. An alumnus of the International Woolmark Prize, he is known for his original design, precision to detail and innovative fabrics – including the use of Australian Merino wool.

With the support of AWI's marketing arm, The Woolmark Company, Dion Lee last year launched a new capsule collection specifically designed for professional women. Aptly entitled SUIT, this new line comprised 10 wool-rich pieces.

"The pieces are designed with fabrications that work within every season. Wool itself is trans-seasonal; it breathes in the summer season and insulates in the winter," the designer said from his new studio in New York.

To promote the SUIT series, the designer also released a book of portraits of 26 inspirational women who have encouraged and guided him since the beginning, including models, staff

from the Dion Lee brand, magazine editors, publicists, stylists, The Woolmark Company's Country Manager for the USA, Michelle Lee, and of course his mother Helen Lee.

"I wanted the SUIT portrait series to put our tailoring into context, to show the inspiring women who wear the clothes and how each person's interpretation is very different." **B**



Kellie Hush: Former Editor-in-Chief *Harper's BAZAAR Australia* and International Woolmark Prize judge.

JOE MERINO'S CLASSIC T-SHIRT FOR SUMMER

AWI's marketing arm, **The Woolmark Company**, has collaborated with Dutch men's fashion brand Joe Merino to help market its T-shirts and promote Merino wool as the perfect go-to in summer.

The T-shirt began as standard uniform in the US Navy following World War II, and through the 1950s it became a symbol of rebellion favoured by advocates like James Dean. But through following decades, the T-shirt declined in status due to its pervasiveness and adornment with merchandising messages.

However, this past European summer, Dutch brand Joe Merino re-introduced the classic T-shirt as a full-fledged no-nonsense quality wear – made from 100% 16.5 micron Merino wool.

The Joe T is breathable, feels soft and luxuriously gentle next to the skin, has a natural elasticity, and is odour resistant. The T-shirt is circular knitted from Südwolle yarns, is machine washable and available in 14 colours.

To promote the Joe T, The Woolmark Company and Joe Merino joined forces to launch in June a video – titled 'The Evolution of Cool' – that examines the history of T-shirts and Joe Merino's re-introduction of the "good old plain T-shirt" with Merino wool fibre as the hero.

The video is being promoted instore and online. To emphasise the story of Merino wool, not only for the Joe T but the complete Joe Merino collection, there were Joe Merino instore displays of raw Merino wool and yarns and a 'virtual reality' experience of wool-growing on an Australian Merino wool farm.

"Joe Merino produces quality apparel, so it is only fitting that they use a premium fibre, Merino wool," said AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "Merino wool is also a very versatile and trans-seasonal fibre, which



The **Joe Merino T-shirt** exhibited in ice at its launch, to emphasise that Merino wool can help you stay cool when the weather is hot.

Joe Merino perfectly demonstrates with their new T-shirt which is ideal for summer and complements their famously timeless jumpers."

The Joe T and the rest of Joe Merino's range are available online at JoeMerino.com and at the company's three concept stores in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Antwerp (Belgium) and Düsseldorf (Germany).

MORE INFORMATION
www.joemerino.com
www.youtube.com/joemerino

WOMENSWEAR PUSH IN GERMANY

AWI has established a relationship with the highly regarded luxury womenswear brand **ODEEH** from Germany to promote its Merino wool garments and increase the demand for Australian Merino wool in Germany and related markets.

ODEEH designer duo Otto Drögsler and Jörg Ehrlich are internationally recognised as amongst the German masters of fashion. Their apparel is sold in 170 stores and online in Germany and worldwide. It is popular amongst mainly 35 to 55-year-old strong, independent and self-confident women.

Germany is traditionally well known for its sportswear and men's suiting apparel, but less so for womenswear. So, to further establish Merino wool's presence in the region's womenswear market, AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company has joined with ODEEH in the promotion of the brand's Autumn/Winter 2018/19 wool-rich collection.

The collection was originally launched to the



ODEEH's wool-rich collection, pictured here at Berlin Fashion Week, is available at retail from September.

fashion trade and media at Berlin Fashion Week in January and received a very positive reception with many stores in Germany, and further afield, choosing to stock the wool-rich apparel. The full Merino wool collection will be available in store in Germany and other countries (eg the Netherlands, Italy and France) from September.

The Woolmark Company has worked with the retailers to create installations in their stores for the autumn/winter 2018 selling period to emphasise the benefits of wool via point-of-sale collateral. This is supported with in-store

presentations, online activity and staff training.

Images and a video of their wool garments on show at Berlin Fashion Week in January will be used in the brand's showrooms in Berlin, Paris and Milan, amongst others.

By being introduced to key retailers through the relationship with ODEEH, The Woolmark Company also now has the potential for other potential future collaboration and promotions with the retailers.

MORE INFORMATION
www.odeeh.com

WOOLGROWER TOUR BOOSTS CONFIDENCE

Woolgrowers who visited the UK and Italy in June on a tour with wool broker **Fox & Lillie Rural** returned to Australia with a greater understanding of the **wool supply chain and optimism about the future of the wool industry.**



Woolgrowers on the Venetian canals – the gondoliers' uniforms are made from Australian wool.

Fox & Lillie Rural's 'The Heritage of Wool' tour took place over 15 days in June, with nearly 30 woolgrowers from across Australia traveling to the UK and Italy where they visited a variety of woollen mills, many of which have a heritage in wool dating back hundreds of years.

The tour began in the Bradford – the wool capital of the world in the nineteenth century. After a decline in fortune in the twentieth century, many of the mills have recently undergone a rejuvenation.

"These Yorkshire mills are creating a wide range of magnificent fabrics, many made from Australian Merino wool," said Fox & Lillie Rural Technical and Marketing Manager Eamon Timms, who accompanied the woolgrowers on the tour. "The quality for which these mills are renowned is reflected in the cloths that they produce, which was absolutely wonderful to see."

In London, the woolgrowers visited Savile Row and its bespoke tailoring and specialty clothing retailers. They then travelled to northern Italy where they visited a number of spinning, weaving and knitting mills and garment manufacturers around Biella and Prato.

"The woolgrowers saw how much hard work goes into the production of the wool fabrics and the pride that the mills

and manufacturers have in transforming Australian wool into top-quality apparel products," Eamon said.

"There was also a very pleasing air of confidence in Italy. The Italians had a greater acceptance of rising wool prices than there had been in Bradford – very upbeat in fact – which was well received by the visiting woolgrowers."

Eamon said that a highlight of the tour was an excursion to Venice where AWI's Italian office organised for the woolgrowers to travel the canals of the city propelled by gondoliers proudly wearing their iconic blue and white striped uniforms made from Australian wool. The reintroduction of wool in the uniforms after the absence of almost a century is an initiative of the Italian office of AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company.

AWI also arranged for the woolgrowers to meet with the President of the Association of Venetian Gondoliers and the CEO of Italian apparel manufacturer and retailer Al Duca D'Aosta which owns the official supplier of the uniforms, Emilio Ceccato.

"Kitting out the hundreds of gondoliers with Australian wool and having the Woolmark logo – a logo owned by Australian woolgrowers – prominently displayed on their sleeves is really great marketing by AWI," Eamon said. "There are an estimated

60,000 tourists visiting Venice every day and they all see the gondoliers doing their strenuous job wearing wool. It is a great example of wool being promoted as a premium and performance fibre."

The new wool uniform is available to the public to purchase from the three Venice stores of Emilio Ceccato and online.

The following day, the woolgrowers travelled to Florence to visit the Pitti Filati trade show at which yarns are presented to an audience of international buyers and designers from the biggest names in the fashion.

At The Woolmark Company's stand, the woolgrowers received a presentation on the latest edition of The Wool Lab sourcing guide for the world's best wool fabrics and yarns. They also learnt about the latest wool innovations that the company is promoting.

"At Pitti Filati there was such a large focus on wool in the yarns throughout the trade show, and it was so encouraging and heartening to see so much Australian wool in the yarns," Eamon said.

"AWI did a really fantastic job. As well as having some wonderful memories from the trip, the woolgrowers have a renewed optimism about the prospects for the wool industry and for their own wool-growing enterprises." **B**



Woolgrowers at The Woolmark Company's stands at the **Pitti Filati trade show** in Florence.



Woolgrowers examining the wool at **Z Hinchcliffe** in Yorkshire, England.

PURE VENOM TO LICE

HIGHLY POTENT, NEXT
GENERATION CHEMISTRY



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[^] When applied within 24 hours of shearing. *Bayer data on file.

ELECTRIC EXPERIENCE WITH COMFORT OF WOOL

The interior of the **Lagonda Vision Concept**, with its wool upholstery.

In its 1930s heyday, Lagonda was capable of producing V12-powered limousines fit for royalty, and sports cars strong and quick enough to win Le Mans. **Bought by Aston Martin in 1947, Lagonda continued to innovate – and never more so than today...**

One of the biggest talking points at this year's Geneva International Motor Show was the announcement by Aston Martin that Lagonda aims to be the world's first zero emission luxury vehicle brand, powered only by electricity.

At the Geneva show, Aston Martin presented its Lagonda 'Vision Concept', which showcases the design themes – including wool upholstery – that could potentially be seen in production models as soon as 2021.

"We see no limits for Lagonda," said Aston Martin President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Andy Palmer. "It will produce cars that exploit technology ... and it will enable Lagonda to redefine the concept of luxury within the automotive and other spheres."

With no need to package a vast internal combustion engine, gearbox and transmission, Lagonda's designers can optimise the interior down to the smallest detail and then build up the exterior of the car around it. For the interior, wool will be used.

A MODERN, LUXURIOUS INTERIOR WITH WOOL

For the interior, Aston Martin EVP and Chief Creative Officer Marek Reichman and his team turned to the most traditional of households for the most visionary thinking: the Queen's nephew and renowned English craftsman David Linley, 2nd Earl of Snowdon.

Mr Reichman said the Earl's ability to marry materials – some very modern, others very established – in ways that are never predictable held the key to the interior of the Lagonda Vision Concept.

"When we first started working with David we showed him all these ideas we'd had

The Lagonda Vision Concept was launched at the **Geneva International Motor Show**: Aston Martin President and CEO, **Dr Andy Palmer**; interiors designer **David Linley**, 2nd Earl of Snowdon; Aston Martin EVP and Chief Creative Officer, **Marek Reichman**.



The **Lagonda Vision Concept** has been configured to accept powerful solid state electric batteries enabling it to cover up to 400 real world miles between charges; that's the distance from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

for marquetry and leather on the inside and he said, 'Let's use different materials, materials people won't expect even in isolation, let alone together', which is why the interior of the Lagonda Vision Concept uses not only ultra modern materials like carbon fibre and ceramics but also some of the oldest and finest."

The result is a cabin in which hand woven wool upholstery lives in perfect harmony with carbon fibre trim and functional ceramic tiles that open and close to alter the ventilation and adjust the volume of the music.

As well as working with David Linley, Mr Reichman enlisted the support of Savile Row tailors Henry Poole, for their expert knowledge in tailoring luxury materials.

Henry Poole said it was honoured: "When the decision was made to use hand woven wool, our master tailors were able to assist in creating the patterns, cutting the material and the detailed finishing to ensure that a perfectly trimmed seat was achieved."

Lagonda is not the only luxury car brand to recently introduce wool in its interiors. For example, BMW uses wool in its i3, Range Rover uses wool in its Velar, and Toyota uses wool in its Century. Continuing the royal theme, Bentley also uses wool in its State Limousine, which is an official state car for the Queen.

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.lagonda.com





MINI

HELPS DRIVE DEMAND FOR WOOL

Leading automotive brand MINI and The Woolmark Company have joined forces with four up-and-coming fashion designers to create a 16-piece travel-inspired collection in wool, available to purchase this month.



The MINI FASHION FIELD NOTES Capsule Collection was unveiled to the crowds on an outdoor stage in the colourful atmosphere which prevailed at the Pitto Uomo trade show in June.

The collection took design features of the 1960s' MINI branding to inspire outfits for urban travelers. They are designed in Merino wool by four emerging international designers: Liam Hodges, UK; Staffonly, China; PH5, USA; and Rike Feurstein, Germany.

"MINI is all about iconic design and an urban lifestyle," explained Head of MINI Brand Strategy and Business Innovation Esther Bahne. "Like The Woolmark Company, we have a sharp eye for quality and the courage to challenge conventions."

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough says the company's marketing arm The Woolmark Company inspires, educates and connects with like-minded brands, such as MINI, to build awareness of the qualities of Australian wool and build demand for the fibre.

"This partnership with MINI allowed us to join forces with a global brand that shares our core values in nurturing young design talent," Mr McCullough said. "The collections created by the designers showcase innovative design with wool's technical benefits."

All four of the designers sourced inspiration for their designs from trips to foreign cities – and wove the encounters and stories they've picked up along the way into wool-rich garments for the collection. They will be available to buy from the start of October via leading fashion blog www.highsnobiety.com. 

MORE INFORMATION
www.mini.com/fashion



DESIGN BY PH5 (USA)

Brought to life by Wei Lin, the daughter of award-winning designer Mijia Zhangin, PH5 challenges the conventional vision of knitwear by marrying whimsical designs with architectural dimensions of innovative knitting techniques. Their MINI Fashion Field Notes pieces were inspired by the **Art Deco District of Miami Beach**.



DESIGN BY LIAM HODGES (UK)

British designer Liam Hodges draws his inspiration from modern sub-cultures, hip-hop skatewear, UK streetwear and post-punk – influences which he fuses into punchy and multi-layered statements. His pieces for the MINI Fashion Field Notes collection were inspired by his encounters in **New York City**.



DESIGN BY STAFFONLY (CHINA)

Shimo Zhou and Une Yea founded Staffonly in Shanghai in 2015. They combine fashion, technology and design to create a sense of curiosity and humour in their pieces. Their creations for the MINI Fashion Field Notes collection draw inspiration from **Greenwich Park in England**.



RIKE FEURSTEIN (GERMANY)

Berlin designer Rike Feurstein explores the link between art and fashion using the almost extinct craft of millinery. Rike creates hats and clothing in avant-garde shapes while experimenting with colours and surrealist details. Her three pieces for the MINI Fashion Field Notes collection draw on impressions from her time in **St Petersburg Russia**.

TOP JAPAN BRANDS

INSPIRED BY AUSSIE VISIT

Representatives from three of Japan's largest apparel groups recently visited Australia to see first-hand where their quality wool garments and products begin their life. The trip will help convince the Japanese brands to use more wool and also help market Australian wool to their customers.



The **Japanese executives** on the property of Tasmanian woolgrower **Matt Dunbabin** (second from right), with AWI Country Manager Japan **Samuel Cockedey** (far right).

During their visit to Australia in May, a group of six representatives from five Japanese apparel brands and retailers – which have annual sales totalling more than A\$800 million – received an inspiring education about the Australian wool industry and the benefits of the fibre.

"It's really important for us to have these international retailers come out here to Australia and see the source of where Merino wool comes from – not only the sheep and the industry, but also the people behind it," said AWI Program Manager Education Extension, Kelly McAvooy, who accompanied the delegation.

"Seeing is believing, and we hope that they will share their experiences when they are back to Japan – we will continue to work with these brands to get the positive message about wool out to consumers. This is particularly important at the moment because the price of wool is so strong, therefore we need to show why Australian Merino wool is so special and why we can command such high prices."

AWI Country Manager Japan Samuel Cockedey said there is a growing interest in Japan about the provenance and story behind wool-growing.



Getting inspired in **Matt Dunbabin's woolshed**.

"It started with the food industry, people really began looking at where their food comes from – and that interest is moving to clothing as well, so they're very interested in understanding where the fibre is coming from. This is why trips like these are so important for us, so we can help bridge the disconnect between consumers, retailers and brands, and the origin of fibres.

"The market is changing in Japan from something very tailored and very formal to a more casual way of dressing, especially in the office. So it is very important that AWI can accompany brands on this transition and ensure that they choose wool. There's a lot of room for growth."

Their trip began at the AWI office in Sydney where the delegation received a thorough briefing about the attributes and benefits of Australian wool.

They then travelled to Tasmania to visit three wool-growing properties: Matt and Vanessa Dunbabin's 'Bangor' at Dunalley, Roderic O'Connor's 'Connorville' at Cressy, and Julian and Annabel von Bibras' 'Beaufront' near Ross. At these properties, the delegation was shown the many factors that go into wool-growing, from looking after their land and sheep to the business aspects of the enterprise.

After a visit to the Tasmanian Wool Centre at Ross, it was back across the Bass Strait to Melbourne where the delegation visited AWTA to see wool testing, the auction rooms and showfloor, and lastly to some shopping outlets to see wool products at retail.

"We really wanted to showcase the industry from where it starts all the way to when it leaves on the boat," said Kelly. "The wool supply chain is

very long, and these guys are right at the other end, so to be able to connect them back to Australia and to the growers is really important.”

Samuel said the feedback from the delegation about the trip has been very positive.

“They’re very grateful to AWI, the woolgrowers and the other people that they met – they had a really exceptional experience. Coming from a large city like Tokyo, which is very urban, and having a chance to visit the farms, to see where wool really comes from, it means a lot to them and I think they have come out of this being very inspired.” **B**

MORE INFORMATION

Hear more about the visit in Episode 46 of The Yarn podcast, available at www.wool.com/podcast.



WHERE WERE THE DELEGATES FROM?

Onward Kashimaya – the fourth biggest apparel company in Japan with annual sales equivalent to A\$3.3 billion.

- Mr Egashira is the division director of 23-ku, the biggest ladies’ brand in the company, with annual sales of A\$350 million from 208 retail stores.
- Mr Kobayashi is the division director of J.Press, the biggest men’s brand in the company, with annual sales of A\$112 million from 124 retail stores.

Explorers Tokyo – the main subsidiary of World Group which is the third biggest apparel company in Japan with annual sales equivalent to A\$3.5 billion.

- Mr Fujiwara and Mr Fujimoto are both in charge of Takeo Kikuchi, the biggest men’s brand in the group with annual sales of A\$141 million from 117 retail stores.

Descente – the third biggest sportswear company in Japan with annual sales equivalent to A\$1.7 billion. While the company had used only a small amount wool, it has decided to expand the amount.

- Mr Goto is in charge of Munsingwear, which is a famous golfwear brands in Japan with annual sales of A\$194 million. Recently it has started to feature wool as the brand’s key material.
- Mr Shimodaira is in charge of Marmot, an outdoor wear brand with annual sales of A\$36 million. It has already started using wool in some product categories such as jackets with wool wadding which The Woolmark Company has helped promote.

MERINO WOOL TAKES CENTRE STAGE IN VIETNAM



AWI General Manager Eastern Hemisphere **John Roberts** presenting at the Merino Wool Awareness Day held in Hanoi, Vietnam.

AWI recently highlighted the benefits of Merino wool to more than 100 textile industry experts in Vietnam at an event aimed at helping industry participants and local consumers understand, access and incorporate wool into their operations and wardrobes.

AWI has worked in the Vietnamese market for five years and considers the country as a key emerging market for wool. As the country’s economic and social environment evolves, AWI has witnessed the country’s growing interest in the use of natural fibres and its potential for production of quality wool product.

AWI’s marketing arm, The Woolmark Company in June hosted the Merino Wool Awareness Day in Hanoi, Vietnam, attended by more than a hundred international and local experts, experienced designers, suppliers and manufacturers in the textile and garment industry.

The event highlighted the benefits of Merino wool and provided guidance on how to access and process the fibre in innovative ways, as well as giving domestic companies an opportunity to showcase their wool products and connect with more than 80 supply chain brands in Vietnam.

The Woolmark Company provided a comprehensive overview of the company, the benefits of Australian Merino wool, and textile innovations using the fibre. The participants also had a unique opportunity to learn valuable lessons from leading brands in Vietnam and across the world such as Canifa, Ivy Moda, Fixxed Studios and Appeal Korea.

“We launched the ‘Out of Vietnam’ project in June 2012, aimed at developing new manufacturing supply chains for wool products, and we have now established collaborations with more than 80 partners

in the country,” said AWI General Manager Eastern Hemisphere John Roberts.

“Our heritage in wool research and development together with Vietnam’s solid background in the textile industry make a perfect combination that promises high quality and sustainable ‘Grown in Australia - Made in Vietnam’ wool products, as well as a strengthening partnership between the two economies.”

Ms Ngoc of Canifa, a large Vietnam-based retailer and attendee on the day said, “I definitely believe that our relationship with the Australian wool industry will continue growing in the near future. Sustainable fashion has been and will be the trend as customer perception increases.” **B**

Attendees view the **innovations in wool textiles** that have been supported by The Woolmark Company.



AUSTRALIA-CHINA RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHENED BY VISIT

A delegation of Chinese media and wool industry representatives visited Australia in May to not only experience the origin of Australian wool but also promote the special bond between the two countries – marking more than 50 years of wool trade between Australian and China.



AWI's **Henry Ridge** explaining wool fibre at the CSIRO's Chiswick Research Station in Armidale, to *Elle China* CEO and Editor-in-Chief **Xiao Xue**, China Textile Development Center Director **Li Binhong** and Donghua University Shanghai Associate Professor **Cao Xiaojie**.



The delegation from China at the AWI office in Sydney, with AWI CEO **Stuart McCullough** (seated far right).

As China emerges as a luxury consumer market as well as a manufacturing hub, AWI and its marketing arm The Woolmark Company continue to position Australian Merino wool as the ultimate ingredient in luxury apparel and technical performance wear.

Through hosting delegations from China, AWI aims to expose key emerging consumer markets to a deeper understanding of Australia Merino wool.

AWI selected 13 leading Chinese business, trade and fashion media as well as seven industry VIPs to join a three-day visit to Australia. Key guests invited to the trip included Editor-in-Chief of *Elle China*, Xiao Xue; Editor in Chief of *Hypebeast*, Lu Zhenzong; Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *T Magazine*, Lu Mengfan; Senior Fashion Editor of *GQ China*, Wu Ruiqi; President of Nanshan Group, Zhao Liang; CEO of Xinao, Zhou Xiaotian; and President of China Wool Textile Association, Peng Yanli.

The first day of the visit included a tour of the Lady and the Unicorn special exhibition of wool-rich medieval tapestries at the Art Gallery of NSW followed by welcome speeches from AWI CEO, Stuart McCullough; China Wool Textile Association President, Madam Peng; and fifth generation owner of Michell Wool, David Michell.

The second day focused on farm visits. The delegation was divided into three groups visiting three different properties: 'Sweven' at Cattai near Sydney, 'Biggam' at Berridale and 'Chiswick' at Armidale. The delegation had the chance to experience Australian Merino wool farms first-hand, witnessing wool shearing demonstrations and general education about the wool-growing process.

The final day of the tour saw the delegation visit AWI's headquarters in Sydney and was welcomed by Julie Davies, General Manager, Processing Innovation & Education Extension with an introduction on the company's education and processing projects as well a presentation of latest Merino wool innovations developed in collaboration with AWI's supply chain partners.

"The whole trip was surprising and the conversations with the AWI CEO was inspiring, which provided a new perspective on the industry," said journalist Patrick Li from Bloomberg Businessweek. **B**

WOOL STARS IN NEW FILM

AWI has produced a stunning short fashion film titled *Armour* as part of the promotion marking 50 years of successful Australian wool trade with China.

Filmed in Tasmania, the film stars Australian-Chinese-Italian actress Natasha Liu Bordizzo and features key wool garments from the autumn/winter 2018 collections of some of the world's leading fashion designers and brands, including Jacquemus, Paul Smith, Max Mara, Erin Snow and John Smedley.

Written and directed by Ben Briand, the film tells the story of a female protagonist as she recollects a life-changing encounter and of how she came to carry a memento – a beautiful Paul Smith wool

coat – that keeps the sensation of her experience alive.

"I was inspired by the wool manufacturing process of taking something incredibly raw and turning it into something achingly beautiful," explains Ben Briand. "There is a beautiful tension in that notion and one that I wanted to explore through the creation of this film."

Armour debuted in Shanghai on 30 August and has also been shortlisted at the A Shaded View on Fashion Film festival in France. Visit woolmark.com to view the film.



WOOL EDUCATION CENTRE LAUNCHED IN SHANGHAI



To help teach the next generation of textile professionals in China about Australian wool, AWI's marketing arm, The Woolmark Company, has opened a Wool Education Centre in Shanghai.

Harrigan, and dignitaries from Donghua University, the SCF and AWI.

"Donghua University, formerly known as China Textile University, is the ideal tertiary institution in China to launch the Wool Education Centre as its fashion and textile science programs are well established and well respected in the country," explained AWI Country Manager China, Jeff Ma.

"The Woolmark Company has helped establish the centre to enable students, designers and partners throughout the supply chain to explore the benefits and possibilities of Australian wool, and learn about current trends, new technology and supply chain developments."

As a research space devoted to promoting Australian wool, the new education centre highlights the fibre's unique farm-to-fashion journey. Students can learn all about the different stages of wool manufacturing, including the process of turning greasy wool fibres into yarn and

the latest information on The Woolmark Company's fabric and textile innovations.

"Designers are also welcome to seek inspiration by browsing The Wool Lab sourcing guide to discover the wide variety of fabrics and yarns currently commercially available, as well as the trends forecasted for upcoming seasons," Jeff added.

The Woolmark Company will also host workshops, exhibitions and forums at the education centre for aspiring designers and supply chain partners.

The new Wool Education Centre in Donghua University in downtown Shanghai complements the separate International Wool Education Centre (I-WEC) which is attached to Nanshan Yantai University in Shandong province, China. The I-WEC was opened in October 2014 by AWI with leading wool textile enterprise the Nanshan Group to help educate university students about wool manufacturing. **B**



Students at the **Wool Education Centre in Shanghai** learning about the supply chain of Australian wool – from farm to fashion.

The Woolmark Company unveiled the new Wool Education Centre at Donghua University's Shanghai International College of Fashion and Innovation (SCF) in May at an event attended by the Australian Vice Consul General in Shanghai, Katrina

TRADE WORKSHOP FOR CHINESE SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNERS

To help build demand for Australian wool, AWI's marketing arm, The Woolmark Company, recently hosted a trade workshop at one of the world's largest wool textile and garment manufacturers.



More than 60 professionals from across the wool supply chain attended a recent trade workshop hosted by AWI at the premises of **Jiangsu Sunshine Group** near Shanghai.

The Woolmark Company hosted the workshop on 'trends and innovations in wool' at the premises of the Jiangsu Sunshine Group, in Jiangyin which is 120km from Shanghai.

Jiangsu Sunshine Group, established in 1986, has grown rapidly to become a leading international wool textile company producing yarn, fabric and finished garments, and whose customers include Giorgio Armani and Hugo Boss. It has an annual production capacity of 3.5 million men's suits and women's wear, and 35 million metres of superfine worsted wool fabrics.

The workshop was held in partnership with the China Textile Information Center (CTIC) and China Textile Development Center

(CTDC), which are state-owned research institutions in the textile industry.

More than 60 design, product development, technology and production professionals from 36 textile enterprises and retail brands attended the workshop. Key supply chain partners of The Woolmark Company that attended include Nanshan, Ruyi, Danmao, Taiyi, Younger, Alpha, Steady and Zhejiang Xiniao. Retail brands, such as Icicle and Zuczug, also sent their designers and staff in charge of fabric sourcing, product planning and strategy.

In addition to the other speakers at the workshop, The Woolmark Company

showcased the latest edition of The Wool Lab sourcing guide and provided information on woven product development and innovation. The workshop included a factory visit in which the Jiangsu Sunshine Group opened its product showroom, and spinning and garment making plants to the visitors.

"The workshop received great support from our key partners and was a huge success," said AWI Country Manager China Jeff Ma. "It's vital to support such a communication and study platform for the industry supply chain, to encourage wool product innovations and diversity of product." **B**

US STUDY BACKS WOOL TO AMELIORATE ECZEMA

An AWI-funded study in the United States of adults and children with symptoms of eczema has shown that wearing superfine Merino wool helps ease the eczema and improves the wearer's quality of life.



The research team at **Dermatology Specialists Research in Louisville, Kentucky**, that undertook the AWI-funded eczema study.

A major focus of AWI's Fibre Advocacy program is validating and communicating the health and wellbeing benefits of wool products. One of these benefits is skin health and specifically the therapeutic effect that wearing superfine Merino wool has on eczema.

This has been an area in which AWI has been undertaking research since 2011, in relation to both infant and adult sufferers of eczema in Australia. As previously reported in *Beyond the Bale*, the studies concluded that traditional management guidelines for eczema should be modified to include superfine Merino wool as a recommended clothing choice.

However, for the research to gain more traction globally, it is important that similar studies be also undertaken in large northern hemisphere markets. AWI therefore sought to undertake a study in the United States.

However, this is not as straightforward as it sounds as dermatological research studies typically assess the therapeutic effects of moisturisers, steroids and other pharmaceuticals on patients. A paradigm shift in thinking is needed for dermatologists to contemplate clothing fibre type as potentially therapeutic. Fortunately, Professor Joe Fowler at Dermatology Specialists Research in Louisville, Kentucky, was open minded and willing to take up the challenge of committing two years of his

research career to assessing Merino base-layer fabrics in this AWI-funded study.

The trial evaluated the effect of wearing superfine Merino wool clothing versus 'standard clothing' when worn by adults and children (aged over 5 years) with eczema. As well as evaluating the effect of wearing wool clothing on the participants' eczema, the study also assessed the effect on the participants' quality of life.

"I really liked the wool clothing, it's comfortable and absolutely made my skin feel better; I still wear it one year out from the end of the study."

US eczema study participant

The results were very positive, both in terms of the effect of wool on eczema symptoms and also on the participant's quality of life. Comments about the Merino wool clothing from participants included:

- "It certainly stopped the itching – I liked that! I think the longer you wear the clothing the more helpful it is."
- "Overall I thought it was very good. It took me a while to adjust to the texture of the material and the thought that I was wearing wool. But I could feel it working, my skin got softer and I wear it now when my skin needs help."
- "I still wear the clothing even though I've finished the study. I'm super sensitive about clothing and never keep any that are not comfortable."

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND RESULTS

The study was a 'cross-over' study of adults and children with mild to moderate eczema. The average age of the 50 participants that completed the study was 26; 37 were female, 13 were male; 29 were Caucasian, 17 African American, 2 Hawaiian and 2 multi-racial.

The 50 participants were split (randomised) into two groups. The first group was dressed in their current 'standard wear' and at six weeks changed to superfine Merino wool

garments. The second group began with the superfine Merino wool and crossed over to their current 'standard wear'. Participants were monitored over 12 weeks, with them seen by the researchers at 0, 3, 6, 9 and 12 weeks. They were assessed using clinical, physiological and quality of life outcome measures.

There were significant decreases in mean Eczema Area & Severity Index (EASI) scores from Baseline to Week 3 in both groups, which were sustained from Week 3 to Week 6 – see Figure 1. (It is common for all participants who start studies to see an improvement in symptoms because of increased adherence to skin care and their medications. Hence the importance of the cross-over design to see a real effect.) Those who switched to Merino wool at Week 6 experienced a significant decrease in EASI scores, in contrast to those who switched to regular clothing. Similar results were observed for static Investigator Global Assessment (sIGA) – a measure for evaluating all the symptoms that when combined results in the diagnosis of eczema – with the additional finding that sIGA significantly decreased in those wearing Merino wool from Week 3 to Week 6.

Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) scores significantly decreased (the lower the score the better!) when Merino wool was worn over the first three weeks of wear, ie from Baseline to Week 3 in the 'wool first' group and from Week 6 to Week 9 in the 'standard clothing first' group – see Figure 2.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

With the Australian-based studies of wool and eczema, and now this US-based study, showing clinically significant benefits, AWI's Board has decided to ramp-up the rate of research by undertaking a multi-site parallel study in key markets.

A compelling body of evidence is needed to overcome consumer misconceptions of wool as scratchy and a cause of allergy, so studies are now being commissioned in the US, Europe and Asia. Confirming wool's benefits across these different geographic, climatic and skin types will enable strong marketing in these key markets. **B**

FIGURE 1: Eczema Area & Severity Index (EASI) scores for the two groups

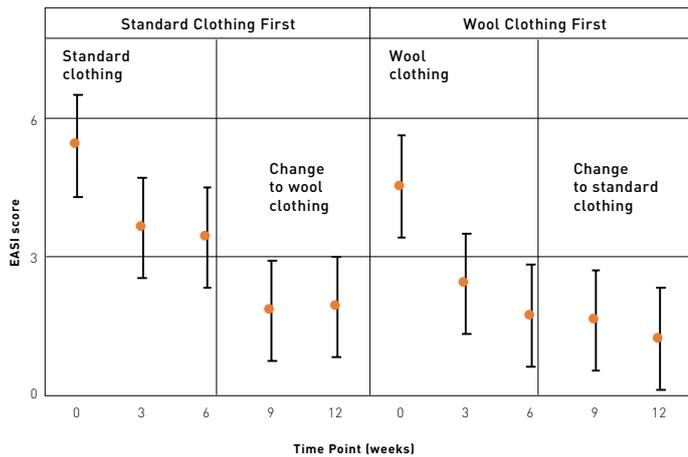
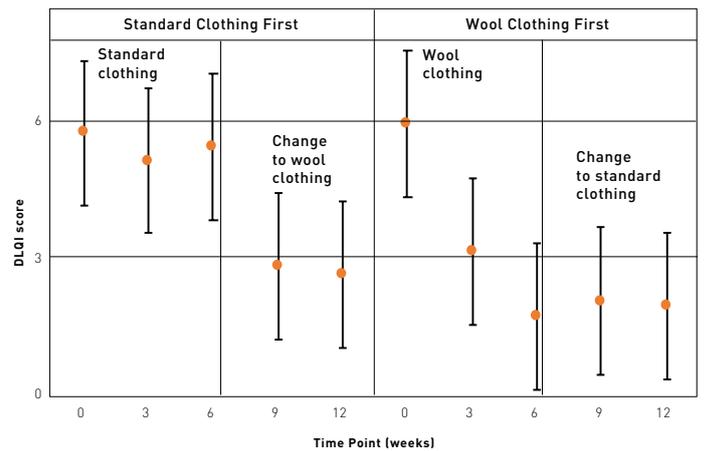


FIGURE 2: Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) scores for the two groups



DIGITAL APPS EDUCATING NEXT GEN CONSUMERS

AWI's new virtual and augmented reality apps are complementing traditional ways to educate the textile trade and consumers about the benefits of Australian wool and the latest innovations with the fibre.



Woolmark VR app, users can tap into the benefits of each innovation, discovering what makes them so unique.

AWI has also released a 'virtual reality farm tour' in which users are 'transported' to an Australian sheep farm to visually experience first-hand the source of Merino wool. These VR experiences follow AWI's partnership with *National Geographic* in December 2017 to launch a virtual reality experience of explorer Pete McBride sharing the benefits of wearing Australian wool apparel on one of his adventures in Colorado.

These three virtual reality experiences can be downloaded for free from the Apple App and Google Play stores (search Woolmark VR).



AUGMENTED REALITY

Augmented reality technology shows a computer-generated image superimposed on a view 'through' the viewer's smartphone.

Woolmark AR is an augmented reality app, designed to provide viewers with a quick and easy way to communicate the benefits of wool – along with some AWI innovations, such as wool footwear – in an interactive and visual way, wherever you are. AWI is looking at further ways to use augmented reality in its educational and marketing activities.

Woolmark AR can be downloaded for free from the Apple App store (search Woolmark AR).



AWI's new **augmented reality app** lets users discover the benefits of wool and the latest innovations via a superimposed 3D image on their smartphone.

AWI is continuing to implement best digital practice across the business, creating a culture of innovation that is not only helping to identify potential growth markets and opportunities but new ways to engage with consumers.

As consumer patterns change and the next generation of millennial and Gen Z consumers come into their own, this strategy is proving increasingly important. AWI is therefore investigating

projects covering topics like New Retail, Home Automation and Voice, Integrated Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality, NFC and Smart Tags as well as additional Fashion Tech positioning.

VIRTUAL REALITY

In June, AWI released a virtual reality experience of viewing five of its fabric innovations: footwear, seamless, Optim™, wool wadding and wool denim. In the

NATURALLY INSPIRING STUDENT SEMINARS

AWI continues to educate tertiary textile and fashion students about the properties and benefits of Australian wool as well as various employment opportunities within the industry – providing the students with a knowledge of and connection with the fibre which will stay with them as they progress through their professional lives.

First launched in 2014, AWI's Naturally Inspiring seminars have become a must-attend event for tertiary students, with the seminars being held in key textile education hubs across the world.

The seminars not only offer students the chance to learn about wool and the numerous ways to work with the fibre, but also give exclusive insights into the fashion, retail and textile industries from experts in the field.

"It was really fantastic and inspiring; I was already a wool fan but even more so now. It was great to see it in a commercial perspective."

Student, Falmouth University

This year, AWI has hosted Naturally Inspiring seminars in Sydney, Glasgow, London and Istanbul, increasing AWI's engagement with the next generation of decision makers, whilst educating them about Merino wool's provenance, benefits and place in contemporary fashion and textiles.

"It was an exceptionally well-structured program - so inspirational for the students."

Tutor, Kingston University, England

Naturally Inspiring brings together expert panels of speakers such as fashion designers, product buyers, fabric suppliers and creative directors – as well as from within AWI – each bringing to the mix their own career journey and assisting AWI nurture the future talent of the wool industry. Former Wool4School winner, Chanelle Davenport, who is now studying at Whitehouse School of Design in Sydney was in the audience at the Sydney seminar. "The presentations gave a comprehensive breakdown of all the many benefits of Merino wool and the various ways it can be used," she said. **B**



TURKEY

Naturally Inspiring returned to Istanbul, Turkey, and was officially opened by the Australian Ambassador to Turkey, His Excellency Marc Innes-Brown. A unique line-up of speakers included designer and product manager Mathias Menger from wool manufacturer Yünsa; founder and CEO of menswear brand Hemington, Umut Boz; head designer at Hatemoğlu, Kudret Saka; International Woolmark Prize alumni Asu Aksu and Giray Sepin; and AWI's research and development manager for Europe, Birgit Gahlen.



ENGLAND

London's Naturally Inspiring event was hosted by the Australian High Commission, with Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, His Excellency the Hon George Brandis QC opening the event. AWI brought together expert speakers including textile design expert Sheila-Mary Carruthers, fabric and knitwear development manager Natasha Lenart from Victoria Beckham Ltd; Chelsea Coleman from interior fabric producer Bute Fabrics; and International Woolmark Prize menswear winners Matthew Dainty and Ben Cottrell of COTTWEILER and Matthew Miller.



SCOTLAND

Glasgow hosted a Naturally Inspiring seminar for the first time. AWI brought together expert speakers including textile design expert Sheila-Mary Carruthers, fabric and knitwear development manager Natasha Lenart from Victoria Beckham Ltd, Maggie Smart from Folk Clothing, Paul Smith designer Andrew Stevenson, and International Woolmark Prize menswear winner Matthew Miller. Held at the Glasgow School of Art, a tremendous day was had by all attendees.



AUSTRALIA

Held at Carriageworks in Sydney, AWI brought together an expert panel of speakers, including ethical fashion journalist Clare Press; wool industry experts Rajesh Bahl and Carol Stubbs; general manager of product at APG & Co, Elisha Hopkinson; yarn and fabric sourcing expert Natalie Skubel; national sales manager for Holland & Sherry in Australia and New Zealand, Nicole Fourniotis; fashion designer Jonathan Ward; and International Woolmark Prize alumni Mario-Luca Carlucci from Strateas Carlucci and Blair Archibald.

HIGH STREET WOOL FASHIONS

AT YOUR LOCAL SHOW



2018 **Wagin Woolorama**, Western Australia. *PHOTO*: Caro Telfer



2018 **Karoonda Farm Fair**, South Australia.
PHOTO: Grant Petras



2018 **Sheepvention**, Hamilton, Victoria.

AWI presents commercially available wool garments throughout the year at the fashion shows of about 30 regional shows across the country, to help showcase the fibre and build demand for the wool products.

Showing the latest wool apparel of some of Australia's greatest designers and retailers, AWI's Runway 101 Kit has been on tour throughout the past six years since it was launched.

The runway kit was created to assist the organisers of regional shows to showcase great examples of wearable wool fashion at their events. The readymade kit includes commercially available wool outfits from Australian brands, as well as information and accessories to help run a fashion parade.

The current kit includes about 50 garments from the Autumn/Winter 2018 collections of leading Australian designer labels including Country Road, Sportscraft, Witchery, SABA, Forever New and M.J. Bale, and sports brands including adidas and Helly Hansen.

"The Runway 101 Kit is a great initiative that brings the latest wool fashion trends to our regional communities," explained AWI Industry Events Manager Wendie Ridgley.

"The kit professionally showcases wearable and commercially available wool products from the current collections of AWI's retail and design partners."

Each year it visits more than 30 events, from the east coast to the west coast, and from the largest shows like Wagin Woolorama, Sheepvention and the Australian Sheep & Wool Show to some smaller, more local events like the Karoonda Farm Fair in South Australia.

"For the past four years we have been fortunate to have access to a selection of beautiful woollen clothing from AWI's Runway 101 collection," said the coordinator

of the Karoonda Farm Fair fashion parades, Elizabeth Kerr.

"This brings the product to the general population who attend the fair and is always a very well received part of our parades. We get a lot of very positive feedback and enquiries about where to buy the product."

The runway kit is available for loan to suitable wool-focused events across regional Australia – it is contained in a robust wardrobe case for ease of storage and transport. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
Enquiries from event organisers interested in borrowing the **Runway 101 Kit** should be directed to AWI Industry Events Manager Wendie Ridgley on **0400 401 008** or wendie.ridgley@wool.com

LTEM COURSE

KEY TO SHEEP ENTERPRISE LAUNCH

The AWI-funded Lifetime Ewe Management course is helping to build indigenous people's practical sheep management skills in the south west of Western Australia, resulting in a bright future in the industry for several aboriginal-owned farms that have been involved.

Dowrene Farm is owned by the Dowrene Farm Aboriginal Corporation, an aboriginal group formed twenty years ago in the traditional homeland of the Minang, Goreng and Kaniyang people. The 720 hectare property sits between Frankland River and Cranbrook in Western Australia and for the past 11 years the property has leased out its land.

When the opportunity arose to change the lease, Maude Bonshore, the chairperson of the Dowrene Farm Aboriginal Corporation and her son Rhys Bonshore, who are both of Noongar descent, instigated a shift in the lease that saw half the property leased and the other half taken under Rhys' management to run as a sheep enterprise.

In 2017, Rhys and Maude decided to invest in on-farm education so they could manage the property and develop a sheep enterprise.

As the property had never been run as a farm by the corporation, and Rhys had no prior knowledge of sheep production, he embarked on a number of courses to up-skill in farm management.

Rhys began with an agriculture economics course through the University of Western Australia and then an environmental conservation management course.

But the pivotal course Rhys undertook began in 2017.

LIFETIME EWE MANAGEMENT COURSE

In early 2017, along with two other Aboriginal corporations, Rhys, on behalf of the members of the Dowrene Farm Aboriginal Corporation, began the first of six sessions in the year-long Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course.

The LTEM course, supported by AWI, aims to increase producers' understanding of the influence of ewe nutrition and management on overall reproduction rates and lamb and ewe survival. Producers develop the skills to manage their ewes to achieve condition score targets and explore the economics of supplementary feeding and pasture management to review stocking rates.

LTEM groups, typically comprising 5-7 producers, meet six times in the annual



Condition scoring is a key element of the Lifetime Ewe Management course.

sheep calendar during a period of 12 months. The course is very hands-on, being based in the sheep yards, shearing sheds and paddocks of participating woolgrowers, which enables participants to share and learn from one another.

More than 4,300 producers in 750 groups across the country have taken part in the course.

LTEM was developed using research outcomes of the AWI-funded Lifetime Wool project (lifetimewool.com.au), which ran from 2001 to 2008, and involved growers and researchers in WA, Vic, NSW, and SA.

The LTEM course is a great example of where investment in initial research, its further development and an effective extension model has paid off handsomely for the woolgrowers for which AWI works, and it will continue to generate benefits for many years to come.

Through participating in the LTEM course, Rhys and Maude have developed skills in sheep husbandry and a knowledge base of farm management to support their business.

"The workshops involve condition scoring, pasture assessment and feed budgeting

activities that are practical and applicable to each farm business, and the importance and effects of ewe nutrition on the performance of both the ewe and her progeny," Rhys said.

In 2018 Rhys, as farm manager, invested in the first mob of sheep, 1,200 Merino ewes to begin the Dowrene Farm enterprise. This base flock of Merino ewes have been joined to White Suffolk rams and will have their first lambs this year.

Facilitated by Perry Dolling of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, the course is run in the south west of Western Australia and had six participants attending the practical course.

"I use the knowledge I have gained through participating in Lifetime Ewe Management every day, and nightly when I'm awake at 1am planning my paddock use and sheep movements," Rhys said.

"Time and again I draw on the skills and knowledge gained through the course. Particularly feeding requirements, feed on offer (FOO), and observation of your flocks on a daily basis. You can't let a day go by without checking on your sheep. You can pick up problems quickly and reduce losses."

FURTHER LEARNING

Rhys, with the support of Maude and the Dowreane Farm Aboriginal Corporation is now embarking on a second year of the LTEM course, again delivered by Dr Perry Dolling.

"This second year has more of a focus on the whole-of-farm implications of managing the ewe flock and involves preparing ewes and rams for the next reproductive cycle, feeding sheep in tough times, optimising lambing results and undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of managing sheep to LTEM targets," Dr Dolling said.

"All of the participants in this group have embraced the concepts of sheep farming, even though many of them had no prior knowledge of the industry.

"I think Rhys is the perfect example of someone who has the passion to learn about the subject and pick it up quickly, and that's applicable to any person in the program.

"By the end of the program, I would be extremely confident that all of the participants could run a sheep enterprise on their own."

Rhys said the second year has been critical

due to the late break in the season and the changes to feeding and sheep management that is required to meet this challenge.

"This year we have focused on issues concerned with dry times and are building up skills to be able to best manage these dry situations. The second year also focuses on preparing ewes and rams for joining, so at the end of this year when preparing my ewes and rams I will have extra knowledge to apply."

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Not only does LTEM give participants a bank of knowledge, it also facilitates farmer to farmer relationships and knowledge sharing.

"The comradeship between other sheep producers and Noongars with interest in sheep has made the whole learning experience very enjoyable," Rhys said.

To support Rhys and the Dowreane farm management, Ian Walsh, a local farmer, is Rhys' mentor to help in the establishment and day-to-day management of the Dowreane sheep enterprise.

"We've been farming here since 1957, and hopefully we can help Dowreane to run a

profitable enterprise. We've developed quite a good working relationship, and also a friendship," Ian said.

"The Noongar model looks after and cares for the land and if Dowreane, with its dedication and enthusiasm, can rub off onto other enterprises, it will be a great model to follow."

The Noongar model Ian speaks of is built on sustainability and working with the natural resources of the land. Rhys hopes that through his management Dowreane Farm will be a sustainable farming model that draws on the knowledge gained from courses such as LTEM.

"We had an environmental study with a management plan prepared by an environmental scientist. It is reviewed often, and over the past 15 years we have improved the property's biodiversity. This emphasis on biodiversity has a very strong connection to our Noongar culture," Rhys said.

"Noongars in the past have been major contributors to Western Australia's sheep industry. We seek to once again have Noongars play a major role in the sheep industry and our small beginnings will hopefully lead to that outcome."



Rhys Bonshore (right) learning about pasture assessment.



Dowreane Farm Manager Rhys Bonshore with his mother Maude Bonshore who is the Chairperson of the Dowreane Farm Aboriginal Corporation.

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NATIONAL MERINO

FAST FACTS

- More than 120 students from across Australia enjoyed an introduction to the wool industry at this year's National Merino Challenge.
- Now in its sixth year, the AWI educational initiative connects the future generation of the wool industry with industry professionals, highlighting an array of careers which involve working with wool.
- Students participate in seven 'mini-challenges' across two days. A Tasmanian Schools team was the Champion Team in the secondary school division, whilst the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, UTAS, was the Champion Team in the tertiary division.

Networking among fellow ag students and wool industry professionals is major part of the NMC.



More than 120 students from across Australia came together in May for the National Merino Challenge (NMC), an AWI initiative that has established itself as a leading education program for students interested in a career in the wool industry.

Held in Adelaide this year, the NMC involves presentations and demonstrations from industry professionals to enable young people to develop their industry knowledge, skills and networks.

Now in its sixth year, the annual two-day event has provided more than 600 secondary and tertiary students with the basic skills involved in the wool industry – both traditional and modern methods – as well as an understanding of the career opportunities within the industry.

During this year's two-day event, the students were educated and then assessed on their skills across a wide range of areas such as feed budgeting, condition scoring, breeding objectives and wool harvesting together with the commercial assessment and classing of animals and fleeces.

Techniques from several well-known industry initiatives, such as MERINOSELECT, Lifetime Ewe Management and Visual Sheep Scores, were used throughout the NMC, giving students a realistic and practical insight into the tools available to woolgrowers to make more informed decisions.

Students also enjoyed the NMC Industry Dinner on the Saturday evening and said they relished the opportunity to spend time with a range of wool industry

participants, from woolgrowers to wool brokers and researchers. The keynote speech was delivered by the sheep reproduction veterinarian Michelle Humphries who shared her 33-year journey since being a graduate working as one of the world's first full time commercial laparoscopic inseminators.

Emma McCrabb, who is studying in her final year of an Agriculture/Business degree at the University of New England, said this year was her second year at the NMC.

"The event is a fantastic opportunity for all us students. I love the producer focus, it's exciting and we're all learning really practical skills, and it's a fantastic opportunity to network," she said.

"At the end of the weekend, students don't just end up walking away with a career path, we walk away with about several different options. The wool industry is such an exciting place to be, particularly at the moment."

NMC project manager Ben Watts said the NMC continues to grow strongly because it delivers what enthusiastic young people want.

"It was great to see the eagerness and energy of the students so keen to learn about wool which is a credit to them and their teachers," he said. "The NMC is also fortunate to receive tremendous support from this great industry."

AWI Sheep Industry Specialist Stuart Hodgson said the NMC is an example of the strong focus on education at AWI which is helping train the next generation of

woolgrowers and wool specialists. "It takes an enormous effort from a large team of people to run the NMC. We have a great NMC organising committee supported by AWI staff to make this a success. It's been a great team effort all round."

AWI thanks the following partners of the 2018 NMC without whom the event would not be possible: Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of SA, Landmark, Government of South Australia, Australian Wool Network, Rodwells, Bank SA, Merino SA, Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders, Elders, Australian Wool Education Trust, Techwool Trading, Michell, Fox & Lillie, Career Harvest, as well as the dedicated volunteers for their time and expertise.

The 2019 NMC will be held at Sydney Showgrounds on the weekend of 25-26 May. Registration opens in April 2019. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.wool.com/NMC

Hear more from NMC project manager Ben Watts and several student participants in Episode 42 of AWI's The Yarn podcast, and also hear from Michelle Humphries in Episode 45, at www.wool.com/podcast



NATIONAL
MERINO CHALLENGE

CHALLENGE 2018

PARTICIPATING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Hay War Memorial High School	Hay	NSW
Molong Central School	Molong	NSW
Burra Community School	Burra	SA
Cleve Area School	Cleve	SA
Cummins Area School	Cummins	SA
Launceston Church Grammar	Launceston	Tas
Scotch Oakburn College	Launceston	Tas
St Patrick's College - Launceston	Launceston	Tas
Edmund Rice College	Bindoon	WA
WA College of Agriculture - Cunderdin	Cunderdin	WA
WA College of Agriculture - Harvey	Harvey	WA
WA College of Agriculture - Narrogin	Narrogin	WA

PARTICIPATING TAFES AND UNIVERSITIES

Charles Sturt University	Wagga Wagga	NSW
University of New England	Armidale	NSW
TAFE Riverina	Riverina	NSW
The University of Adelaide	Adelaide	SA
Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, UTAS	Hobart	Tas
TasTAFE	Launceston	Tas
La Trobe University	Melbourne	Vic
The University of Melbourne	Melbourne	Vic
Murdoch University	Perth	WA
Australian Adult Learning Centre Online		



Career advisor **Charles Impey** facilitated a **careers session** in which students were provided with advice on entering the agricultural sector from a panel of four young professionals already in the industry, from left: **Daniel Schuppan**, Animal Production Specialist, Landmark (Jamestown, SA); **Lexi Cesnik**, Wool & Livestock Specialist, Moses & Son (Wagga Wagga, NSW); **Todd Mullan**, woolgrower at 'Qailreup West' and 'Eastville Park' (East Wickepin, WA); **Sarah Ryan**, Wool Buyer Southern Region, Techwool Trading (Melbourne, Vic).



NMC involves **hands-on learning** under the guidance of wool industry professions.

SECONDARY SCHOOL DIVISION AWARDS

Champion	Laura Hall, Cummins Area School
Second Place	Caitlin Watts, Molong Central School
Third Place	Angus Tomney, Cleve Area School
Champion Team	Tasmanian Schools Team (George Booth, Olivia Lawson, Brittany Hine, George Gray, trainer George Darby)
Top Performer in Wool Section	Brittany Hine, St Patrick's College
Top Performer in Production Section	Angus Tomney, Cleve Area School
Top Performer in Breeding Section	Mackenley Harradine, Cleve Area School
Winning Trainer	George Darby, Tasmanian Schools Team

TERTIARY DIVISION AWARDS

Champion	Lauren Rowlands, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, UTAS
Second Place	Rebecca Owen, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, UTAS
Third Place	Madison Carter, Murdoch University
Champion Team	Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, UTAS (Lauren Rowlands, Rebecca Owen, Annick Wick, Olivia Cripps, trainer Andrew Bailey)
Top Performer in Wool Section	Kieran Smith, University of New England
Top Performer in Production Section	Rebecca Owen, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, UTAS
Top Performer in Breeding Section	Damien Goodman, The University of Melbourne
Winning Trainer	Andrew Bailey, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, UTAS



Students testing their skills in **ram selection**.



Students watching local Australian representative shearer **John Dalla**.

AUSTRALIAN RURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Now is your chance to join a network of leaders working collaboratively to advance the interests of rural industries and communities, and the sheep and wool industry in particular.

If you have ambitions of being a leader in the rural community, then the Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP) can provide you with the experience and skills to help fast track you towards your goal.

The ARLP is rural Australia's iconic leadership development program that aims to produce a network of informed, capable and ethical leaders who are able to work collaboratively to advance the interests of regional Australia.

AWI funds the participation of emerging wool industry leaders in the ARLP. These wool industry leaders engage with AWI, the wool industry and community about the learnings from the ARLP and continue to use these learnings for the benefit of rural and regional Australia, and the sheep and wool industry in particular.

Applications for Course 26 of the ARLP, which runs from July 2019 to October 2020, close at the end of this month.

The ARLP course consists of about 50 days face-to-face, delivered in multiple sessions over 15 months. Five of these sessions take place in locations across Australia, including the Kimberley, a state capital city and a regional area, and involvement in Canberra's political scene. One session takes place overseas with an eye-opening visit to one of Australia's closest neighbours, Indonesia.

COURSE 24 AWI-FUNDED PARTICIPANT: STACEY LUGSDIN



Stacey Lugsdin speaking about her personal journey through the leadership course, at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in May.

Woolgrower Stacey Lugsdin, who with her family runs a self-replacing Merino enterprise at 'Warrendale' north-east of Hay in the western Riverina district of NSW, will next month complete her AWI-sponsored participation in Course 24 of the ARLP when she graduates at a ceremony in Canberra.

Stacey has been managing 'Warrendale' since 2000 and teaches wool classing part-time. Stacey is involved in the Peppin-Shaw Ewe Flock Forum and the Hay Merino Sheep Show.

Stacey thanked AWI for the opportunity to take part and encourages other people in the wool industry to apply for the course, saying they must be open and willing to learn, and be

committed to helping others, ultimately for the betterment of the wool industry.

"I used to think that leaders always led from the front, but now I believe that leaders can 'lead from the back', in that they should encourage and guide people, especially the next generation, nurturing new ideas so the industry can move ahead in innovative ways," she said.

"The next generation is more technology-minded and forward-thinking than the last. We need innovation in the wool industry, so we must nurture the young people in the industry.

"I've also learnt that vulnerability is not a weakness; it's actually an endearing quality and a sign of empathy. A leader needs to show empathy and connect with people."

There were 33 people on the course, from across Australia and with a wide range of backgrounds. While there were a few mixed farmers on the course, Stacey said she adopted the role of representing the wool industry on the course, educating the other participants about the industry, such as the use of technology for the collection of data about individual sheep to make flocks more productive.

Stacey said the course provided a broad range of experience.

"The two weeks in the Kimberley helped examine how participants reacted in unfamiliar situations, and how that can help develop character and leadership skills.

"The time spent in Indonesia gave us a better understanding and appreciation of different cultures. One of the key things I learnt there was that all businesses (big or small, Australian or overseas) are at the mercy of the market, and it is important to try and take volatility out of markets – which is something that applies to the wool industry too."

To build her leadership qualities even further, Stacey has undertaken a Company Directors Course through the Australian Institute of Company Directors, which she completed last month.



COURSE 25 AWI-FUNDED PARTICIPANT: DAVID YOUNG



David Young classing a fleece at "Tekooti", Bookham.

AWI's ARLP position for the recently commenced Course 25 was awarded to woolgrower David Young from Bookham in the Southern Tablelands of NSW, who runs and manages a 1,200-hectare aggregation focusing on fine wool, prime lamb and beef production.

"While there are a myriad of issues affecting rural Australia that would benefit from stronger leadership, of particular concern is a lack of proper succession planning and a general ageing of farmers in the sector," David said.

"The traditional pathways to leadership are beginning to malfunction and my view is that we need to find new and novel ways to bring successful farmers with new ideas into the frame. I aim to be one of these."

David's first session of the ARLP program began in Darwin in July, before he travelled to the Kimberley in WA for an outdoor experiential component of the program. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.rural-leaders.com.au
www.wool.com/ARLP



The Australian Rural Leadership Program Course 24 after finishing their first session, which took place in the Kimberley, WA.

NEXT GENERATION ON THE HORIZON

Anna Horton from the Monaro of NSW is the 2018 recipient of a Horizon Scholarship sponsored by AWI, in recognition of her leadership potential and commitment to Australian agriculture.

The Horizon Scholarship is an initiative of AgriFutures Australia (formerly known as Rural Industries R&D Corporation) and aims to support the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Under the scholarship, AWI is supporting Anna throughout her Bachelor of Agribusiness course at the University of New England by providing her with a financial bursary and professional support in the form of mentoring, professional development workshops and industry placement.

"My interest in agriculture started from a young age having grown up on a sheep property," Anna said. "Our farm, located on the southern Monaro, runs a self-replacing Merino flock, with prime lambs also entering the mix. I've always enjoyed helping out on the farm and the rural lifestyle that comes with it."

Anna attended Delegate Primary School before heading off to boarding school in Year 7 at Frensham School, in the Southern Highlands. Following high school, Anna got the opportunity to broaden her agricultural experience by working on one of Australia's biggest cattle stations.

"I took a gap year last year in the Northern Territory, working as a stock hand on Lake Nash Station, three hours west of Mount Isa, mustering, processing and branding cattle on the 4.2 million acre property. The experience opened my eyes to various grazing and management techniques and further instilled the importance of a strong work ethic. It was an educational experience and one that I cherish and will always remember."

Anna said she is thrilled to receive the Horizon Scholarship and thanked AWI. "It's an honour to receive the scholarship; not only will it open doors and connect me with industry professionals, but I will gain valuable experience in the wool industry."

Students on the AgriFutures Horizon Scholarship program attended a four-day workshop in Wagga Wagga, NSW in July, focused on leadership and personal development. The workshop featured special guest speakers, industry experts, field trips and the opportunity to network and discuss innovations and challenges in the agricultural sector.



Anna Horton from the Monaro of NSW.

"It's an honour to receive the scholarship; not only will it open doors and connect me with industry professionals, but I will gain valuable experience in the wool industry."

"It was exciting to meet other students across Australia involved in the program, learn more about the challenges and trends across the agricultural sector and how I can make a positive impact on the future of Australian agriculture." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.agrifutures.com.au/horizon

TWO NEW QUEENSLAND WILD DOG COORDINATORS



(Left) New wild dog coordinator for south-west Queensland, **Skyela Kruger**, who is based at St George. (Right) New wild dog coordinator for central-west Queensland, **Rohan Dent**, who is based at Blackall.

Two new wild dog coordinators have recently been appointed in Queensland to work with woolgrowers and other stakeholders to help strengthen rural communities' efforts to assist with sustained on-the-ground control of wild dogs.

AWI is co-funding two new wild dog coordinator positions in Queensland. Their role is to assist woolgrowers and other key stakeholders to work together to lessen the impact of livestock predation by wild dogs. Reducing these attacks will improve on-farm productivity, rural community wellbeing and rural biodiversity.

AWI is co-funding the two new positions, with further support from MLA Donor Company, the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the Queensland regional bodies of Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) and the South West Regional Economic Development Association (SWRED).

Skyela Kruger, who started in the position in April, is based in St George and is servicing the South West shires. Originally from Yaraka, Skyela grew up on several rural properties. She has lived around St George since 2010, with her family managing rural properties in the area, and she now lives on a mixed farming property east of St George.

"Coordination is the key to effectively managing wild dogs across the state – everyone I've spoken to is keen to get on top of the issue," Skyela said.

"One of the issues in the area is absentee landholders, which can result in large gaps in programs if control measures are not being undertaken. This can be frustrating for other local producers. I plan on speaking with absentee landholders, to let them know about their neighbours' concerns and try to get all landholders to work together."

Rohan Dent, who also has a mixed farming background, is based in Blackall in central-west Queensland. His role, which began in May, includes supporting and assisting stakeholders and local wild dog committees of the seven shires in the RAPAD area.

"I have a liaison role, attending committee meetings and bait days, and encouraging the wild dog committees to work closely together. The challenge is to bring together

a wide range of personalities and opinions, of people who are often undertaking a wide range of other roles," Rohan said.

"I already knew some of the key people involved, so I feel I have hit the ground running. However, I don't underestimate my task. One of the many issues of keeping landholders engaged in control is absentee landholders or those that have destocked or moved out of wool. Increasing the awareness to those landholders of the impacts to other livestock enterprises and their neighbours is also part of the role. The main goal is to engage with all stakeholders regardless of land tenure and support them as best we can to achieve a positive pest management outcome."

Brett Carlsson (Senior Wild Dog Coordinator / North Queensland) along with Skyela and Rohan, speak weekly, working toward building effective coordination and action across approximately 70% of the state.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION IS VITAL

AWI Program Manager Vertebrate Pests, Ian Evans said collaboration between local landholders is vital but can be challenging without external help.

"Woolgrowers recognise the vital need for wild dog control, but they often don't have the relationships with all land managers across sometimes vast distances as in Queensland that are needed to be able to work together on the dog problem," he said.

"Nor do they necessarily have all the skills or resources to combat dogs, and those people that are actively involved in dog control can often feel burnout due to the scale of the problem and low participation within a region.

"That is why communities need a coordinator to step in and help out. They need somebody independent, who can break down these barriers and get landholders working locally and across shires."

Wild dog coordinators use a 'nil-tenure landscape level' approach with local

communities that highlights the benefit of focusing on the 'common problem' rather than attributing ownership of the wild dogs to individual land managers.

This approach can re-instil good working relationships between private and public land managers. More importantly, it can have a positive impact on the emotional well-being of farmers in the area who now feel that something positive is being done to address the constant financial and emotional impact of wild dogs.

Through this consultative process local farmers can not only share in the 'ownership' of the decision making but can identify and pursue the resources required to successfully implement a local and regional solution.

AWI-FUNDED WILD DOG COORDINATORS

AWI funding for the appointment of the two new wild dog coordinators in Queensland complements AWI funding for wild dog coordinators in other states.

- Queensland (south-west): Skyela Kruger 0429 232 089
- Queensland (central-west): Rohan Dent 0437 116 875
- NSW (north-east): Dave Worsley 0429 638 078
- NSW (western): Bruce Duncan 0409 515 471
- Victoria (Gippsland): Brian Dowley 0408 436 600 and Lucy-anne Cobby 0488 712 616 (shared position)
- Victoria (north-east): Michael Freeman 0477 358 061
- Western Australia: Meja Aldrich 0417 622 780

A workshop at St George in Queensland provided practical information for producers who have constructed exclusion fencing.

From the interest shown in the workshop held at the end of May, it appears that exclusion fencing is relevant to a large number of property owners in the region.

The workshop was run by AWI's state network in Queensland, Leading Sheep, and was attended by 37 woolgrowers and other stakeholders. The emphasis was on property owners who have finished or nearly finished constructing an exclusion fence.

"The workshop generated a significant amount of interest in the St George region and further afield," said organiser Jed Sommerfield, who is on the South West committee of Leading Sheep and is an Extension Officer at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

"Feedback received at the workshop showed that the topics, presenters and format were very relevant to producers. Almost all attendees said they had learned something new and would recommend the workshop to others. Three-quarters said they intend to make changes on their properties as a result of attending the workshop."

FEEDBACK FROM PRODUCERS ATTENDING THE WORKSHOP

"It was great to attend a workshop that had a positive vibe."

"Excellent speakers on range of different relevant topics."

"It is good to hear what others are doing and whether their ideas can help you."

MY EXCLUSION FENCE IS BUILT, NOW WHAT?

To effectively control wild dogs, an **exclusion fence must be regularly monitored and maintained** to prevent incursions by pest animals.

There were six presenters covering six topics.

Maintaining your exclusion fence

Two producers from Bollon, Bob Brown of 'Heather Station' and Stephen Tinkler of 'Cardiff', provided tips and tricks for constructing and maintaining an exclusion fence. Some of the take home messages were that site preparation saves you money in the long run; maintain roads because it makes monitoring easier, cheaper and quicker; and fix any damage as soon as possible.

Local knowledge and cooperation

– St George producer Rod Avery, who is also the Chairman of the Balonne Shire Wild Dog Committee, provided local knowledge and experience of managing the wild dog population in the Balonne Shire. He emphasised the importance of cooperation amongst landholders to help control wild dogs, inside and outside of exclusion fencing. He also said that exclusion fencing won't solve all the wild dog problems, but it is another very useful management tool to be used – other control methods are still needed.

Photo sites – Jed Sommerfield spoke about how to establish, monitor and use 'photo sites' on a property, which are where a series of photographs are taken over time to monitor short-term or long-term physical changes, for example changes in pasture. Photographic records provide a permanent visual record of change on a property without reliance on memory or taking physical measurements.

Motion activated cameras – Jed also spoke about how to measure and monitor pest numbers by setting up motion activated cameras to capture photos of pests.

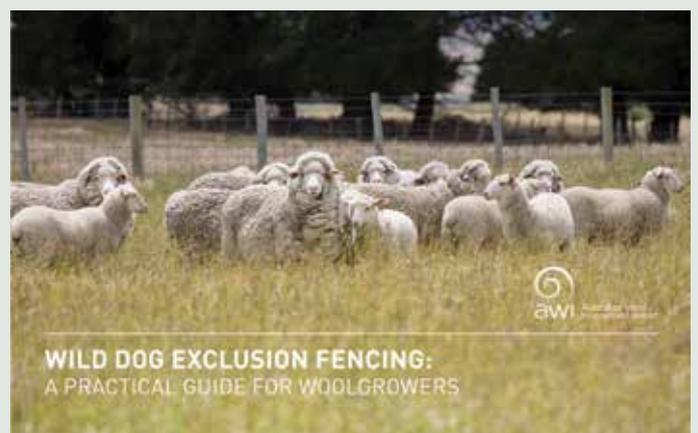
Common weeds – DAF Senior Biosecurity Officer John Cuskelly discussed common weeds to the area, how to take a photo to assist in the identification of plants (take a photo of the lead, stem, flower and seed) and the different types of treatment for different weeds.

Damage Mitigation Permits – Luke Male from the Queensland Department of Environment and Science provided information on how to apply and act on Damage Mitigation Permits as well as how to comply with the current legislation. **B**

AWI PRACTICAL GUIDE TO WILD DOG EXCLUSION FENCING

To help woolgrowers who are considering, planning, building or maintaining wild dog exclusion fencing, AWI has produced a free 36-page guide that provides an overview and photos of successful exclusion fences already built by woolgrowers on other properties. To complement the AWI guide, AWI is also making available the 14-page Kondinin Group Research Report *Exclusion Fencing, Fighting Ferals* that was produced in January 2016.

Both publications are available for free on the AWI website at www.wool.com/exclusionfencing. Hard copies are also available by calling the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.



AERIAL BAITING

CONTINUES TO RECEIVE WOOLGROWER SUPPORT



Preparing to load baits onto the plane.

An aerial wild dog baiting program, part funded by AWI, was once again conducted this year in the pastoral sheep zone south of the dog fence in northern South Australia, complementing existing ground baiting to target wild dogs threatening sheep production.

“Sheep are happier and lambing percentages are up due to wild dog control.”

Such was the generally positive feedback from woolgrowers involved in this year’s aerial baiting program in South Australia, which strongly reinforced the value of the investment.

“The program is run efficiently so as to be of maximum benefit to the landholder, with minimum workload or business interruption,” continued another woolgrower. “We would not be able to bait the difficult terrain covered by aerial baiting as thoroughly. This service is greatly appreciated.”

The aerial baiting was undertaken for eight days during April, following on from successfully-run programs in previous years. Landholders from 96 wild dog-affected properties participated in this year’s program.

The exercise was principally led by Natural Resources SA Arid Lands with support by Biosecurity SA. Funding support also came from AWI and the SA Sheep Industry Advisory Group.

The aerial baiting complemented the concurrent autumn ‘Biteback’ wild dog ground baiting program run in South Australia, with many properties participating in both programs.

COORDINATED EFFORT

An important part of the program is that it links sheep producers and other landholders in a coordinated effort to counteract the wild dog problem.

“It feels like we are doing something for the issue, being pro-active and taking action,” commented a producer in the program’s feedback survey. “We’re finding a solution for the problem rather than just wallowing over the damage being caused.”

The baits were dropped from a Cessna 210 aircraft along a route of more than 10,000km, with baits generally laid at a rate of five baits per km. It concentrated on inaccessible areas, such as rugged ranges.

The baits were dropped along a similar flight path to the previous year.

The total bait production for the program was about 52,000 baits, although about

2,000 were not used in the aerial baiting and were subsequently allocated to ground baiting.

“Funding support has been greatly appreciated. It has enabled wide scale programs to be established and run for a length of time. Continued support would enable these benefits to be further increased.”

Woolgrower involved in the aerial baiting program.

To reduce the risk and difficulty of using casual labour for the cutting of fresh meat baits, it was decided to purchase (kangaroo) meat already cut into 150g portions by a meat supplier. However, as much as a third of the baits were cut above the 150g, so some additional cutting was required prior to the injection of 1080.

As in previous years, the navigation system ensured that baits were dropped accurately along established flight paths and that appropriate ‘no bait’ buffer zones were maintained, for example around homesteads, outstations, yards and waters. The aerial baiting operations went to plan with no interruptions and the aerial contractor, Wrights Air, performed very well.

IMPROVING FARMERS’ WELLBEING

The SA Wild Dog Aerial Baiting Coordinator, Bill McIntosh, said most respondents to the feedback survey found the aerial baiting a very useful addition to their normal ground baiting operations.

“Woolgrowers see the baiting program as a positive factor in their decision-making regarding either consolidating or increasing their commitment to flock numbers or wool production,” Bill said.

They generally indicated that aerial baiting helped with a sense of wellbeing in the face of dog predation on their flocks, with one producer commenting, “I have peace of mind knowing baits are in areas I am unable to get to,” and another saying, “We feel better knowing there are some control measures in place; it benefits our business, environment and peace of mind.”

“Overall, the feedback survey provided a positive response and showed that the program is, almost without exception, highly valued and appreciated on the part of woolgrowers,” Bill added.

PROTECT RESPONSIBLE, SUSTAINABLE 1080 USE

National Wild Dog Management Coordinator Greg Mifsud came home from an AWI and Invasive Animals CRC-funded study tour of the US, a myth-buster. Wolves are not like dingoes and non-lethal control measures aren't always safe or effective. Most importantly, he brought home some valuable lessons on predator control for us all.

Protect the use of 1080 in Australia at all costs was the key message brought home by National Wild Dog Management Coordinator Greg Mifsud, from a recent US study tour investigating predator management.

Focusing on coyotes and wolves in Montana and Wyoming and their impacts on livestock production and management, Greg said the loss of 1080 as a control tool in 1971 was a significant factor in the decline of their national sheep flock.

"Unlike Australia, 1080 in the US was not highly regulated with species-specific dose rates," he said. "Instead, it was commonplace for farmers and government staff to inject large chunks of meat with corning syringes using 100% stock solution which resulted in the death of any carnivore or scavenger exposed to the meat.

"I delivered a presentation on Australia's predator control programs and how we use 1080 to the USDA Wildlife Services State Conference.

"Staff were amazed to hear that we use such small, targeted dose rates to control predators, and while many would like to reinstate 1080's use in the US, significant public opposition

means it is unlikely to ever happen."

Without 1080 as a broadscale control tool, management of coyotes (their predator most similar to Australia's wild dogs) is difficult, dangerous and expensive.

"Primarily, coyotes are controlled by aerial shooting which works reasonably well in the open country but is far more problematic in the mountains," Greg said.

"Prior to me arriving in Wyoming, two men were killed when a plane, owned and operated by the Wyoming Wool Board, and engaged in aerial shooting, crashed."

Other forms of control used include canid pest ejectors, traps, snares, guardian dogs and ground shooting often with decoy dogs. The dogs are used to stir the pack up and lure the coyotes into the open where they can be shot by government officials.

Greg also found it interesting wolves are heavily controlled and monitored under state government management plans.

"There was huge focus on the reintroduction of Grey Wolves into Yellowstone National Park in the mid-1980s and, for some time wolves were protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act," he said.

"With management of wolves since handed back to the states, following development of federally-approved management plans, their populations and distributions are now heavily regulated through control actions and hunting programs.

"In Montana every pack living near livestock is monitored using radio collars. They get a two-strikes-and-you're-out policy, with two attacks on stock resulting in complete removal of the pack through aerial shooting and trapping.

"This has limited their impacts to a degree, however, they still cause huge problems on the summer range, where herders take stock up to high country leases."

Greg said guardian dogs are widely used but accompanied by fulltime shepherds, usually from nomadic cultures such as Peru, Nepal and Bhutan.

"The guardian dogs serve more as an alarm than a defence and despite their presence, wolves and coyotes regularly kill livestock, albeit less than if the guardians weren't there," he said.

"Movement of wolves into the plains, west of the northern Rockies, is a serious concern for ranchers as their size, about 60-70kg, and numbers mean they often overpower and sometimes kill the Great Pyrenees and Anatolian guard dogs commonly used there.

"Coyote packs have also worked out that if they can distract the guardian dogs, other pack members can get a kill."

Contrary to popular belief, Greg found dingoes are far more similar in size, behaviour and social structure to coyotes than wolves and said comparisons between the role of wolves in Yellowstone and dingoes in Australia are unrealistic.

"Coyotes were much more abundant in most of the landscapes visited and were a far greater problems for livestock producers than wolves," he said.

"On average most of the ranchers interviewed lost between 12 to 25% of lambs annually to predators, primarily coyotes.

"At one property I visited, 400 lambs were killed out of 2,500 weaned and, after putting a plane in the air, the US Department of Agriculture shot 28 coyotes on their 2024ha property."

Greg said predator management in the US is far less coordinated and often reactive, unlike in Australia where Greg and the AWI wild dog coordinators work closely to support community-led, coordinated management campaigns to reduce wild dog impacts.

"The trip highlighted that the approach advocated by industry, through the National Wild Dog Action Plan, really does put us at the forefront in terms of managing predator impacts when compared to the ad hoc approaches undertaken in other countries," he said.



John and Vicki Childs from Wyoming standing with a mount of one of the wolf pack responsible for killing 900 sheep on their ranch in one season.



FLYSTRIKE R&D UPDATE

At this year's 2018 Breech Flystrike RD&E Technical Update, attended by 115 industry stakeholders, significant and incremental progress was reported from a wide spectrum of research projects and trials conducted on farms and in laboratories.

Woolgrowers, researchers, consultants, commercial providers, vets and animal welfare advocacy groups discussed the latest developments and trial results from AWI's flystrike prevention program at the 2018 Breech Flystrike Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Technical Update held in July in Sydney.

Introduced by AWI Program Manager for Sheep Health & Welfare, Bridget Peachey, the forum was told that protecting the national flock from flystrike remains the top research priority at AWI. Since 2005, more than \$30 million has been invested by AWI on measures to combat flystrike as part of a greater long-term investment of more than \$60 million in animal health and welfare measures.

Fifteen speakers presented the latest technical information on completed and current projects, addressing sheep breeding and selection, breech modification alternatives, improved management practices, wool industry training and engagement and supply chain engagement. Significant and incremental progress is being reported in most areas.

"This, the sixth Breech Flystrike RD&E Technical Update since 2008, was another good opportunity to enable researchers to share ideas on the future direction of their studies, while hearing from the welfare groups and woolgrowers about their needs and expectations of the AWI breech flystrike program," said AWI Animal Welfare Advocacy Manager Geoff Lindon said.

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Supply chain engagement

AWI's General Manager of Corporate Affairs & International Market Access, Peta Slack-Smith reported how she leads an annual delegation

(including an Australian woolgrower and a researcher) to the northern hemisphere, where the delegation informs key brands, retailers, retail associations, welfare groups and NGOs about Australian wool and the high standard of on-farm animal welfare practices.

Ms Slack-Smith, who has led these delegations since 2009, said global apparel businesses are increasingly focused on sustainability and traceability, including animal welfare. The feedback from northern hemisphere markets is that consumers' and brands'/retailers' perception of wool is changing significantly for the better, with the result that demand for the fibre is growing.

However, she said these businesses have a very high awareness and understanding of AWEX's National Wool Declaration (NWD) and they monitor the NWD monthly and annual figures to see trends. Universally they want woolgrowers to increase use of the NWD.

AWEX National Wool Declaration (NWD)

Dr Kerry Hansford from AWEX gave a presentation on the trends and latest figures on NWD usage. Australian wool sold through auction declared through the NWD continues to increase; it was 66% in 2017, up from 61% in 2016. The declaration by woolgrowers of their use of Pain Relief (PR) for mulesing is also increasing through the NWD, as is the proportion of Non Mulesed (NM) declarations.

The results also show increasing premiums for Non Mulesed (NM) declared wool, on-going but modest premiums for Pain Relief (PR) declared wool, and small discounts for wool that is Not Declared (ND) - see page 52.

Survey of husbandry practices

Bob Sloane from market research company Kynetec reported the results of a significant survey of the husbandry practices of more

than 1,200 woolgrowers across six states. The survey results showed how committed woolgrowers are to the welfare of their animals and their ability to change.

While 77% of Merino ewes and 66% of Merino wethers nationally are still mulesed, about 85% of lambs that are mulesed are now treated with at least one pain relief product, an increase from 77% in 2013/14. There has been rapid adoption of pain relief by Merino producers since the first product was commercialised in 2006.

BREEDING & SELECTION

Industry progress in breeding for breech strike resistance

AWI's Geoff Lindon reported that the indirect indicators of breech flystrike – lower wrinkle, dag and breech wool cover – are key risk factors for flystrike, and forum participants learnt that industry now has access to tools and strategies for breeding for plainer breech strike resistant sheep.

Industry has had access to commercially available breeding values via MERINOSELECT for these significant traits since late 2009. With a balanced approach to selection, participants heard that reducing breech strike and increasing production is possible but much harder in the Fine and Super Fine Merino types. Breeding for breech strike resistance continues across the national flock with medium Merino types showing strong gains towards reducing breech wrinkle and cover and thus the risk of breech strike.

Rate of genetic gain in reducing breech flystrike

Dr Forbes Brien of the University of Adelaide informed the audience about a project that will revise predictions (first made in 2015) of the future genetic gain achievable for reducing

breech strike incidence in Merino breeding programs while maintaining or improving productivity. These revisions are in light of updated genetic estimates that have since become available based on young crutched sheep, a management regime more typical of commercial industry practice.

Breeding for breech strike resistance: genomics

Dr Sonja Dominic of CSIRO provided an update on a project to complete the final phase (and most divergent between resistant and susceptible lines) of genotyping the breech flystrike resource flocks in NSW and WA. Outcomes are expected to form the only genomic reference population for breech flystrike resistance. The genome-wide association study for breech flystrike resistance and indicator traits will contribute to determining pathways for further genetic evaluation research in breech flystrike for sheep.

IMPROVED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Breech flystrike risk factors – a review

Dr Peter James of the University of Queensland spoke about a review being undertaken of flystrike risk factors with a view to developing new or improved means of control. Specifically, its objectives are to review current and past information on the importance of identified risk factors; assess potential for utilising odour and other cues for the development of new controls; identify areas of knowledge deficit in risk factors for breech flystrike and recommend key areas of research towards more effective flystrike control.

Fly genome research

Continued work by the University of Melbourne on the genome of the sheep blowfly is providing greater understanding of what attracts the gravid female to sheep and what genes are active in the early larvae stage. Dr Trent Perry of the University of Melbourne reported that this will enhance the ability of researchers to identify and target blowfly genes critical to its lifecycle.

This ongoing and significant body of work is already contributing to the next steps in the development of new chemical controls that could kill the larvae or repel the female fly, and consideration for a blowfly vaccine which could potentially prevent the larvae feeding on the skin and underlying tissue of the sheep.

New chemicals for blowfly control

Dr Andrew Kotze of CSIRO spoke about the need for new chemicals for blowfly control due to the limited number of drugs for protection against flystrike. A CSIRO project to identify new compounds, providing a basis for the development of new insecticides to control sheep blowfly, is under way. Dr Kotze reported that, if successful, next steps will be to attract investment from an animal health company towards developing and commercialising a novel insecticide, potentially using the blowfly

as a proof-of-concept for a wider insecticide role. CSIRO has already started talking to several animal health companies, but the anticipated time frame for development of new chemicals would be at least 5-10 years.

CSIRO pain relief study and next steps

Dr Alison Small of CSIRO reported on pain relief research co-funded by AWI that shows the use of the anti-inflammatory agent Buccalgesic® and anaesthetic actives in Tri-Solfen®, singly or in combination, provide welfare benefits that persist for at least six hours post-mulesing based on behavioural observations (only assessed for 6 hours), and up to 24 hours based on physiological parameters.

The best outcome was seen where Tri-Solfen and Buccalgesic were used in combination, delivering the benefits of both local anaesthetic and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents. Buccalgesic therefore offers a good adjunct to Tri-Solfen in extending the pain relief period for sheep undergoing surgical mulesing. See page 42 of the June edition of *Beyond the Bale*.

Participants heard that the results from this project have already been used to support registration of Buccalgesic for use in mulesing, and that there are now three pain relief options (Metacam, Buccalgesic and Tri-Solfen) available for woolgrowers to consider for their lambs in the alleviation of pain during mulesing, castration and tail docking. Woolgrowers are advised to consult with their local veterinarian as options do vary between procedures.

BREECH MODIFICATION ALTERNATIVES

Breeching Process

John Steinfert of Steinfert Agvet reported that the original R&D into treating the breech using the Liquid Nitrogen Process was not successful and has been discontinued. However, he is now working on a new Breeching Process, also using Liquid Nitrogen. AWI is not funding this new work.

SkinTraction

Bridget Peachey of AWI told the forum that discussions continue with a potential new partner for further SkinTraction R&D to overcome the tight APVMA label use restrictions.

WOOL INDUSTRY TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT

Moving to a non-mulesed Merino enterprise

AWI's Geoff Lindon told the forum about the AWI manual *Planning for a non-mulesed Merino enterprise* that outlines important matters for woolgrowers to consider in planning to move to a non-mules enterprise. Forty producers who have successfully made the transition were interviewed for the manual. Geoff said the key messages from these businesses are: the focus should be on improving whole-of-life welfare; re-balancing the remaining mix of tools used to control

strike and ensuring the wool premiums are maximised and the discounts minimised for un-mulesed restocker sheep. A key learning from the producers was that it is important to have a detailed plan in place before starting the move to a non-mules enterprise, that has the support of everyone involved in the business.

The manual is available to download from www.wool.com/flystrikelatest or from the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099. A practical 10 step guide is also available on page 54 in this edition of *Beyond the Bale*.

Sheep ectoparasite resistance update

Narelle Sales of NSW DPI spoke about how AWI and NSW DPI have jointly funded a project to determine insecticide resistance profiles of the two major ectoparasites of the Australian wool industry, the Australian sheep blowfly and the sheep body louse, across the major wool producing regions of Australia.

To ensure that all wool-growing areas are covered, NSW DPI researchers are seeking blowfly samples from across Australia. A request is out for woolgrowers from all states across Australia who are willing to provide blowflies from their property for use in this research – see page 50 for more information.

Improving parasite management of sheep

The Executive Officer of ParaBoss, Dr Deb Maxwell, talked about FlyBoss, a producer-focused online information resource, jointly funded by AWI and MLA and delivered by UNE. It is one of a number of websites under the ParaBoss suite of tools, which also includes WormBoss and LiceBoss.

The FlyBoss website (www.flyboss.com.au) contains a large amount of information for woolgrowers on best practice flystrike control and is supported by regular Facebook updates, a fortnightly ParaBoss newsletter and a regular article in *Beyond the Bale*. Training for chemical retailers to ensure woolgrowers are receiving accurate and consistent messages about best practice chemical treatment use to prevent flystrike is also under development. **E**

MORE INFORMATION

The presentations from the event are all available on the AWI website at

www.wool.com/flystrikeRnDupDate

Hear more about the Forum in Episode 51 of AWI's The Yarn podcast at www.wool.com/podcast



The 115 industry stakeholders at the 2018 Breech Flystrike RD&E Technical Update in July.

HOW WELL PERFORMING ARE YOUR BLOWFLY AND LICE TREATMENTS?

Do you know what chemical groups are effective against blowflies or lice in your flock? A

project to determine the insecticide resistance of these two ectoparasites in Australia is under way, thanks to funding from AWI and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Woolgrowers can get directly involved in the project too, by supplying maggots from fly struck sheep or fleeces from lousy sheep.



NSW DPI researcher **Monica Suann** at the **Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute** with a sample of maggots (left) and assaying lice (right)



AWI and NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) are jointly funding a project to determine insecticide resistance profiles of the two major ectoparasites of the Australian wool industry, the Australian sheep blowfly and the sheep body louse, across the major wool producing regions of Australia.

“Without monitoring field populations for the presence of resistance, and adapting ectoparasite management practices accordingly, the effective life of registered chemical treatments can be reduced considerably,” said NSW DPI researcher Narelle Sales.

“The new project aims to provide producers with up to date information on the insecticide resistance status of blowflies and lice affecting their flocks to aid management decisions – with the potential to increase production, decrease production costs and extend the effective lives of these insecticides.”

As part of the project, NSW DPI researchers are therefore **seeking woolgrowers from all states** across Australia who are willing to provide blowflies and/or have lice on their property for use in the research.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

An AWI and NSW DPI survey carried out

in 2012-14 found that 36/58 (62%) of sheep blowfly populations tested displayed low level resistance to cyromazine. The highest percentage of resistant flies in any single cyromazine resistant population was 40%. A small number of these populations (8/36 or 22%) also had flies capable of surviving the concentration of dicyclanil which will kill susceptible flies. This project also determined that these resistant flies could reduce the body strike protection period of cyromazine from 11 weeks to 8 weeks on jetted sheep.

However, as 48% of these blowfly populations were sourced from NSW, the new survey is being undertaken to cover all of the major wool production areas of Australia.

YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED

Blowflies

This current survey relies on producers collecting maggots off struck sheep on their property and sending them into the NSW DPI laboratory for testing. The researchers breed them up and will then determine the resistance of these blowflies to the insect growth regulators (IGRs) cyromazine, dicyclanil and diflubenzuron, as well as the neonicotinoid, imidacloprid; the macrocyclic lactone (ML) ivermectin; the

spinosyn spinosad, and the organophosphate (OP) diazinon.

The researchers received a small number of blowfly samples last autumn, mostly from NSW again. However, they keen to be able to provide information to individual producers as well as compile regional, state and national information. Please contact NSW DPI to request a collection kit to keep handy; the kit has reply-paid postage – see below.

Lice

In addition, this project is able to test body lice for resistance to imidacloprid, spinosad, abamectin, diazinon, diflubenzuron and the SP cypermethrin. To achieve this, researchers need to arrange the transport of a fleece from your property to the NSW DPI laboratory. The fleece needs to be off the lousiest sheep available and the more lice the better. The researchers need at least 10 lice to be visible in each wool-parting as they test them straight off the fleece. If there is an insecticide of concern, let the researchers know so they can test that insecticide as a matter of priority.

The researchers will organise shipment and have successfully carried out testing from fleeces which have been shipped from as far afield as Western Australia, so please don't be deterred. Contact NSW DPI for further details – see below.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are interested in supplying NSW DPI researchers with maggots from fly struck sheep or fleeces from lousy sheep, please contact:

Narelle Sales, NSW DPI
Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute
Email: narelle.sales@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 4640 6446

After testing, you will receive the results for your flock. At the end of the project you will also receive the project results showing how products are performing in your region or state. The project will be completed in mid-2020.

Producer confidentiality will be maintained and all property information will be de-identified.

Still using the same fly strike treatment?

ROTATE YOUR THINKING



Avenge contains the first new active for spray-on fly strike prevention in 20 years.

If you use the same fly strike treatment for too long, you're taking a huge gamble. That's why you should rotate with Avenge, which contains imidacloprid. So if you think you know Avenge, think again.

- Fast knockdown of blowfly maggots
- Higher volume, complete coverage
- Up to 14 weeks protection in long wool

Rotate your fly strike treatment, visit your nearest stockist or growsolutions.com.au today.

AVENGE
DO IT ONCE. DO IT RIGHT.



PREMIUMS AND DISCOUNTS FOR MULESING STATUS

Results presented by AWEX show increasing premiums for Non Mulesed (NM) declared wool, on-going but modest premiums for Pain Relief (PR) declared wool, and small discounts for wool that is Not Declared (ND).

PREMIUMS AND DISCOUNTS FOR MULESING STATUS (C/KG CLEAN)

		Merino (micron)						Non-Merino (micron)				
		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	27	28	29	30
INDICATIVE MICRON PRICE GUIDE												
SEASON	2013	1404	1328	1261	1218	1187	1180	1167	724	664	645.5	627
	2014	1364	1331	1285	1231	1196	1185	1168	823.5	769	747.5	726
	2015	1523	1510	1468	1408	1359	1344	1330	939.5	844	806	768
	2016	1926	1915	1835	1699	1523	1448	1403	882.5	729	657.5	586
	2017	2643	2552	2278	2029	1867	1793	1717	1008.5	842	725	608
NON MULESED PREMIUMS AND DISCOUNTS												
SEASON	2013	16 1.1%	12 0.9%	9 0.7%	9 0.7%	4 0.3%	-3 -0.3%	2 0.2%	0 0.0%	-1 -0.2%	4 0.6%	16 2.6%
	2014	28 2.1%	15 1.1%	11 0.9%	12 1.0%	13 1.1%	0 0.0%	5 0.4%	3 0.4%	4 0.5%	-3 -0.4%	28 3.9%
	2015	10 0.7%	15 1.0%	7 0.5%	8 0.6%	8 0.6%	1 0.1%	-15 -1.1%	0 0.0%	-1 -0.1%	1 0.1%	4 0.5%
	2016	14 0.7%	15 0.8%	30 1.6%	13 0.8%	21 1.4%	18 1.2%	-12 -0.9%	-1 -0.1%	11 1.5%	-5 -0.8%	-1 -0.2%
	2017	36 1.4%	44 1.7%	57 2.5%	44 2.2%	36 1.9%	18 1.0%	-13 -0.8%	20 2.0%	6 0.7%	1 0.1%	2 0.3%
MULESED with PAIN RELIEF PREMIUMS AND DISCOUNTS												
SEASON	2013	0 0.0%	2 0.2%	0 0.0%	3 0.2%	0 0.0%	3 0.3%	-15 -1.3%	16 2.2%	-9 -1.4%		0 0.0%
	2014	11 0.8%	6 0.5%	-2 -0.2%	1 0.1%	-1 -0.1%	-4 -0.3%	1 0.1%	3 0.4%	0 0.0%	-1 -0.1%	11 1.5%
	2015	2 0.1%	2 0.1%	-4 -0.3%	0 0.0%	1 0.1%	0 0.0%	2 0.2%	8 0.9%		9 1.1%	14 1.8%
	2016	6 0.3%	-1 -0.1%	6 0.3%	1 0.1%	3 0.2%	4 0.3%	0 0.0%	14 1.6%	19 2.6%	-11 -1.7%	12 2.0%
	2017	24 0.9%	4 0.2%	5 0.2%	8 0.4%	1 0.1%	3 0.2%	1 0.1%	27 2.7%	6 0.7%	-2 -0.3%	-1 -0.2%
CEASED MULESING PREMIUMS AND DISCOUNTS												
SEASON	2013	4 0.3%	14 1.1%	9 0.7%	-2 -0.2%	3 0.3%	1 0.1%	16 1.4%	2 0.3%	-4 -0.6%	4 0.6%	4 0.6%
	2014	11 0.8%	4 0.3%	-3 -0.2%	10 0.8%	-5 -0.4%	-3 -0.3%	17 1.5%	-1 -0.1%	5 0.7%	-3 -0.4%	11 1.5%
	2015	51 3.3%	15 1.0%	3 0.2%	8 0.6%	5 0.4%	4 0.3%	-1 -0.1%	2 0.2%	5 0.6%	-8 -1.0%	-3 -0.4%
	2016	1 0.1%	21 1.1%	15 0.8%	5 0.3%	5 0.3%	3 0.2%	8 0.6%	30 3.4%	9 1.2%	-20 -3.0%	20 3.4%
	2017		68 2.7%	8 0.4%	19 0.9%	4 0.2%	0 0.0%	-10 -0.6%	-8 -0.8%	4 0.5%	-5 -0.7%	5 0.8%

Source: AWEX

NWD Premiums and Discounts for Mulesing Status – Criteria:

- Australian stored; Merino fleece/weaners & crossbred fleece.
- >30 N/ktex, >60% Schlum Dry, <2.2 VMB, Styles 4/5, Good/light colour (incl. H1), P Certificate.
- Lengths according to diameter range: 70–95 mm (<18 µm), 75–99 mm (19–21 µm), 83–104mm (22–24 µm), 90–110 mm (26–29 µm), 100–130 mm (30–34 µm).
- Records per group (micron/NWD status) >2, empty cells when not enough data to generate a premium or discount.
- Premiums and discounts for Not Declared and Declared Mulesed are not shown in the above table.

While the demand for Australian Merino wool has increased due to brands expanding their use of the fibre in new ranges and sectors, and many other brands 'discovering wool' and using it for the first time, it is important that the Australian wool industry continues to inform the market about the fibre's on-farm provenance.

The Australian wool industry, through the Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX), introduced the National Wool Declaration (NWD) program ten years ago as a means for woolgrowers to document their flystrike control practices through the wool selling system.

The NWD creates transparency and choice in the marketplace for retailers and suppliers wanting to source wool that has been produced using husbandry practices preferred by the buyer. AWI encourages woolgrowers to declare their practices to provide the supply chain with the information they are requesting.

The proportion of woolgrowers declaring their wool through the NWD continues to increase. 66% of Australian wool sold through auction was declared through the NWD in 2017, up from 61% in 2016, 55% in 2015, 50% in 2014, 43% in 2013 and 38% in 2008.

The declaration by woolgrowers of their use of Pain Relief (PR) for mulesing is increasing through the NWD, as is the proportion of Non Mulesed (NM) declarations.

What are the levels of premiums and discounts that woolgrowers have been receiving for declaring their practices?

At the recent Breech Flystrike Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Forum, Kerry Hansford of AWEX presented the levels of discounts and premiums that woolgrowers have been receiving for their wool over the past five years – see table left..

AWI Animal Welfare Advocacy Manager Geoff Lindon said while the results can vary across micron categories; Not Declared wool is receiving a small discount, Pain Relief wool is receiving a modest premium that in most cases will more than pay for the product, and the premiums are increasing for Not Mulesed wool. These are important emerging market signals for woolgrowers. **B**

FASHION GIANT LEARNS ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE

Hugh Attard and Dan Baker of 'Gostwyk' at Uralla hosted a visit by Alexandre Capelli and Cathelijne Klomp from LVMH to learn about animal welfare, environmental and sustainability issues.

The head of sustainability from world leader in luxury LVMH – which owns high profile fashion brands including Louis Vuitton, Dior, Lora Piana and Givenchy – recently visited Australia to meet woolgrowers and learn more about practices to combat flystrike.

Headquartered in Paris, luxury goods group Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH) is a world leader in luxury.

Its fashion business includes many famous luxury brands including Louis Vuitton, Dior, Givenchy, Céline, Marc Jacobs, Fendi, and Lora Piana which is particularly well known for its use of wool. In addition to its fashion business, LVMH is also strong in perfumes and cosmetics, wine and spirits and watches and jewellery.

The company has 4,374 stores across the world and 145,000 employees. It had a revenue in 2017 equivalent to about A\$25 billion from its fashion business alone, a growth of more than 20% from 2016.

Global apparel businesses are increasingly focused on sustainability and traceability, covering a wide range of issues, such as the environment, labour conditions, animal welfare, product safety and life cycle assessment.

These companies are paying closer attention to the raw ingredients and processes required at every step of their supply chains, to make sure they are responsible and sustainable.

For wool, the spotlight largely focuses on animal welfare, but also the environment and life cycle analysis.

Each year, Peta Slack-Smith, AWI's General Manager of Corporate Affairs and Market Access leads a delegation (including a woolgrower and a researcher) to meet with key brands and retailers, retail associations, welfare groups and NGOs to discuss a range

of sustainability issues, with a strong focus on animal welfare.

In June, LVMH representatives travelled from France to visit a number of farms in the New England region of NSW to learn more about animal welfare and practices to combat flystrike ('Congi' T.A. Field Estates Pty Ltd, Woolbrook; 'Nerstane', Woolbrook; 'Gostwyk', Uralla; and CSIRO Armidale). Alexandre Capelli leads the sustainability work across all LVMH brands, and Cathelijne Klomp works across all LVMH brands advising on raw materials and their supply chains.

"Our target is to implement environmental and sustainable practices in our wool supply chain," said Alexandre. "But to do that, it's very important to be able to go in the field and understand what the practices on farms really are – and that's why we were here.

"Consumers are asking more and more for traceability and transparency. They are asking more and more for animal welfare. It's definitely a trend that I don't think is going away."

Cathelijne said that, although they tried to come without any preconceptions, prior to the trip they had thought that mulesing might not be a technique beneficial to animal welfare. But their trip showed the issue is not as clear-cut as they had thought.

"After visiting the three farmers, who each had different practices, we now understand that the animals' best welfare is the objective of all the farmers, whether they are mulesing or not mulesing. They all have different justifications for their choice of practice,

and they are all valuable and good reasons. Taking care of the animals is something that we really saw during our visits," Cathelijne said.

Alexandre said he found the visit very insightful because they "saw that mulesing is not a black and white issue, there were a lot of grey shades", but he thinks that if woolgrowers do mules then they should do so with pain relief.

"We have more and more demanding requirements about animal welfare and, while I understand that mulesing might be useful in certain locations of Australia, it should be done with pain relief and anaesthesia."

Cathelijne noted that although learning about animal welfare was the main reason for their visit, LVMH tries to focus on all sustainability topics, including environmental and social issues, and the livelihood of farmers.

"We understand that there is another dimension that is highly important to us, which is the welfare not only of the animal but also of the farmer him or herself, especially given the situation at the moment in Australia with many areas affected by drought," Cathelijne added. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

Hear more from Alexandre and Cathelijne in the second half of Episode 46 of The Yarn podcast, available at www.wool.com/podcast.



MAKING THE TRANSITION TO A CEASED MULESING FLOCK

Deborah Maxwell writes:

Breech strike is a killer – not just of sheep, but also profits. So preventing breech strike with mulesing was best practice for our property's sheep and bank balance, just as it has been for decades in many other Merino enterprises.

As flock owners, our days are filled with prevention or early treatment of diseases. Mulesing is one such prevention.

But the world has challenged us to look again.

When my husband and I took up that challenge to prevent breech strike without mulesing our lambs in the high summer rainfall New England region, first and foremost in our minds was "How many might become struck and will we be able to deal with it?"

We did successfully stop mulesing our superfine Merinos nearly 10 years ago, but no year has been the same and we are still learning and fine-tuning our management.

Don't expect to get it exactly right the first time, and be prepared and flexible to change with different seasons.

While a written plan is ideal, you can start right now by reading the 10 steps to the right and reflecting on the questions and points under each one.

Importantly, if you have family and staff involved in your sheep management, include them too – just start the discussion at smoko with, "How about we plan to stop mulesing?" then keep talking and take it one step at a time.

Don't just stop mulesing! You might spend the next year thinking about and discussing the points to the right and some flocks might need a concerted breeding effort to make them less susceptible before stopping.

Another great reference is the 2018 report by AWI's Geoff Lindon, *Planning to move to a non mulesed Merino enterprise*, (see opposite page) which outlines the key learnings from woolgrowers who have moved to a non-mulesed enterprise – real stories from real people who have taken the plunge.

Finally, FlyBoss (www.flyboss.com.au) has a wealth of information and tools to help you on this journey.

MORE INFORMATION
www.flyboss.com.au

ParaBoss Executive Officer and Merino sheep breeder Deborah Maxwell has ceased mulesing on her property at Guyra in the high summer rainfall New England region. In this article, she outlines 10 steps of transitioning to a ceased-mulesing flock and identifies some of the key questions and points for each step.

1. IDENTIFY THE FLYSTRIKE RISK PERIODS ON YOUR PROPERTY

- When is my seasonal flystrike risk?
- How does my shearing time affect risk?
- Can my shearing time be optimised, considering: wool production goals, shearer availability, wool length at lambing and joining, minimising flystrike risk, grass seed, dags risk and season?

Use the FlyBoss Compare Management Tool ([at www.flybosstools.org.au](http://www.flybosstools.org.au)) to assess your flystrike risk.

2. ASSESS THE FLYSTRIKE SUSCEPTIBILITY OF YOUR CURRENT SHEEP

- What is my current rate of flystrike?
- How and when would that change without mulesing, crutching or chemicals?
- What traits do I need to change about my sheep? eg fleece rot, breech wrinkle, dag, breech cover, wool type, wool colour, conformation, urine stain, polls/horns.
- Would I improve them through breeding, management or both?

Refer to FlyBoss Breeding and Selection pages (www.flyboss.com.au/breeding-and-selection) to assess your flock.

3. IDENTIFY YOUR NEW IDEAL SHEEP AND HAVE THE CONVICTION TO BREED THEM

- Which traits do I need to focus on?
- What will make the biggest, fastest gain, what's next?
- How much change is required?
- Where can I get the information?
 - Wether trials
 - MERINOSELECT (www.sheepgenetics.org.au)
 - Merino Superior Sires (www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au)
 - RamSelect (www.ramselect.com.au)

- Merino field days, shows and sales
- Advisors
- By asking those already not mulesing and with low rates of flystrike

- How will I make the move? How might I break long-established relationships and build new ones with ram breeders?

Refer to FlyBoss Breeding and Selection pages (www.flyboss.com.au/breeding-and-selection) to see what is achievable.

4. IDENTIFY NEW OR MODIFIED PRACTICES THAT COULD BE USED

- Which traits will need to be better managed?
- What are the management options for them?
- How do those options fit with my whole business? Consider labour, facilities and equipment, cost, skills.
- How might I have to do them differently to now? Consider method and timing.
- What's my new management shortlist?

Use the FlyBoss Tools (www.flybosstools.org.au) to see how management changes on your property will affect your flock's flystrike risk and also optimise your treatment times.

5. REVIEW WHETHER YOU AND YOUR TEAM HAVE WHAT IT TAKES

- Am I part of my team?
- Do I share the goal and the journey?
- How can I inspire then?
- Do we really know how and when, not just what to do?
- Do we have the know-how, equipment, time and determination?
- What are the attitudes of our shearers?

Consider joining a producer group (www.wool.com/networks) or attending training.

6. LEARN WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED

- Am I set in my ways or open-minded, and will I accept critique, ideas, new or alternative ways, and help?
- Where do I learn more? Consider new information sources and training options.
- Do I know what's needed based on risk and impact? Plan even for low risk events if they are high impact.

FlyBoss (www.flyboss.com.au) has a wealth of information on flystrike prevention and management.

7. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH SUPPORT

- Who's on the money? Find the performers: whether they be experts, advisers or other producers.
- Sign up, logon, watch, listen and ask.
- Assess those in your business or providing services to you on what they achieve, rather than what they say.

8. BE PREPARED AND FLEXIBLE

- "Expect the best, plan for the worst, and prepare to be surprised."
- What could go wrong and how likely is that? Know all your options, even for the less likely problems.
- Am I ready? Have know-how, staff, equipment and products on hand or quickly available for the likely issues – and not too far away for less likely problems.
- Can I handle a change of plan? Being prepared for changes makes for less stress and a better outcome.

9. TAKE THE PLUNGE, BUT KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL

- Are you putting off the change? Recognise procrastination.
- Don't be paralysed by a need for perfection.
- If you have gone through the earlier steps: stop planning, start doing: 100% success is never assured.
- But don't relax just yet: Keep an eye on the ball because flystrike happens quickly.
- Information and planning reduces risk and anxiety.

10. REVIEW, IMPROVE AND REJOICE

- Are you asking why and how? Ask "why did that happen, how can we do it better?"
- Are you prepared to do it differently next time?
- Do you celebrate and enjoy the small wins as well as the large?



2008 drop



2013 drop

Unmulshed hogget rams from the same non mulshed superfine/fine flock. If you need to select from mulshed rams, neck wrinkle is a good indicator for breech wrinkle.

PLANNING TO MOVE TO A NON MULESED MERINO ENTERPRISE

A new AWI report that is intended to assist woolgrowers in planning to move to a non mulshed Merino enterprise is available in hard copy and online.



The 16-page report outlines the key learnings from a number of woolgrowing enterprises, from a diverse range of environments and Merino types, that have moved to a non mulshed enterprise.

While mulshed has been shown to reduce breech strike by 90%, in 2016/17 7% of the Australian Merino clip (less than 24.5 microns) was declared as non mulshed through AWEX's National Wool Declaration. Moving to a non mulshed enterprise isn't easy, however there is a trend to non mulshed wool. Key learnings to keep in mind from these businesses when considering a move to a non mulshed Merino enterprise include:

- It is important to have a detailed plan in place that has the support of everyone in your business – including staff, contractors, shearers, livestock agents and ram suppliers.
- The business needs to be brave, organised and determined to make it work in the early years.
- Moving to a non mulshed enterprise often requires fundamental change to the whole business. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

The manual is available at www.wool.com/flystrikelatest or request a free hard copy version from the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.

Weight gain at the touch of a finger.



Touch screen Weigh Scales

- Simple to operate touch screen Weigh Scales
- Collect data to optimise animal performance



TW-1



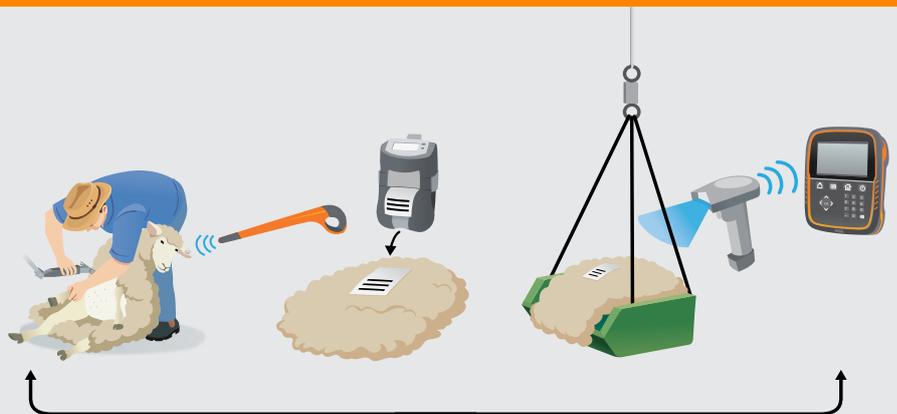
TW-3



TWR-5

Track individual animal fleece performance such as micron, staple strength, or greasy fleece weight in the shed. Make management decisions based on individual and accurate animal data collected over a life time.

For more information on our full range of Weighing and EID Systems, contact Gallagher on 1800 425 524.



For many years laparoscopic AI using frozen semen has produced highly variable results. The good results have been OK, but the bad results have often been very bad and producers have been walking away from the technology. Investigations to date have been unable to explain the large variation in conception rates between sites but have pointed to several likely causes and possible remedies.

New AWI-funded research aims to address several of these issues by developing new treatment protocol(s) that are able to consistently produce improved levels of synchrony of oestrus. It is anticipated that this new treatment protocol will replace the existing standard treatment protocol that has remained largely unchanged since the 1970s.

By examining the effects of body condition scores, feed intakes and progesterone concentrations on synchrony of oestrus, the project also aims to develop improved management strategies for AI programs.

The AWI-funded research, which is due to run until the middle of next year, is being carried out through the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) by Dr Simon Walker, Dr Dave Kleemann and Dr Jen Kelly.

Semen quality has often been blamed for the variable success rates of AI programs. However, while semen quality is one of a number of factors that need to be optimised, Dr Walker says it is highly unlikely to be a major reason for the poor results.

"Substantial research into semen quality has been conducted over the past 30-40 years and AI results today are no better than they were back then – in fact, they are probable worse," he said. "When it takes up to 4-5 days for all sheep in a flock to come into oestrus, as can occur, semen quality loses a lot of its relevance – sperm simply don't survive that long after insemination."

REASSESSING THE CURRENT SYNCHRONISATION PROTOCOL

Dr Walker says the current synchronisation protocol (CIDR for 14 days followed by PMSG), which has long been presumed by the sheep industry to routinely produce a good synchrony, needs reassessment.

"This dogma reaches far and wide within the industry. The reality is much different – there are good, average and bad synchronies across flocks with matching pregnancy rates. A good rule of thumb is 'a good synchrony produces a good result'. One of the challenges of this project is to identify the reasons for this variability and to develop protocols that are more reliable."

Dr Kleeman says that ewe nutrition is a factor that potentially influences synchrony of oestrus.

"However, we are betting that it is the effect of long term rather than short term nutrition that is important," he said. "Of particular interest is the ability of the ewe to recover body condition

IMPROVING THE SUCCESS OF SHEEP AI PROGRAMS

An AWI-funded research project aims to improve the success rates and reliability of artificial insemination (AI) programs.



Researchers **Dr Simon Walker** and **Dr Dave Kleemann** at the SA Merino Sire Evaluation Trial field day in June at Keyneton Station, at which they spoke to attendees about the AWI-funded project. PHOTO: Stock Journal

following the previous lambing/lactation. If there is substance in this notion, it would indicate that flocks in the more marginal areas of the country might experience greater variable in their AI results. We'll be looking at various aspects of this topic utilising ewes that lambed in autumn."

Dr Kleeman says sheep have changed substantially during the fifty or so years since the development of the original protocol, so it is possible that body size is another factor influencing the ability to synchronise sheep.

"Ewes are substantially bigger, perhaps fatter and many are dual purpose in nature," he said. "These changes raise issues such as dose rates of the treatment hormones and the effects that selection for growth rate might have on components of reproduction including the ability to synchronise oestrus."

EARLY RESULTS ARE ENCOURAGING

A large part of the study involves examination of the ovary during the period

of hormone treatment and to determine what happens after the CIDR is removed.

"These observations are being done using ultrasound and the thousands of images so far collected show that, at the time of CIDR removal, there is a lot of different activity on the surface of the ovary – for example some have lots of follicles, others have few follicles, some follicles are growing whilst others are regressing," Dr Walker said.

"We are correlating these differences with time of onset of oestrus to determine if there is a 'preferred' ovarian status at the time of CIDR removal. This information will provide a sound basis for the development of new protocols – we have already been able to shift the pattern of synchrony by up to 12 hours and this adds to our confidence that new protocols will be developed."

Once the research is complete, the outcomes will be reported through field days, seminars and updates to commercial companies. An extension package including a best practice manual will also be produced for veterinarians and sheep breeders to help adoption of the technical advances. E

YOUR CHANCE TO GET INVOLVED IN THE 2018 NATIONAL LAPAROSCOPIC AI SURVEY

As part of the project, a national survey of AI results/programs is being conducted by the SA Stud Merino Breeders Association (Merino SA) to help not only measure success rates, but also identify problems within regional areas and to identify flocks (those with good and bad results) that might help in the development of new strategies to improve success rates.

If you are a sheep breeder in Australia who has used laparoscopic AI in recent years, you are encouraged to complete the survey, available on the Merino SA website at www.merinos.com.au

For further information about the survey, contact Merino SA committee member Ian Rowett on 0418 486 050 or ian@mernowepollmerinos.com

MERINO LIFETIME

PROJECT UPDATE

FAST FACTS

- The AWI-funded Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project is a \$7 million (plus \$5 million from partners), 10-year partnership between AWI, the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA), nominating stud Merino breeders and site hosts.
- The project aims to better understand how current selection approaches relate to lifetime performance and to learn more about the genetics and economic interactions, across a diverse range of Merino types delivering high quality wool, lambs and meat through life.
- The MLP project runs at five sites where sire evaluation trials operate for the first two years and then continue to track the performance of ewe progeny as they proceed through four to five joinings and annual shearings.
- A full suite of independent visual classing and productivity traits will be assessed annually.



During July and August, the Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) sites at Macquarie (Trangie, NSW) and the New England (Armidale, NSW) hosted their first project field days.

On display at the Macquarie and New England field days were the F1 ewe progeny from 15 different sires joined at each site. These sires were selected to offer a range in performance (good and bad) and type to better understand the genetics of Merino ewe lifetime productivity.

In total 170 people attended these two days, which for many offered a welcome distraction from the prevailing drought conditions.

MACQUARIE SITE FIELD DAY

Dr Kathryn Egerton Warburton, the site manager of the NSW DPI-hosted Macquarie site, described the extremely tough seasonal conditions currently being faced by the site, along with the unique ewe base featured at Macquarie.

“The site had a particular interest in looking at the role that skin type might play in lifetime productivity. Foundation ewes were sourced from two bloodlines, Centre Plus and Towalba, to allow this to be explored further. These ewes were artificially inseminated for two years in order to generate the F1 ewe progeny that will be the focus of the project,” outlined Kathryn.

Using ‘linked’ sires across sites allows different foundation ewe bases to be taken into account between sites.

The Macquarie field day presentations also included an overview of the different

classing approaches undertaken as part of the project. Chris Bowman, who carried out the professional classing, described the process.

“Ewes are classed to the site’s breeding objective as a single mob five-ways. We are also trialling classing four ways within each sire group to the ram entrant’s own breeding objective rather than the MLP site’s breeding objective. It will be interesting to see how these two approaches line up,” Chris said.

“The classers are not provided with the sire details of each group, so it’s a completely blind and independent class.

“A couple of people were asking me why I had left some obvious culls in the pens. It’s important to remember that all ewes are retained in the project regardless of their classing allocation.”

NEW ENGLAND SITE FIELD DAY

At the CSIRO hosted-New England field day, MLP project manager Anne Ramsay described the background to retaining all the sheep in the project.

“One of the unique features of the MLP project that sets it apart from research undertaken in the past is that ewes only leave the project if there is a welfare need,” Anne said.

“Ewes deemed a cull either through classing, index selection or a combination of selection approaches, are retained and their performance followed through life. These ewes will enable us to answer questions around the best time to make culling decisions, and to possibly quantify the impact of traits like poor conformation and wool quality on productivity.”

A range of speakers at the New England field day outlined work that is adding value to the core project. These ‘add on’ projects are co-funded by AWI, and include work that is being undertaken by CSIRO’s Dr Brad Hine and Dr Jen Smith who will use the MLP F1 wethers to explore the impact of innate resilience on health, welfare and productivity.

“We have developed methods to assess resilience in sheep and now want to quantify the benefits of improving resilience in a commercial situation,” Brad said.



Professional classer **Chris Bowman** at the **Macquarie** field day. PHOTO: Emma Grabham

PRODUCTIVITY

“There are lots of factors that contribute to an animal’s resilience. Immune competence, or the capacity of an animal’s immune system to fight disease, is one such factor we will be assessing. We will also look at their temperament and ability to cope with stress, such as that induced by standard management practices.”

The F1 New England wethers will have annual assessments detailing their health records, coupled with annual visual assessment and measurement of wool, carcase and growth. After three years of data has been collected a full economic analysis will be undertaken to estimate the value of incorporating resilience into breeding and selection programs.

CSIRO was fortunate to attract further AWI funding to allow lambs to be tagged at birth and additional records to be captured. The New England’s site manager Dr Jen Smith described how the information collected by the project will help to explore the relationships between fitness, productivity and longevity.

“We are collecting comprehensive birth records and noting any incidence of compromises to fitness at birth, and throughout life such as injury, illness and mortality (when and why). We hope to share our early results at next year’s field day,” outlined Jen.

It takes a small army to plan and run the site field days, and AMSEA and AWI would like to thank and acknowledge the site committees, site hosts (NSW DPI and CSIRO) plus sponsors of the Macquarie and New England sites for their efforts above and beyond to make the field days come together.

Finally, the MLP project team is often asked what has been learnt since the project commenced in 2015. As much as we would like to make some early observations, the aim of the project is to evaluate ewes for life and to understand the drivers, economics and genetics of ewe lifetime productivity. For many traits that are lowly heritable, such as reproduction, it’s really important that we have repeat records to ensure the validity of results and be confident in any information we generate.

So hang tight, as soon as the results are robust we’ll be sure to share the information! In the meantime, the MLP and standard sire evaluation reports are available on www.wool.com/MLP or come to a site field day. 



The crowd at the **Macquarie** field day. PHOTO: Emma Grabham



AMSEA executive officer **Ben Swain** undertaking pen side sire introductions at the **New England** field day.



Some of the **New England** site committee who attended the field day: **Martin Oppenheimer, Jen Smith, Andrew Swan, Katrina Blomfield, Jock McLaren, Peta Bradley, Hugh Nivison, Duncan Lance and Kim Barnett.**

MORE INFORMATION
www.wool.com/MLP

ELMORE FIELD

Detailed analysis of the Elmore Field Day results has revealed that dual purpose Merinos were not only the most profitable prime lamb dam during the trial, but would have been the most profitable across the three market eras spanning the 24 years between 1994 and 2018. This highlights the resilience and versatility of the dual purpose Merino under a range of market conditions and provides a valuable insight for prime lamb producers seeking to maximise their profitability.

FAST FACTS

- The Elmore Field Days trial 'Ewes for the Future: Lambs, Wool and Profit' compared five breeds of ewes for their lifetime production of meat and wool.
- The main characteristics measured were lambing percentage, lamb growth and wool production.
- The trial results indicated that dual purpose Merinos delivered higher gross margins per hectare when stocked at the same DSE per hectare than the composites or 1st cross ewes in the trial.
- Further analysis of the trial results demonstrated the value of dual purpose Merinos not only during the trial, but across three distinctly different markets for wool and lamb during the 24 year period from 1994 to 2018.

A RECAP ON THE TRIAL

The Elmore Field Days trial 'Ewes for the Future – Lambs, Wool & Profit' compared the merit of five breed types of ewes joined to terminal sires for six years. The ewe genotypes were the Border Leicester x Merino, local Loddon Valley Merinos from northern Victoria (studs represented East Loddon, Panorama and Willera), Merino Central West NSW (Centre Plus), the Dohne Merino and the South African Meat Merino (SAMM). The ewes were run together as one mob except at lambing. All ewes were bred in clients' commercial flocks.

ELMORE FIELD DAYS TRIAL RESULTS

The results showed that lambing percentages, lamb growth, wool and easy care characters are all highly relevant to improving profitability, but no single ewe type excelled in all areas. Once lambing percentage, lamb growth and wool production were considered, dual purpose Merinos were the most profitable alternative in the Elmore trial environment. The main results and estimated returns are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Production data for the five adult years from 2010 to 2014. Results cover (i) ewe weight, (ii) wool production, (iii) lambing percentage details, (iv) lamb weight and (v) skin wrinkle.

Breed group	Border Leicester x Merino	Merino, Loddon Valley	Merino, Central West NSW	Dohne	SAMM	Least significant difference
Ewe weight at joining (kg)	79.6	63.6	70.7	70.6	79.7	8.1
Clean fleece weight (kg)	3.9	4.8	4.1	3.5	2.6	0.4
Fibre diameter mean (µm)	30.3	20.9	19.0	20.8	24.4	1.3
Fetuses scanned per ewe joined	158%	129%	148%	126%	161%	18%
Lambs born per ewe joined	150%	116%	138%	120%	156%	9%
Lambs marked per ewe joined	132%	96%	116%	96%	132%	6%
Lamb weight in spring (kg)	47.7	44.3	46.1	46.3	48.5	0.5
Wrinkle, neck & body (score 1-5)	1.2	2.5	2.3	1.6	1.1	0.2

Table 2: Average yearly income per ewe from lamb and wool production during the Elmore Field Day trial with the average DSE estimate per ewe-lambs unit*

Breed group	Border Leicester x Merino	Merino, Loddon Valley	Merino, Central West NSW	Dohne	SAMM
Lamb returns, \$/ewe	\$155	\$102	\$130	\$109	\$157
Wool returns, \$/ewe	\$20	\$53	\$50	\$39	\$23
Total returns, \$/ewe	\$175	\$155	\$180	\$148	\$180
DSE rating per ewe-lambs unit	3.07	2.21	2.62	2.42	3.06
Total returns, \$/DSE	\$57	\$70	\$69	\$61	\$59

*The wool and lamb income per ewe were calculated each year using average prices over the 12 months in 2017 and are rounded to the nearest \$. Lamb income per ewe was calculated from lambing percentage, lamb liveweight, dressing percentage and skin value. Wool income reflected clean fleece weight and fibre diameter differences.

DAYS

MERINO DAM PROVES ITS WORTH

EXTENDING THESE RESULTS

While the trial generated valuable information about the wool and meat income per head for each ewe type, this did not provide gross margins per DSE or per hectare. Further analysis of the Elmore Field Days trial was conducted using GrassGro to generate this gross margin information and extend the results across three distinct market scenarios experienced during the 24 years between 1994 and 2018.

The market scenarios considered were:

- 1994-95 to 2001-02 which was characterised by **low lamb prices**
- 2002-03 to 2009-10 which was a period of **drought**
- 2010-11 to 2017-18 being **recent years** with more contemporary prices.

GrassGro is a computer simulation program that draws upon decades of field experimentation from across Australia to model interacting processes of pasture growth and animal production. Livestock details for the five ewe enterprises considered in the Elmore Field Days trial were inputted into GrassGro along with management scenarios, costs and prices, to generate gross margins for the three distinct market environments experienced between 1994 and 2018.

The results show that the Merino dams (Centre Plus and Loddon Valley Merinos), followed by Dohnes, had the highest gross margins per hectare across the all market conditions when ewes were stocked at the same DSE per hectare.

This project was funded and conducted by the Elmore Field Days Inc together with The Campaspe Prime Lamb Producers Group with professional help from three organisations and six product support sponsors. AWI provided funds for statistical and economic analyses. B

MORE INFORMATION

Full details are on the Elmore Field Days website www.elmorefielddays.com.au/about/ewe-productivity-trials

- The economics study report, 33 pages
- A YouTube link to the presentation at the Victorian BestWool / BestLamb conference
- The 12 page summary report contains the key findings.
- A 52 page report gives the full details.



The trial is run by the Elmore Field Days in cooperation with the Campaspe Lamb Producers Group, pictured at lamb marking. Left to right: **Pat Johnston, Roger Kemp, David Lees, Peter Safstrom, Erica Schelfhorst, Frank Oliver, Max Williams, Bill Johnston, Glen Rathjen, Rod Fiedler, Ged McCormick, Kieran Ransom and Rob Williamson.**

Table 3: Gross Margin \$/Ha when the Elmore Field Day trial results are extended over three distinctly different markets

	1994-95 to 2001-02	Rank	2002-03 to 2009-10	Rank	2010-11 to 2017-18	Rank
Merino, Central West NSW	\$298	1	\$191	1	\$418	1
Loddon Merino	\$242	2	\$160	2	\$400	2
Dohne	\$219	3	\$135	5	\$378	3
SAMM	\$200	5	\$154	3	\$372	4
Super Borders x Merino	\$211	4	\$148	4	\$352	5
Ave\$/Ha	\$234		\$158		\$384	



Shearing was at the Elmore Field Days in early October each year.



Ewes penned for **regular husbandry.**

DROUGHT RESOURCES

For woolgrowers going into, enduring or recovering from drought, AWI provides a range of drought planning and management resources, plus links to useful external resources. View a list of some of the available resources here or visit www.wool.com/droughtresources for further information.

AWI DROUGHT RESOURCES



MANAGING SHEEP IN DROUGHTLOTS

A best-practice guide that highlights the purpose, benefits and experiences of woolgrowers managing sheep in confined areas during drought.

STOCK WATER - A LIMITED RESOURCE

A fact sheet that helps calculate stock water budgets, especially when droughtlotting sheep.

LIFETIME WOOL FEED BUDGET TABLES

Feed budgeting for ewe flocks in the dry season.

FEEDING AND MANAGING SHEEP IN DRY TIMES

This publication provides producers with practical guidelines and examples on feeding and managing sheep during dry seasons and

drought years. While it focuses on dry times and confinement feeding systems, it also has useful information on getting through the normal summer/autumn feed gap period.

MANAGING FODDER PRICES FOR DROUGHTS

A guide to strategies that help manage fodder prices and supply risks during droughts.

WHICH SHEEP DO I KEEP?

A guide to help determine whether to sell or supplementary-feed all, some or none of the flock.

DROUGHT FEEDING AND MANAGEMENT OF SHEEP

This booklet is a practical guide on sheep feeding and management during a drought to help producers break down into manageable steps the daunting planning phase, and see the plan realised as a successful way of combating the drought.

PLANNING FOR PROFIT

A practical guide offering a series of step-by-step, cost-effective breeding and pasture management options for producers to consider post drought.

All these publications are available at www.wool.com/droughtresources.

DROUGHT RESOURCES ON GOVERNMENT WEBSITES



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES

www.agriculture.gov.au/drought

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought

NSW DPI

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/droughthub

QUEENSLAND DAF

www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/environment/drought

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought

WA DPIRD

www.agric.wa.gov.au/climate-land-water/climate-weather/drought-and-dry-seasons

AWI STATE NETWORK WEBINAR RECORDINGS



SHEEP CONNECT NSW

www.sheepconnectnsw.com.au/tools

- Confinement feeding of sheep
- Managing livestock nutrition in dry times and beyond
- Early weaning - tips for a successful early weaning exercise
- Pastoral livestock nutrition for dry times
- What's your plan? - preparedness for dry times
- Funny feeds
- Taking the guess work out of feeding or selling sheep during drought

LEADING SHEEP (QLD)

www.leadingssheep.com.au/category/recordedwebinars-videos/

- How to have a successful lambing in dry conditions:
 - Part 1 Nutrient demand
 - Part 2 Practical and social considerations
 - Part 3 Supplementation strategies
- Drought feeding to minimise ewe and lamb losses – a producer case study

BEYONDBLUE

AMBASSADOR JOHN SUDHOLZ

Former VFL footballer John Sudholz is a farmer and an ambassador for *beyondblue*.

John started to be affected by depression during the drought of 1982. Now much improved, John encourages other farmers to get serious about looking after themselves.

John made his debut playing for South Melbourne in 1966 and was the club's leading goalkicker for four consecutive seasons. After making the finals in 1970, John made the decision to return to his family's farm in Rupanyup, Victoria in 1971.

John started to 'feel the pinch' in the early 1980s, particularly during the drought of 1982.

"I wasn't sleeping, I felt uptight, I was crabby with my children and my wife. I felt resentful towards the community who were always asking me to do things and I couldn't say no. I would get all uptight about minor issues, making it feel like they were major issues when they weren't."

In 1988, John was hospitalised as he felt completely broken down and had no confidence. It was a long journey home after treatment. John's mental health issues cost him his first marriage. He believes the people closest to someone with a mental health issue get hurt the most.



He was nervous about returning to his community. Even a trip to the main street was a big effort because he was worried about what people would think of him.

But it wasn't long before one of the locals wandered up to welcome him home. It was a simple gesture which made all the difference.

"I'm sitting there in the passenger seat, beside the supermarket actually, and he walked up to me and he just said 'Good day, jumbo'. He said, 'It's good to see you back in town'. I've never forgotten that."

John has continued his involvement in sports although has slowed pace a little.

As a *beyondblue* ambassador, John encourages other farmers to get serious about looking after themselves.



beyondblue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to reduce the impact of anxiety, depression and suicide in Australia. *beyondblue* provides information and support to help everyone achieve their best possible mental health, regardless of age, background and wherever they live.

Mental health professionals are available 24/7 at the *beyondblue* Support Service – 1300 22 4636 – or via beyondblue.org.au for online chat (3pm-12am ADST) or email.

"Groups like *beyondblue* and Lifeline have made help far more accessible for rural people.

"Everyone in this world has two or three mates who are true mates and will do anything for them. They will sit and talk and listen to your point of view. When you are feeling the pinch, you need to go and talk to these mates.

"It's vital that we all get serious about looking after ourselves both mentally and physically."

B

ACTION
"The Big Shed People"

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QUICK QUOTE



**Specialists
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Farm Sheds**

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- Machinery sheds
- Shearing sheds
- Workshops
- Yard covers

TECHNOLOGIES

TO SHAPE YOUR FARMING FUTURE

Three workshops with woolgrowers were held across Australia in June to help identify opportunities for AWI to support the development and adoption of technology in the wool industry.

Technology is rapidly changing many areas of agriculture – and AWI aims to ensure Australian woolgrowers are on the front foot to take advantage of the latest opportunities.

AWI recently commissioned a series of workshops to hear from woolgrowers about the problems they want to solve with emerging and currently available technologies. The objective was to understand woolgrower perceptions of currently available technologies, as well as identify opportunities and challenges for enhanced AWI support of innovation and technology development and adoption.

There were 71 wool industry participants at the workshops – in Dubbo (NSW), Dunkeld (Victoria) and Katanning (WA) – facilitated by two experienced campaigners in this area: Sarah Nolet from AgThentic and Mark Ferguson from neXtgen Agri.

“Feedback from the workshops showed that woolgrowers are really interested in technology, especially for solutions that exist now,” Sarah said. “There was strong interest in receiving support for implementing and integrating current technologies better, and in learning about new technologies that could be implemented immediately.”

Six examples of new technologies discussed during the workshop were sensors, big data, artificial intelligence (see opposite page), robotics (see page 68), gene editing (see page 49), and virtual and augmented reality (see page 35).

WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH AGTECH STARTUPS

A key learning of the workshops was that, while current woolgrower interaction with agtech startups is limited/minimal, the majority of participants said they would be interested in working with entrepreneurs to help them solve problems that are relevant to the wool industry, such as by providing tips to increase adoption or pitfalls to avoid.

A large majority of participants said they

would even be willing to invest their own money (in a modest way, less than \$20,000) in agtech startup companies working on relevant problems.

There was overwhelming support in favour of making awareness of, and opportunities for interaction with, the startup ecosystem more widely available to woolgrowers.

“One of the first agtech startups in the world that we discussed at the workshops is called Observant (<https://observant.net>), which comes from Australia,” Sarah said. “Established in 2003, the company provides technology solutions such as irrigation automation, monitoring, and alerting; crop condition reporting; cameras that monitor livestock water points, pump stations and sheds, and remote facilities; and technology that checks on the status of electric fences and alerts producers alerts when the fence voltage drops or the system detects any failures.”

At each workshop, the woolgrowers were taken through an interactive exercise where they first identified areas where they commonly experience problems. The top five, in order of frequency, were:

1. Labour intensive systems, particularly: feeding, poor availability of labour, and wool handlers
2. Shearing
3. Connectivity, phone, internet coverage, etc.
4. Sheep data collection, accuracy and integrity (lack of automation), mainly: live weight, condition scoring, and reproduction
5. Monitoring and management of sheep welfare, especially during lambing

“The key motivation that underpinned the woolgrowers’ problem areas was: how can technologies help us to do what we already do now, but make it easier and cheaper without our intervention?” Mark said.

“So how would I condition score all my ewes without me having to have someone in the



More than 30 woolgrowers in Dunkeld discussing tech opportunities for the wool industry.

paddock doing that? How would I check my water points without sending something out there? How would I shift sheep from paddock to paddock without my intervention?

“The real interest was how they would automate some of the processes, and how they could use these technologies without actually creating more work for themselves.”

USING TECH TO BRIDGE THE URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE

Sarah said that another common discussion point during the workshops was that the woolgrowers wanted to connect much more closely with the end-consumers of their products.

This was perceived as having value from both the woolgrower knowing more about what happens once the wool leaves the farm, as well as providing an opportunity for the woolgrower to tell their authentic farming story to the end-consumer.

“With technology such as websites and social media, producers are now able to talk about their farm and connect with consumers in a way that’s never happened before,” Sarah explained. “I think that kind of bridging the urban-rural divide is a really positive benefit of technology.”

Mark said that the accelerating pace of digital technology means that there are many potential opportunities for the sheep and wool industry.

“For the first time we’re seeing a lot of the technologies that used to look like they were miles away that are now near enough to our industry that we can actually see a purpose for them,” he said.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE R&D TO AID SELECTION

A new AWI-funded study is examining whether artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are able to automatically identify in young sheep several of the phenotypical traits that predict their lifetime performance – a solution that would help woolgrowers in their selection and productivity management decisions.

The project's objective is to provide proof of concept that the technology works and could potentially be adapted for commercial sheep farming systems.

The premise on which the project is based is that it's possible to use repeat digital photographs of several different views of a sheep in conjunction with an AI algorithm to determine bodyweight, body wrinkle, neck wrinkle, face cover and identify individual sheep.

"The project team has designed and constructed an initial prototype of a staging rig in which sheep stand for the photographs that feed into the algorithm. The dimensions of the rig are based on weigh crates routinely used to weigh sheep," said lead researcher Dr Mark Ferguson of neXtgen Agri.

"The design has fixed cameras placed above

the sheep, to the side of the sheep and in front of the sheep to collect high resolution images. The system will have the capacity to link the images to sheep EID and have the ability to extract meaningful information from the digital images and allow differentiation of the traits under investigation. The current prototype takes three images per second.

"The project team has already written software to control the camera and allow the sheep EID and image number to be automatically archived awaiting further analysis through the machine learning process."

Following the completion of the proof of concept stage next year, a recommendation regarding further R&D investment in the technology will be provided by the researchers to AWI.



Image of the **initial prototype staging rig** in which the sheep can be photographed from several angles. The digital images are then analysed by an artificial intelligence system to identify phenotypical traits in the sheep to assist in productivity management.

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SUBTERRANEAN CLOVER RED LEAF SYNDROME



An infected subterranean clover plant with red leaves. Note the reddening is from the leaf margins inwards.

Detailed guidance to help livestock producers manage the impacts of subterranean clover Red Leaf syndrome has been released, following recent outbreaks of the syndrome and associated pasture loss in Western Australia.

FAST FACTS

- Research into subterranean clover Red Leaf syndrome has determined the main cause of the syndrome as Soybean Dwarf Virus (SbDV), which is spread by aphids.
- To combat the risk and spread of SbDV, producers are encouraged to use a variety of control measures, including:
- Use of insecticides only when the risk of early infection is high
- Implementation of annual ryegrass or forage oats into pasture regimes, as grasses do not host SbDV
- Consider sowing alternative legume species, such as Serradella, which do not appear to be affected by SbDV.
- Producers are encouraged to read a new fact sheet available at www.wool.com/weeds.

The new fact sheet (available at www.wool.com/weeds) provides producers with a clear plan of attack if they are impacted or suspect there is Red Leaf syndrome in their clover pasture.

Based on new research prompted by outbreaks in 2017, the fact sheet was produced by AWI in conjunction with Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), the University of Western Australia (UWA) and the WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

AWI Project Manager – Production Systems & Wool Credentials, Melissa McAulay, said that the effective collaboration between the

research and development corporations and researchers was key to finding the cause of the syndrome and delivering answers and management strategies to producers.

“By convening an expert panel of agronomists, researchers and producers, we have been able to identify the main cause of the syndrome as Soybean Dwarf Virus (SbDV). The research revealed that of the subterranean clover plants tested, 80% with obvious red leaves were infected with SbDV, compared to just 2% without obvious symptoms.”

Given current understanding and testing of samples, researchers believe that SbDV is the most likely cause of the red leaf syndrome but it is likely that a number of other contributing stress factors are involved.

SbDV is spread by aphids and frequently infects subterranean clover. Symptoms of the virus include reddening leaves, stunted plant growth and premature plant death which can lead to significant loss of dry matter and seed production.

An integrated disease management approach using control measures that operate in different ways is needed to control SbDV in subterranean clover pastures:

- **Use insecticides only when the risk of early infection is high**

Application of an anti-feed insecticide (i.e. synthetic pyrethroid) at the highest registered rate for aphid control in subterranean clover at two and six weeks after seedling emergence. This will deter aphids from feeding and therefore spreading SbDV to young vulnerable sub clover seedlings.

- **Manipulate pasture composition**

Grasses do not host SbDV, so using annual

ryegrass or forage oats could be a useful tactic and in the absence of an outbreak would likely improve early feed availability.

- **Growing alternative pasture species**

This is another option to lessen the impact of a loss of subterranean clover pasture as the result of an outbreak. If sowing alternative pasture species, seek further advice to see if they are suited to your soils, rainfall and management system. Serradella is an option as it does not appear to be affected by the syndrome, even when growing alongside symptomatic subterranean clover plants. However, a note of caution, it is unknown whether some of the alternative pasture species are hosts of SbDV.

- **Barrier**

Oats can be sown as a barrier around pasture paddocks to disperse aphids and slow early spread into pasture from outside sources.

Ms McAulay added that if producers suspect their clover pasture is infected with SbDV, they are encouraged to send symptomatic leaf samples to the DPIRD diagnostic laboratory service for accurate diagnosis (see www.agric.wa.gov.au/ddls-plant-pathology-o)

“This also enables the project team to develop a better understanding of the virus and likely causes of the disease,” Ms McAulay said.

Producers are also encouraged to continue reporting incidents of the virus by engaging with the online producer survey conducted jointly by AWI and MLA at: <http://survey.mla.com.au/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=clover> **B**

MORE INFORMATION:

The fact sheet is available at www.wool.com/weeds

SHEARER AND WOOL HANDLER TRAINING REMAINS A PRIORITY

AWI funds training for shearers and wool handlers to attract and retain new entrants into the wool harvesting industry, build the capacity and longevity of existing staff, and increase returns to woolgrowers through improved clip preparation practices.

Adequate numbers of highly skilled professional staff to harvest and handle a high-quality Australian wool clip in a timely manner are key to the profitability of the Australian wool industry.

AWI therefore funds hands-on practical training for shearers and wool handlers in the shed, aimed particularly at increasing their productivity, skills development and professionalism.

In the past financial year, more than 1,500 days training (with more than 6,000 attendances by shearers and wool handlers) were delivered through AWI-funded programs across Australia – a similar amount to the previous year. The delivery was a combination of in-shed training, novice schools and workshops. AWI-funded training in the Shear-Jitsu technique, the new way to perform the catch and drag, expanded during the year.

"The training for harvesting staff is provided through AWI's Independent Coaching

Program and also by Registered Training Organisations," AWI's shearing industry development coordinator Jim Murray says. "Training covers a wide range of experience, from learner to professional shearers and novice to professional wool handlers. It is also offered as short term, intensive workshops across a range of skill levels."

In addition to the above face-to-face training, AWI also funds online training through the Lojik training website (www.lojik.com.au) and Facebook page run by world shearing record holder and top shearer trainer Dwayne Black. More than 5,500 views by shearers during 22 online training sessions were held during the past financial year. The popular online learning resource for shearers helps them perfect their techniques, which in turn improves the quality of woolgrowers' clips. **E**

MORE INFORMATION:

To arrange training in your state, email AWI at swt@wool.com.



A series of short training videos for shearers and wool handlers, to promote better techniques and improve clip preparation practices in the industry, is available free from AWI.

Woolgrowers are reminded that a comprehensive series of about 200 short videos to improve skills in shearing sheds are available free from AWI on a USB.

The AWI videos cover all aspects of wool harvesting and are a complete reference guide for shearers, wool handlers, woolgrowers, instructors and students working in various areas of wool harvesting.

Packed with tips, hints and practical advice, the videos include advice from experienced shearers, wool handlers and wool classers including Shannon Warnest, Dwayne Black and Racheal Hutchison.

"People working in shearing sheds have traditionally learnt their skills 'on the job' by being shown; these videos use the same approach," Jim Murray says. "Available on USB, they are a great way of getting information to people working in the industry as the videos are suitable to be watched in the shearing shed on laptop computers."

The USB includes videos in the following sections:

- Basic wool handling
- Novice shearing
- Improver/professional shearing
- Wool handling and shed skills
- Experting and grinding
- Wool industry
- Crutching.

Also available on the USB is a series of four recent training videos that highlight the Shear-Jitsu technique which is a new way to perform the catch and drag. Shearers can utilise the technique to help them prevent injury and increase the longevity of their careers. **E**

MORE INFORMATION:

The USB is available free to shearers, wool handlers, trainers and woolgrowers by calling AWI on 1800 070 099. The videos are also available to view on the AWI YouTube channel www.youtube.com/AWIWoolProduction



Brian Sullivan (centre) training shearers at 'Steam Plains' near Conargo, NSW.

ROBOTIC SHEARING

REVISITED IN THE DIGITAL AGE



Shearers and robotic experts examining some of the robotics during the workshop.

AWI recently brought together some of the best shearers and robotic experts in Australia to help determine whether a robot, equipped with the latest digital technology, will be able to shear a sheep.

With wool harvesting being one of the largest annual costs for woolgrowers, and shearers being sometimes hard to find (despite AWI's training efforts), one of the biggest challenges facing the wool industry – but also one of the greatest opportunities – is robotic shearing.

"The robotic systems that were built through the 1980s and early 1990s were amazing for the time and looking back as a roboticist today it's humbling to think of the progress that was made," said leading research scientist Associate Professor Rob Fitch from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). "But there have been a number of advances in robotics since then."

So, with an industry enjoying fantastic profitability, AWI is undertaking a scoping study in conjunction with the School of Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering at UTS that aims to develop an understanding of the technical challenges of developing semi-autonomous robotic shearing systems.

Through analysis, experimental demonstration, and industry consultation, the project's intended outcomes will provide strategic guidance to both researchers and wool industry representatives on future technical directions for systems development that will improve efficiency,

working conditions, and quality in the shearing process.

WORKSHOP BRINGS EXPERTS TOGETHER

To assist the UTS researchers, AWI brought them together in June with some of the best Australian shearer trainers and shearers at a workshop in Cattai, west of Sydney. Those attending included world record shearer Dwayne Black, and research scientist Associate Professor Rob Fitch from UTS, who played a significant role in developing the self-driving car in the US.

Dwayne said there was a lot of positivity from everyone at the workshop, with plenty of thinking outside the square.

"I think we really need in the wool industry to accept change and grasp opportunities that might present themselves. There's potential for improvement in the industry if we open our minds and give it a chance to be more efficient," Dwayne said.

"At the workshop we shared each of our industries' points of view about what we could achieve. Then we shored some sheep for the robotic guys, so that they could see first-hand what shearers actually do. We explained to them how we hold sheep and use angles

and techniques to get around sheep."

The robotics team then had a chance to demonstrate some of their robots – and members of their team were then given the chance to hold the handpiece and do some shearing.

"We really got right into it," said Associate Professor Fitch. "We showed some robots that we brought along with us and got to interact with them."

"We had really hands-on sessions where we could work through the process, the challenges. I was able to take my first two blows under expert tutelage – and from there we were able to start to really think beyond tradition and try out some new ideas."

After seeing what robots are capable of and the amazing job shearers do, the discussion quickly turned to how to hold the animal in a safe, repeatable, comfortable manner.

"We thought the best hold for a sheep would be under the sheep's brisket and belly. So the sheep is presented walking towards us and then we just lift the sheep off the ground a few inches and it basically hangs over a device where it can be relaxed and comfortable.

"Obviously comfort is an important issue for traditional shearing as well – a comfortable animal will sit calmly and you can shear it; an uncomfortable animal becomes a wrestle and you can't shear it.

"Then we tried a bit of a pattern on the sheep – obviously using a conventional hand piece and flexi down-tube – taking wool off from the head down to the tail of the sheep on each side, basically like peeling a banana.

"It was really good to see the robotics guys' eyes light up as we did this. The penny drop moment for me was seeing *them* see that it was possible to build robots to do this.

"I think they have no doubt they can replicate what the shearers did to the animal. I'm very confident they can use what they saw and recorded on the day, and transfer that into robotics, quite simply."

As part of the scoping study, UTS researchers are undertaking an analysis of existing robotics technology and off-the-shelf robot hardware that could potentially be applied to shearing. They will then be helping to identify and bridge the gap between robotic technology and the needs of the wool industry.

The scoping study is due to end later this year, with its results helping guide future investment in the area.

AWI INVESTMENTS IN ROBOTIC SHEARING

Wool harvesting is an elaborate labour-intensive process, relying on highly trained shearers and wool handlers who work hard within a busy wool shed work place. Considering the national shearer and shed hand annual award rate rise of about 3.4% over the past 10 years and rising workplace health and safety insurance costs, woolgrowers requested AWI take a new look at automated shearing.

Research and development in automated technologies is a fast moving and high-risk sector with thousands of global players in robotics and programing across every industry from human health and food industries to mining and transport.

AWI is spreading the investment risk in automated shearing across a few investments and is looking for additional opportunities in safe and soft robotics.

Investment has started with two streams. The one outlined left is identifying existing robotic hardware and software developed for other industries for application to any part of shearing. The other is building a system that enables full automation (full wool sheep in and shorn sheep out) – see box right.

R&D INTO FULLY AUTOMATED WOOL HARVESTING

Fully automated shearing could be the way of the future for shearing sheds across Australia following the launch of an AWI-funded research project to automate wool harvesting from sheep.

In partnership with Ranken Research and Robo Shear, the new four-year AWI project is a practical engineering research and development project that aims to design, construct, field test and evaluate a proof of concept prototype machine for fully automated end to end wool harvesting.

AWI General Manager Research, Jane Littlejohn, said the research aim of full automation of the whole wool harvesting process is innovative and future focused to support the future sustainability of the sheep and wool industry.

"This research is a long-term project that is seeking to develop a prototype machine to fill the shearer shortage gap," Jane outlined. "AWI invests in research into alternative wool harvesting technology to improve the efficiency of organising and conducting shearing."

Robo Shear Project Director Richard Lyons said the final product envisaged is a modular, portable, reliable machine that can fully automatically harvest traditional fleece wool from a sheep.

"Our long-term aim is to develop a readily available and capable automated alternative to manual shearing that will provide a range of benefits including ensuring the welfare of the sheep and reduces the risk of both human and animal injury," he explained.

"It is critical the end product of our project ensures the quality of the fleece with a target rate of 1,500 de-fleeced sheep in a continuous 10-hour period."

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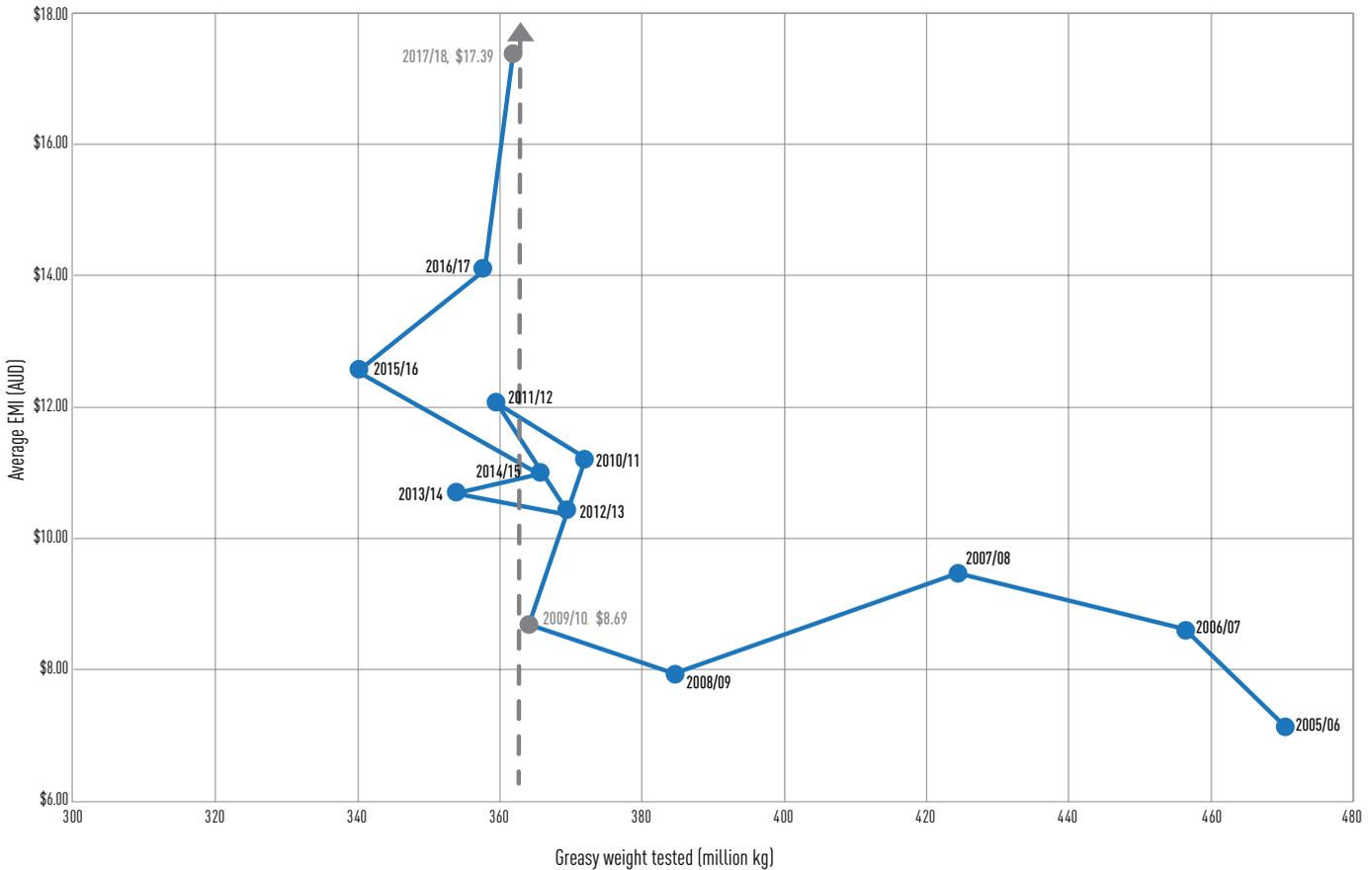
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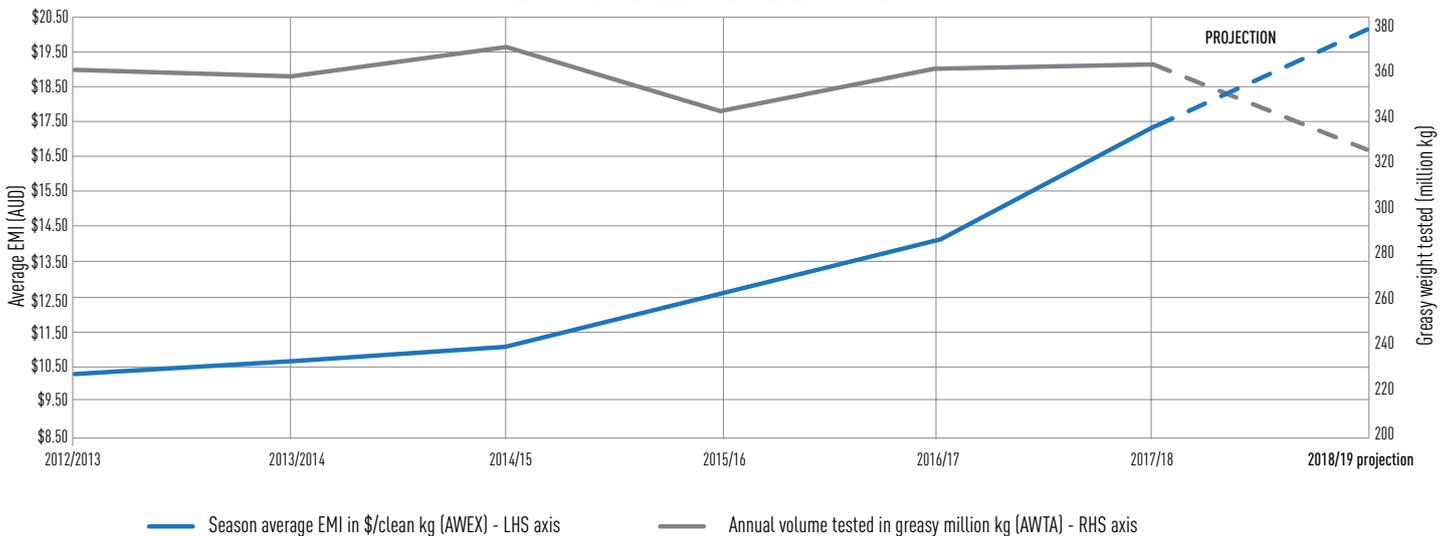
HOW LONG CAN THIS WOOL MARKET HOLD UP?

This question is probably on many minds involved in wool and wool-growing at the moment. Whilst we cannot offer market predictions or any financial advice, in this article we look at why prices may be sustainable going forward, and the factors that are behind the very healthy six year bull run for woolgrower sellers. To be bit more provocative as well, let's propose another question and ask: "Is it possible wool prices can actually continue to rise?"

WOOL SUPPLY AND PRICE 2005/06 TO 2017/18



RISING PRICES DESPITE STEADY SUPPLY



IGENGE REPORT

RECORD PRICES

The 2017/18 season completed on 30 June 2018, with the EMI (Eastern Market Indicator) price level record broken 28 times throughout the selling season. The AUD (Australian Dollar) EMI closed at 2056ac which appreciated by 532ac for the 12 months from a season opening level of 1524ac, which represents a 34.91% gain. The USD (United States Dollar) EMI closed at 1512usc which appreciated by 354usc for the 12 months from a season opening level of 1158usc, which is a 30.57% gain.

At the time of writing, the 2018/19 season has been four weeks into selling and already a new record high EMI of 2116ac was achieved on 16 August. The USD EMI on the same day hit 1539usc which was just 1usc short of equalling the record USD price of 1540usc set in the first week of June.

It is interesting to note in that same week in June, the AUD EMI was then over a full dollar lower at 2011ac, giving rise to the benefits of the lower AUD rate against the USD. This 2 month period of forex (foreign exchange) movement put more than 1 AUD per kg more income into local sellers accounts, whilst in reality, the overseas users buying in USD were not being hurt as they paid a similar price in US dollars. Continuation of this currency trend advantage gives rise to hopes of the AUD price being sustainable.

Worthy of a mention too was that on the same record EMI day of 16 August 2018, the 19 micron indicator of 2462ac finally surpassed the previous high of 2426ac which was set in numerous auction weeks from March to May of 1988.

The superfine categories of 18.5 micron and finer have been higher during the late 1980s and 1990s than they are now, but neither the AWC or AWEX reported those categories until July 2002, so there is no industry reported figures to verify that. Obviously the production volumes of those superfine wools back in those years was significantly lower. Since 2002 though, all superfine categories of 16.5 micron to 18.5 micron are now also at their highest ever levels on industry databases.

What is perhaps counter intuitive to the positive tendency argument, is the decoupling of the CNY (Chinese Yuan) against the USD over the past four months. China mostly uses USD to buy Australian wool, but first needs to buy USD using their CNY. The forex rate of USD v CNY has shifted from a rate of 6.27 CNY needed to buy one USD to recently topping at 6.94. That makes every USD 10.7% more expensive to purchase using CNY.

Almost exclusively, the Chinese are unable/unwilling to obtain forex cover against the

USD as the CNY is not a true floated currency. It is more often described as a managed floated currency but in the past, hedging could be undertaken with some degree of confidence as the CNY was roughly pegged against the USD, but obviously that scenario has altered significantly since the tariff negotiations between those two countries commenced.

According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics CPI (Consumer Price Index), the Aussie dollar has experienced an average inflation rate of 2.54% per year. Prices in 2017/18 are considered 106.9% higher than prices in 1987/88 season. In other words, A\$1 in 1987/1988 is equivalent to A\$2.07 in 2017/18 over 30 years. So, in the 1987/1988 season when the previous "boom" was in play, the price topped out at an indicator of 1257ac which was in the week ending 22 April 1988. On today's dollar for dollar values, that would mean an EMI today would have a theoretical 2018 value of 2601ac.

It is essential to note that the "real dollar" or "indicator" quoted figures are neither precise, directly relatable nor comparatively accurate over time and this is just an informal observance of a market price figure. What is clear though, is that whatever is driving the wool price, there is absolute potential for further growth in woolgrower returns. The continuance of efforts to maintain and improve that price is vital and fundamental to the core needs of woolgrowers.

STEADY SUPPLY, BUT ABOUT TO DIP

1,780,590 bales of Australian-grown wool was sold at auction during the 2017/18 season. It is estimated a further 195,000 bales was put through private and direct export buying systems, taking the annual figure to around 1,975,600 bales sold for the season. This volume ties in closely with the AWTA Key Test Data which showed that AWTA tested 2,027,178 bales or 360.4 million kgs greasy for the 2017/18 season. This is a year to year increase of 0.7% or 21,000 bales or 2.5 million kg greasy – and indicative that the vast majority of woolgrowers were on a shear and sell strategy.

The first 4 weeks of selling into the new season has seen a 14% reduction in wool being sold to the trade. The four week forecast for the last two weeks of August and first two weeks of September sales is indicating a 17% reduction in offered quantities expected. Drought is the major issue, but also figures are somewhat unpredictable at present due to the 6 and 8 month interval shearing playing havoc with estimates.

There is some anomaly appearing though as the AWTA Key Test Data for the first month of July

of the new season showed just a 3.5% reduction in wool tested. The August Key Test Data will tell a clearer story. We estimate on at least an 8% reduction in the clip this season on tested wool through AWTA which will take the national total to around 330 million kgs. The Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee has indicated a shorn wool production figure of 322 million kg, down 5.7% from their reported figure of 2017/18 of 341 million kg.

NSW produced 36% of the national wool cut and that state is now 100% drought declared, so a large effect on national supply will be felt. Anecdotal evidence and recent surveys suggest a 25% de-stocking has been undertaken, and retention of new spring lambs is yet to be determined. The marginal grazing areas of SA are also badly affected, but almost all other areas are reporting good conditions and hopefully stock are able to be off loaded into these zones to offset the damage done to sheep numbers in NSW and SA.

RISING DEMAND

With steady supply during the past few years, it is clear that price rises have been demand-driven and not supply-driven.

The steady rise in demand from new product areas of consumer markets such as athleisure, sportswear and adventure – combined with the existing traditional suiting and knitwear garments – gives strong impetus to the theory that current prices can last for some time to come. The market right now is very different to the conditions that were prevalent in 2011 when wool markets spiked in price, rather than the steady build-up of recent years.

Much of the lift of the past seven years is rightly attributed to the rising middle class of China and their increasing disposable income. According to demographic studies by leading analysts, well over half of China's urban population will be considered middle class by 2022. Educating and inspiring this growing Chinese middle class to understand why Australian wool is versatile and fashionable and worth paying a premium for is vital.

The prediction of continued strengthening of the Chinese and other global economies sees demand for luxury goods on a high. It is crucial for wool, and in particular Merino, to maintain the positioning strategy of sitting the product at the very top sector of the fashion triangle. Supply will most certainly come into play this season, but the sustained efforts to educate and attract at the consumer level is vital and a prerequisite for getting that discretionary spend focussed on wool at premium prices. E

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI COMPARISON

RECORD PERFORMANCE FOR FINER AND MID MICRONS

EMI'S RECORD RUN CONTINUES

The chart opposite provides a snapshot of how well the AWEX monthly Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) and a range of microns have performed for the past three months (May 2018 – July 2018) in Australian dollar terms compared with the previous five years May 2013 to April 2018 (circles) and the decade previous to that, May 2003 – April 2013 (squares).

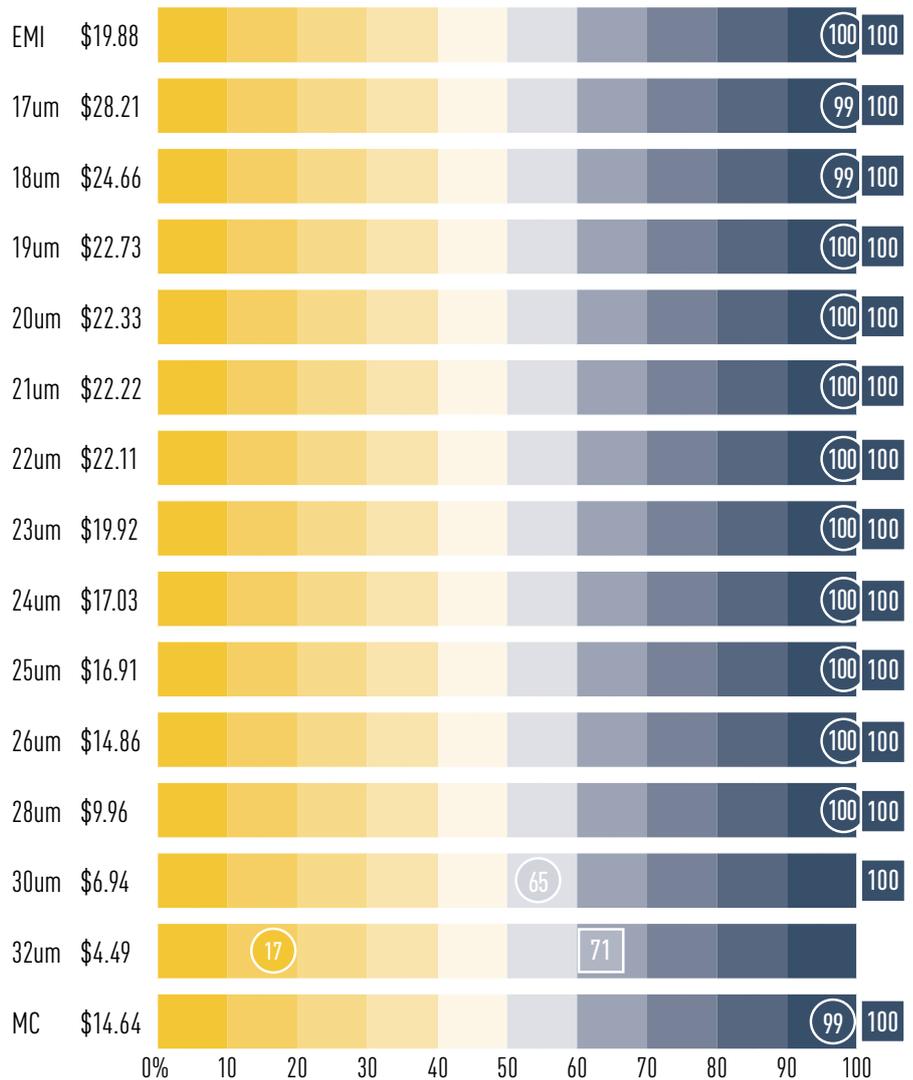
For the past three months, the monthly EMI averaged at \$19.88, tracking at the 100th percentile against the previous five-year monthly EMI. This means that in the previous five years the monthly EMI has never recorded a price higher than the current \$19.88 (May 2018 – July 2018).

As well as tracking at the 100th percentile over the previous five years, the EMI is also at the 100th percentile when compared to the decade May 2003 – April 2013. This means the current EMI of \$19.88 (May 2018 – July 2018) is higher now than it was for all that decade.

The mid and finer microns and Merino Cardings (MC) have continued to perform particularly well recently. For the past three months Merino Cardings averaged at \$14.64, operating at the 99th percentile for the previous five years and the 100th percentile for the previous decade.

For the same period, 18 micron averaged at a monthly value of \$24.66 (99th percentile for the previous five years and 100th percentile for the previous decade), 21 micron averaged at \$22.22 (100th percentile for the previous five years and 100th percentile for the previous decade), and 28 micron averaged at \$9.96 (100th percentile and 100th percentile respectively).

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI FOR MAY 2018 – JULY 2018 COMPARED WITH
 ● PREVIOUS 5 YEARS MAY 2013 – APRIL 2018
 ■ THE DECADE MAY 2003 – APRIL 2013



MARKET INTELLIGENCE: FREE VIA SMS

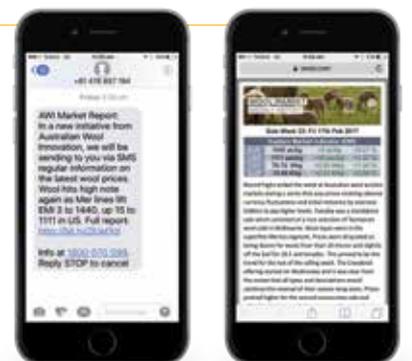
In an initiative launched last year, AWI is sending wool prices and market intelligence direct to about 5,000 woolgrowers' mobile phones.

The woolgrowers receive the latest movements in the EMI in a simple text message (see left image), including a link to a full price report that provides more detail about price movements (see right image).

If you would like to subscribe to the free SMS service, visit www.wool.com/sms where you will be asked to input your name and the mobile phone number to receive the SMS.

You can unsubscribe from the service at any time by replying to the AWI SMS message.

MORE INFORMATION
www.wool.com/sms



NEW FUNCTIONALITY NOW AVAILABLE ON WOOLQ

Three new features were added to WoolQ last month: **the My WoolQ tool, the Ready Reckoner and the Industry Network Forum. The final piece of WoolQ functionality, WoolQ Market, will be launched in December.**

WoolQ (www.woolq.com) is an online platform that allows woolgrowers and industry participants to easily harness digital efficiencies across the wool-growing and selling cycle. It offers a suite of digital tools to facilitate more informed decision-making and enable digital communication and exchange.

WoolQ has been delivered to industry in stages during 2018. The first phase of WoolQ was the launch of the Industry Network and eSpeci tool in March 2018. The WoolQ eSpeci is an alternative to the current paper speci and allows woolgrowers and wool classers to efficiently capture their in-shed clip data at the time of shearing (see box below).

In August, **WoolQ** launched My WoolQ, a central mailbox and storage point for all data relating to a woolgrower's clip, with simple comparative tools to see what's happening from one season to the next.

Broker integration is required to access the full suite of My WoolQ tools.

Having this rich data set available, a woolgrower can use the new WoolQ **Ready Reckoner**, a simple calculator with two tools: the 'Market Analysis' tool allows growers to get an instant estimate of the value of their clip from up-to-date market pricing. The 'Market Results' tool also allows growers to view recent sale prices to benchmark and evaluate their clip performance against similar wool in the market.

The August launch also included the addition of the WoolQ **Industry Network Forum**. This is Australia's first online wool industry discussion forum where woolgrowers, classers, brokers and buyers can connect to share ideas, experiences and learnings.

The final piece of WoolQ functionality, the **WoolQ Market**, will be delivered to industry towards the end of this year. WoolQ Market will be an interactive marketplace that enables the matching of buying and selling interests for the sale and purchase of any tested/marketable wool.

WoolQ can be accessed by any member of the wool industry, from woolgrowers to classers, through to brokers, buyers and industry associations. Users first need to register at www.woolq.com.

Wool Q is available to users anywhere, any time, with or without internet connection. WoolQ can be accessed via mobile phones, tablet, laptop or desktop computer – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Easy-to-follow video tutorials and user guides are available on www.woolq.com along with a customer assistance service. **B**

NEXT GENERATION TOOLS SUPPORT WOOL'S FUTURE

Now supported by his daughter Anna, fifth generation woolgrower Jack Cotton from 'Kelvedon Estate' in Tasmania, is optimistic about the future of the Australian wool industry and is proud to see Anna embracing both the commercial and operational sides of their business.

"I'd describe WoolQ as streamlined. It takes away the hassle, the paper trail and removes the margin of error. It's moving the Australian wool industry into the future, into the 21st century."

Woolgrower Anna Cotton

Anna's progressive attitude and approach to wool-growing is inspiring to observe and in her view there is no better time to be embarking on a future in the wool industry. Always keen to try new industry developments, Anna encouraged Jack and their team to use the new WoolQ eSpeci during their recent shearing, instead of the traditional paper speci.

After a simple process of setting up their Kelvedon business profile on the WoolQ portal, Anna and the team captured their clip information directly onto an iPad in the shed, creating an instant, digital record.

At the completion of shearing, she signed the electronic eSpeci declaration, and the eSpeci was then automatically emailed through to their broker.

"I found the eSpeci really user-friendly," Anna said. "It is extremely logical as it's a step by step process. It prompts you along the way and removes the margin of error as everything is pre-set."

The Cottons' broker also enthusiastically partnered with Anna and Jack, embracing the new WoolQ eSpeci tool. Once they had set up their WoolQ profile and connected with Kelvedon Estate, the completed eSpeci was automatically received into their system, eliminating the need for manual entry. They commented on how easy the process was and on what a huge benefit it was to receive



Jack and Anna Cotton who recently used the WoolQ eSpeci for the first time.

the eSpeci immediately, at the conclusion of shearing, free of errors and 100% legible. **B**



WIN!!!

If you submit a photo that gets published in Readers' Photos, you'll receive an autographed copy of Andrew Chapman's *'The Shearers'*.

This 170-page hardback book documents the lives of the Australian shearers as they go about their work in some classic shearing sheds. It is also available to purchase from www.andrewchapmanphotography.com and good bookshops.

READERS' PHOTOS!

Have you got any interesting photos that you'd like to share with other readers of *Beyond the Bale*?

If so, please email the image and a brief description to the editor of *Beyond the Bale* Richard Smith at richard.smith@wool.com.

 **Beyond the Bale has also launched its very own Instagram account.** You can follow [@beyondthebale](https://www.instagram.com/beyondthebale) on Instagram and also tag us in your photos for your chance to be featured. We will also be showcasing on Instagram some photos emailed in to Readers' Photos (we'll ask your permission first), so you can keep emailing them in.

KIDS FEEDING THE LAMBS

Paul Grams of Longreach in Queensland sent in these two photos of kids hand-feeding some lambs: Reiner and Jordan at Julia Greek (left) and Ella Goodman at Longreach (right).



FRED'S FIRST SHEARING

Chris Hume of Gretna in Tasmania sent in this photo of James Hume with son Fred in the 'Allanvale' shearing shed. Ahh, that first feel of freshly shorn fleece.

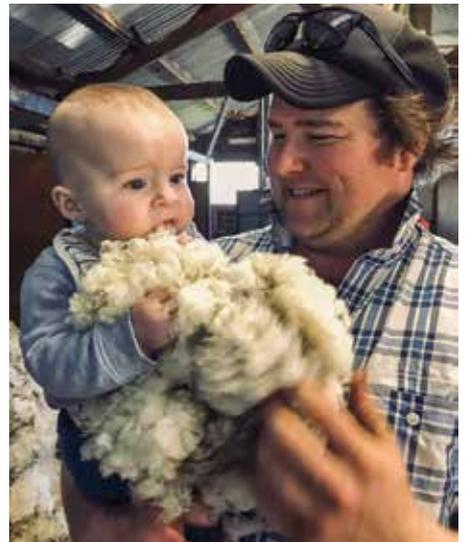
EARLY RISERS!

James McEachern from Wingeel, west of Geelong in Victoria, posted this beautiful sunrise on Instagram ([james_mceachern](https://www.instagram.com/james_mceachern)). Thanks for tagging [#beyondthebale](https://www.instagram.com/beyondthebale)



THE TIN DOG

Lisa Alexander from Blackall in Queensland posted this photo on Instagram ([lisa_alexander_photography](https://www.instagram.com/lisa_alexander_photography)) explaining that the 'tin dog' is getting the job done when the real dog has bailed out. Lisa has her own photography business and loves to capture daily life on the land. Head to her website at <https://lisaalexanderphotography.com.au> to view more wonderful images.



YOUNG GUN SHEARER IN THE MAKING

Astrid Rees posted this photo on Instagram (astridrees_station_photography) of her daughter in the shearing shed at 'Bellevue Station' at Ivanhoe in NSW. She is wearing a shearing singlet made especially for her by Just Shear (www.justshear.com) – a manufacturer of custom shearing singlets and hoodies.



IT'S RAINING!

Andrea Mitchell of 'Kilpa' at Savernake in southern Riverina of NSW sent in this photo of an umbrella being held amongst the cockies and buyers at the Corowa Sale Yards. The photo was taken a couple of years ago and it would be nice to see a bit of rain again soon!



THE OVERSEER

Codie Reynolds of Young in NSW sent in this photo of one of her daughters checking that all is well in the shearing shed.



PROTECTING HER ICY POLE

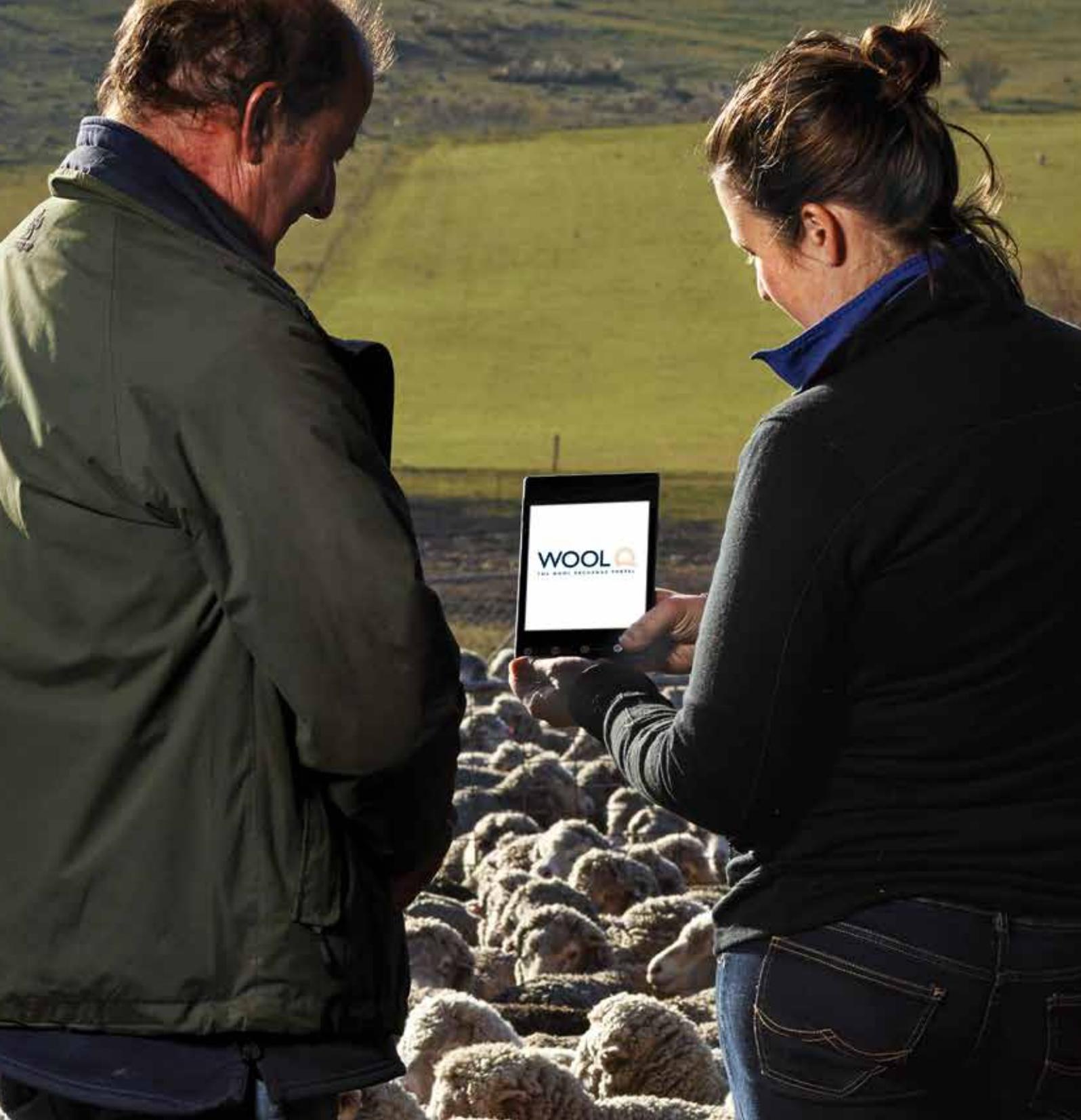
What's a young girl to do when a naughty pet lamb tries to eat your icy pole? Hide in a spare tree guard! Thanks for sending in the photo, Coralie Nix from Boyup Brook in WA.



ALL HANDS, AND PAWS, ON DECK

Here is a photo of working dog Jenny out helping feed the rams at 'Possamunga Station' at Quilpie in South West Queensland. Thanks to Christie Edwards for sending in the photo.





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