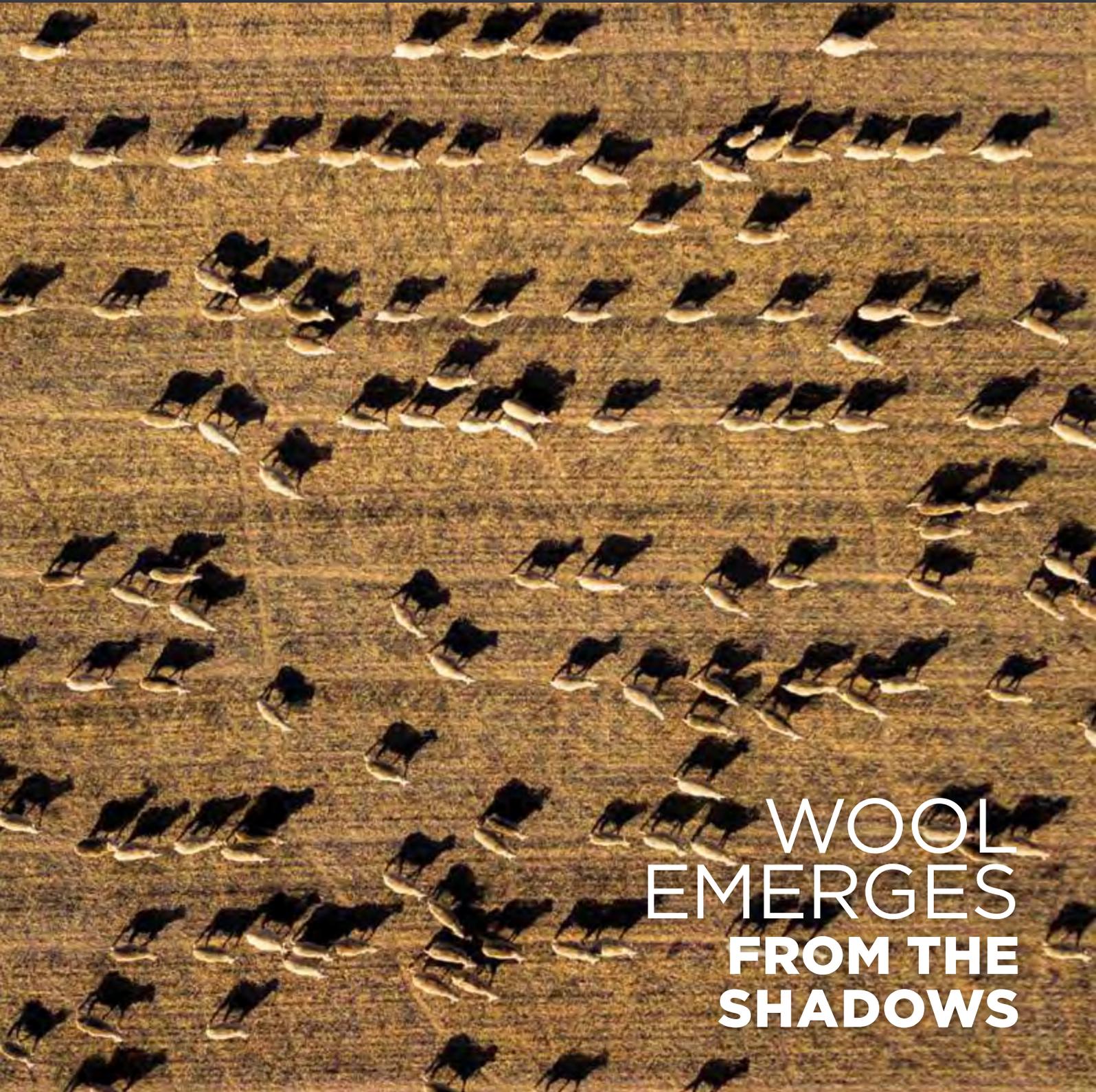


Beyond the bale

ISSUE 72 SEPTEMBER 2017

PROFIT FROM WOOL INNOVATION

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WOOL EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS

04
FIBRE
OF UNION

A man in a dark jacket and hat holds a yellow banner with the word 'WALLABIES' written on it. The background shows a large pile of wool bales.

05
WOOL HITS
A SIX

Four men are sitting side-by-side, smiling at the camera. They are wearing dark polo shirts with a logo on the chest.

36
SHEEP CLASSING
WORKSHOPS

A group of people are gathered around a long table in a workshop, examining sheep. The scene is brightly lit and appears to be an educational or professional setting.

Beyond the bale

www.wool.com/btb

EDITOR

Richard Smith
E richard.smith@wool.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Lisa Griplas
E lisa.griplas@wool.com

Australian Wool Innovation Limited

A L6, 68 Harrington St, The Rocks,
Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 4177, Sydney NSW 2001
P 02 8295 3100
E info@wool.com W wool.com
AWI Helpline 1800 070 099

SUBSCRIPTION

Beyond the Bale is available free.
To subscribe contact AWI
P 02 8295 3100 E info@wool.com

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Ben Baker, Pulse Hub Pty Ltd
P 0429 699 553
E ben.baker@pulsehub.com.au
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FRONT COVER

This photo **Sheep Shadows** was taken at Merredin in Western Australia by Josh Carr who runs a business that offers drone photography and videography services. The Sheep Shadows image is one of many images that are available to purchase from the Carr and Drone website at www.carranddrone.com



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

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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

EUROPE, THE UK AND THE USA

For much of the past month I've been travelling through the USA, Europe and the UK, meeting with scores of companies, designers, processors and brands who buy or use Australian wool.

Their response is overwhelmingly positive. Australian wool is in more stores and in more product ranges than perhaps at any time I can recall. Your wool is 'on trend' and in demand both by companies and consumers, which I'm delighted to be able to report. You will find some of the detail in stories in the following pages.

However I've been completely bewildered to read the rural media reporting domestic issues during this time – and how they starkly contrast with the view of our major customers in the northern hemisphere.

So I feel it is important to address here in this report some concerning falsehoods being reported in public forums and in the media over the past couple of months about AWI's oversight and efforts in flystrike R&D and productivity.

OVERSIGHT

AWI's governance structure and business model was built 'fit for purpose', multi-level and cascades directly from our Constitution, Corporations Law and other legislation through the company's operations.

That we treat the many (7+) woolgrower representative bodies equally is a good thing and it provides the company with comprehensive feedback and counsel from a wide range of grower groups. AWI's predecessor, AWRAP, did operate differently, but growers voted with their feet ensuring that when AWI was established in 2001, it was accountable to all growers, not a few agri-political groups as it had been in the past. This is what some are unwisely calling for a return of now.

To help inform woolgrowers of the structure of their company we have prepared an insert

that is included with this edition of *Beyond the Bale*. Please have a look.

If you haven't already listened to AWI's podcast *The Yarn*, please do. It's a good and quick way to hear what's happening with your levies. It is available at www.wool.com/podcast and on iTunes. Please also refer to episode 19 of *The Yarn* featuring the AWI Company Secretary, Jim Storey, explaining in detail our governance principles.

PRODUCTIVITY

I note recent uninformed comments in the media about alleged lack of work by AWI in the area of productivity; this couldn't be further from the truth. AWI's key purpose is to support grower profitability and productivity.

Our single largest on-farm research project is the Merino Lifetime Productivity project. We keep growers informed about progress in this project via our website at www.wool.com/MLP and regularly in *Beyond the Bale* (see the double-page spread in the previous edition).

I encourage those commenting on AWI's activities to first appraise the roughly 300 projects AWI is funding at any one time on behalf of growers.

FLYSTRIKE

Flystrike prevention is a complex area and serious health risk to the industry with no easy solutions as woolgrowers know only too well. For 12 years now we have increased the investment in projects to identify a practical and effective alternative to mulesing. We have made progress and we have a number of treatments that are showing promise but we don't have this problem solved yet.

AWI is the only company globally doing any work in this important space and we remain committed completely, so to suggest there is no strategy is ill-informed.

The role of a Research and Development Corporation (RDC) like AWI is not to set policy; indeed the Government actually forbids it. So while we do have an extensive Research, Development & Extension (RD&E) strategy and the outcomes of it can inform

policy, we don't set policy. Should any one of the woolgrower representative bodies wish to instruct or mandate their members on animal husbandry practices, then that is a decision for them, we won't be.

“THOSE IN GLASS HOUSES”

I am a big supporter of free speech, especially when it's informed. But I do not support airing dirty laundry in public.

The recent criticism of the wool industry, woolgrower and AWI activities by MLAs Managing Director, Richard Norton, is a unique precedent I can't remember witnessing in my eight years as CEO.

We have not to date, and nor will we, play into this tactic with retorts through the media, but we are disappointed Mr Norton chose this path. A simple phone call to either myself or the Chairman would have been more appropriate and professional.

POSITIVE WOOL PRICES CONTINUE

To end my report on a more positive note, it is pleasing to see wool prices have continued to go from strength to strength in 2017 with auction sales producing some stunning results.

While the EMI surpassed 1,400c for the first two months of the calendar year, it has exceeded 1,500c for most of the subsequent months, and even briefly exceeded 1,600c following the recess in auction sales.

At the time of writing, the EMI stands at almost 25% higher than at the same period of last season.

We all hope these prices can be sustained over the long-term to reward the hard work and loyalty that woolgrowers have demonstrated towards the fibre. I believe the strong prices are due to a consistent and steady long-term shift in consumer sentiment towards the fibre and appreciation for its premium natural qualities.

As always, if you have any questions or comments please email ceo@wool.com or call 1800 070 099.

THE FIBRE OF RUGBY



"I had such fond memories of my time in the 1960s representing Australia and touring and playing the game with the best in the world, and here I am now 60 years later running sheep at the top of their game and producing a wonderful article of wool, made out of 19.5 micron, the type of wool I grow."

JIM MILLER

Former Wallaby **Jim Miller** on his property **Cooinee**, a 4,451ha property on the Murrumbidgee River at Jugiong in the central east of the Riverina in NSW.
PHOTO: Brad Newman, Food Miles magazine.

Woolgrowers and sporting fans across the country now have the chance to cheer on the Wallabies wearing new Wallabies scarves made from 100% Australian wool. Retro playing tops for supporters, also made from 100% Australian wool, will be available soon.

A new partnership has been formed between Australian wool and Australian Rugby Union (ARU).

AWI's subsidiary and marketing arm of the Australian wool industry, The Woolmark Company, has joined forces with the ARU to promote the strong heritage and natural connection between these two great Australian icons, with new Wallabies wool scarves and retro playing tops a fitting way for Australians to show some natural fibre and national spirit.

The scarves are available now to purchase for \$69.95 (\$59.95 for woolgrowers), and the supporter jerseys – recreations of the 1937 and 1938 playing tops worn by the Wallabies in Test matches against South Africa and New Zealand – will be available soon.

The history of Australian wool and Australian rugby is inextricably linked with rugby union being the game of choice for many Australian wool-growing families. Long before the game turned professional, many players worked on sheep properties and spent their weekends playing for their local town, district or, in rare cases, even playing for Australia.

ARU General Manager Commercial, Pete Sciberas said, "We're delighted that Woolmark are joining our partnerships family. They represent one of the most iconic brands and products in Australia, and have a natural affinity with the rugby

community, much of which is based in rural and regional Australia."

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said Australian wool and Australian rugby were both products that helped establish the nation as a world force and put the country on the map.

"In the same way that very few people witness the passion, sweat and sacrifice it takes for a player to make that step up to the world stage, very few people get to observe how the world's finest natural fibre transitions from the farm to the shopfront," Mr McCullough said.

"The creation of a Merino wool garment begins long before it sits across the shoulders of the rugby fans across the world; it begins with the passion, sweat and sacrifice of a woolgrower looking after their flock."

During the remainder of the year, the nation will be cheering on the Wallabies in Rugby Championship Tests against South Africa and Argentina, and a Bledisloe Cup clash against the All Blacks in Brisbane, followed by an end of year tour during which they will be playing Japan, Wales, England and Scotland. Grab a wool scarf and raise your voice for the Wallabies!

To purchase the Wallabies wool scarves, visit www.heraldsun.com.au/shop (enter the code WOOLMARK to receive the \$10 discount) or phone the Herald Sun Shop on 1300 306 107.



Current Wallabies **Nick Phipps** and **Bernard Foley** proudly wearing the new wool scarves.



Jim Lenehan of Australia in action against South Africa at the SCG in Sydney in June 1965. Jim scored a try for the Wallabies in their 18-11 over the Springboks in front of a 46,000 crowd. Jim is now a woolgrower at June in the Riverina region of NSW. PHOTO: News Ltd/Newspix

“It makes me enormously proud to be both a Wallaby and a woolgrower, two things that I only ever did for the love of it. There were a lot of blokes when I played that came from country areas, some of the top players. I was a Wallaby for 10 seasons but for over 50 seasons I’ve been a woolgrower, and that makes me feel very privileged!”

JIM LENEHAN



Woolgrower and Boorowa ‘Goldies’ Rugby Club member **Murray Dymock**, with his daughter **Millie**, five, at ‘West Killanear’ at Boorowa in the South West Slopes of NSW. PHOTO: Kirsten Frost

“Merino wool and rugby are both very big parts of our community and always have been. To know that something you put your life into producing is now going into a product that supports the Wallabies is a pretty good feeling.”

MURRAY DYMOCK

MERINO PUSHES THE BOUNDARY FOR ZEVEN



Shane Watson, AB de Villiers, Virat Kohli and Chris Gayle wearing their Merino wool polo shirts, developed by **AWI and Zeven World**, at the recent ten-year celebration of the **Royal Challengers Bangalore** cricket team in the Indian Premier League.

Some of the biggest names in cricket have donned Merino wool polo shirts in a collaboration between AWI, Indian sportswear brand Zeven and the Royal Challengers Bangalore IPL team.

AWI has teamed up with major Indian sportswear company Zeven to develop polo shirts made from 80% Merino wool as travel gear for the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) cricket team.

One of the more consistent and successful teams of the Indian Premier League, the RCB is captained by Virat Kohli and has tremendous international star power in Chris Gayle, AB de Villiers and our own Shane Watson. The team is coached by New Zealand’s ex-captain Daniel Vettori.

“We aim to cement Merino wool’s position in the activewear market by collaborating with brands and manufacturers that look to push boundaries across the wool supply chain,” said AWI Country Manager India, Arti Gudal.

“As well as being the official kit sponsor for the RCB, Zeven has truly explored Merino wool’s potential by creating the polo shirts. Being a natural fibre, it is the perfect addition to the activewear and sportswear category which is a core proposition for the brand this year. AWI will continue its collaboration with Zeven.”

Zeven’s mission is to transform sports in India by making active sport an integral part of Indian life – and sells gear for the gym, running, tennis, football, lifestyle and cricket. Zeven Category Head - Apparel, Nikhil Muthanna, said choosing Merino wool as the fabric for the RCB travel kit came naturally.

“We believe Merino wool is an amazing fibre that can be used for outdoor apparel. It manages moisture better than cotton, is smarter than synthetic and comfortable in any weather condition. Being a high-performance fibre, naturally safe and environmentally friendly, it also helps in controlling odour build-up and is breathable, making it a great choice for manufacturing apparel for athletes.

“We at Zeven are focused on developing functional, comfortable and affordable sportswear for men and women. As a part of our process we are also committed towards giving back to the environment by designing and manufacturing sustainable and environmentally friendly products.”

THE FIBRE FOR FIRE-FIGHTERS



Livestock being relocated from property near **Coolah, NSW**, on 12 February 2017, as smoke from the **Sir Ivan bushfire** is seen in the background
 PHOTO: Alex Ellinghausen

Norwegian company Devold, which sources wool from Coolah woolgrower Edward Martin in the Warrumbungle Shire of NSW, has **donated protective Merino wool apparel to members of his local Rural Fire Service** in recognition of their work in fighting the Sir Ivan bushfires in February.

February's devastating bushfires burnt through 55,000 hectares of farming land in the NSW Central West, destroying more than 5,000 head of sheep and cattle and damaging vital agricultural infrastructure. As always, the local RFS members did their utmost to contain and limit the damage.

While people across NSW and the nation watched with sadness and empathy as the events unfolded, the effects were also being felt 15,000 km away in Norway.

Apparel company and Woolmark licensee Devold, based on the north-west coast of Norway, sources some of the Merino wool used in its apparel from Edward Martin's 'Turee Vale' property at Coolah. While 'Turee Vale' was not directly affected by the fires, some of Edward's neighbours' properties were damaged.

Devold was founded in 1853, based on the idea of protecting people against the elements, and has worked with wool throughout its 164 year history. The company's main focus is on apparel for sports and outdoor people; Edward's Merino wool is used in the recently-launched Devold Breeze and Devold Signature base-layer collections.

Not long prior to the bushfires, Edward had

been in Munich, Germany, at the ISPO trade show (the largest sporting and outdoor goods trade show in the world) as an ambassador for Devold and Merino wool. There he showcased the premium qualities of Merino fibre to the many manufacturers and retailers that visited the Devold stand and told them about the families and farms that produce it.

"Devold had an event for press and international trade at ISPO to launch its new collections and I was there to help provide a different perspective for the audience," Edward said. "Quality is critical to protect the people that buy this type of apparel and I helped get the message across that woolgrowers work hard to provide the degree of quality that they need."

Almost as soon as Edward landed back in Australia, the Sir Ivan bushfires began to sweep through the Central West of NSW, and Edward along with his local RFS colleagues were deployed for three days to help combat them.

When Devold heard about the destruction caused by the fires, they wanted to pay tribute to the local RFS brigade's members, many of whom are also farmers and neighbours of Edward. So they sent flame

retardant Merino wool-rich apparel and balaclavas/hoods Down Under that were presented to the brigade in July.

This particular range of apparel, from Devold Protection, is designed as workwear for protection in occupations where workers are exposed to heat and flame, so it is very suitable for fire-fighters.

"When we heard about the terrible bushfires in Australia, we wanted to do something to help out," Devold CEO Cathrine Stange said. "After travelling to Australia last year to visit Edward's property and the other farms that supply us, I have so much respect for these farmers. Theirs is a lifestyle demanding enormous passion, drive and a wide set of skills. It is impressive how they operate, and always with the unpredictability of crises like for example a bushfire."

Edward said he and the rest of the brigade were very appreciative of the donation by Devold.

"The Merino apparel is an unexpected but well received gesture from Devold, and the brigade will make good use of them. They are very comfortable and their flame-resistant properties will be indispensable," he said. **B**



NSW RFS fire-fighters battle flare ups during the fire near **Uarbry**, just south of Coolah NSW. PHOTO: Peter Lorimer/Newspix



Members of the **Talbragar RFS** gather in July at the property of **RFS Vice Captain John Stippard**, to be presented with the donation of Merino wool apparel from Norwegian company **Devold**, with the assistance of wool buyer **G. Schneider** and **Macdonald & Co woolbrokers**.



Woolgrower **Edward Martin** who volunteers with the **Talbragar RFS** and whose wool is supplied to **Devold**.



The **Devold Safe zip neck** – an example of the Merino wool-rich apparel donated by Devold.



McNair Mountain shirts that are made from Australian Merino wool.

McNAIR MOUNTAIN SHIRTS

McNair Shirts of Yorkshire promote their Merino wool shirt as the “best mountain shirt in the world” – and if the reviews of the shirt are anything to go by, it most probably is.

Four years ago McNair Shirts had the idea of making a wool shirt based on the same fabric as the famous Dachstein mitts – the classic heavy duty, felted wool mitts that have been providing mountaineers and skiers with serious hand protection and warmth for decades.

Their idea has become reality. McNair Mountain shirts are now available (shipping worldwide), made at the company's factory near Huddersfield in Yorkshire, England. The company is rightly proud that the shirts are designed, spun, woven, milled and finished all within 10 miles of where they make the shirt, which enables the company to keep a very close control on quality.

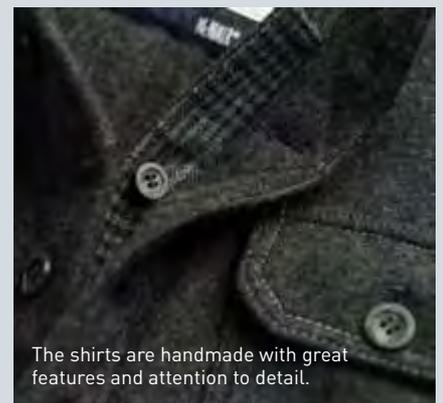
The Merino wool fibre – what the company calls ‘the world's finest Merino’ – is from Australia. The shirts are available in mid-weights and heavy-weights. Indeed, teamed with a Merino base-layer the shirt is designed to be so weatherproof and warm as to perform like an outer shell in most conditions.

The company set out to make the absolute best shirt it could and then work out how much it would cost, rather than starting with a price point and working backwards. So for such a premium product, you can expect to pay a premium price, starting at £335 (about \$550).

There are more than 45 separate pieces in each shirt (excluding buttons), all put together by hand over the course of a day and half – and when finished it is signed and numbered by the skilled craftsman that made it.

Aside from the fabric, there is delight in the detail: bar-tacking on key stress points for extra strength, twin needling and reinforced seams, baffles for weather protection on the front and cuffs, buttons effectively fused onto the shirt so they won't fall off, and much more. These shirts are made to last. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.mcnairsthirts.com



The shirts are handmade with great features and attention to detail.



Jenna Brook wearing **Merino Country** apparel while out training near Birdsville for her epic run up Australia next year.

RUNNING FOR BUMS

In February 2018, Jenna Brook from Birdsville in far west Queensland will begin an epic run traversing the length of Australia – all while being dressed in Australian Merino wool apparel from Merino Country.

Jenna will begin her run from the South East Cape of Tasmania, and cover in excess of 4,500km to finish four months later at the tip of Cape York.

Having had her first taste of endurance events in 2012 when she walked 435km across the Simpson Desert, she has since finished two 250km ultra marathons, and had a crack at a few more just for good measure. So she has an appreciation of the challenge in front of her.

However the run is not just a personal challenge for Jenna, there is also an important reason for the run, and one that is close to her heart. Along the way Jenna will be raising awareness of bowel cancer in the communities that she passes through, as well as online through social media platforms. She has called her run 'Running for Bums' and is fundraising 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.

"This is why knowing your personal risk factors, understanding the symptoms, and subsequent early detection is so important. Not enough people have the conversation about bowel cancer, most likely as a result

of embarrassment and stigma, and this must change."

As someone who loves to be active and get outside, Jenna will also be spreading the message of how moving and keeping active can play an important role in the fight against bowel cancer.

MERINO COUNTRY

Jenna, whose family run organic beef properties in Queensland's far west, is delighted that she is being sponsored in her running challenge by activewear and underwear company Merino Country, whose origins are also in outback Queensland.

An extension of the family Merino wool enterprise, Merino Country was established in 1993 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 am so excited that the legends from Merino Country have come on board with Running for Bums, and that together we will be showing the world just how good Australian Merino is, and how practical it is to run in," Jenna said.

"With 4,500km to run, walk and shuffle during Running for Bums, there was no way I was going to be layered in polyester from top to toe. I couldn't imagine having my body caked in a synthetic fibre, stinking after just a few hours and leaving my skin gasping for air at the end of the day. I just couldn't let that happen.

"Merino Country's products have successfully managed to keep me warm when I was a bit chilly, and cool when the temperature got turned up in outback Queensland. They saw me through a 50km 'adventure' race with no chafing issues, and are fantastic to do yoga in. I'm very confident that they'll serve their purpose on the run to keep the sun off my skin, allow my body to breathe, wick sweat away, as well as defeat the mortal enemy; chafe. No one likes chafe.

"As far as I'm concerned, Merino Country's high-quality products are a testament to the hard work of the team behind the scenes, and for me personally I now seek out my Merino Country products every day, and am guilty of pulling them out of the washing basket to wear over and over again."

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.

As well as activewear, the company's product range (for men, women and children) includes its famous Wundies – wool undies & bras – thermals, travel clothing and Bare Belly Joe kids gear. As well as retail customers, Merino Country supplies Merino products to the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Antarctic Division and Victoria Police. Their products are available to purchase online at www.merinocountry.com. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

www.runningforbums.com.au
www.bowelcanceraustralia.org
 Tel: 1800 555 494
www.merinocountry.com



The enormity of Jenna's challenge beginning to sink in! Don't worry, Jenna, you're wearing Merino wool; that'll pull you through!

THERE'S A NEW LOOK MERINO COMING



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LUXURY ATHLEISUREWEAR IN CHINA

As the line between fashion and function continues to blur, globally renowned Chinese department store **Lane Crawford** has recruited two leading brands to deliver exclusive athleisure collections made from Australian Merino wool.

AWI has entered a two-year strategic partnership with Chinese luxury department store Lane Crawford, to bring forward-thinking designs in wool direct to consumers.

The first two collections in the collaboration were athleisure collections, launched in July with Chinese fashion designer Helen Lee and activewear brand Particle Fever.

Athleisure is a term used for activewear that can be used for non-active and casual, everyday use – with a modern, comfy and stylish look. Merino wool's ability to combine comfort and flexibility with casual elegance makes it well placed to cater to this growing market.

Under the theme of 'Fitness x Fashion', the two collections were made available exclusively in Lane Crawford stores across China and Hong Kong, as well as online for shipping worldwide. The campaign features Chinese supermodel and fitness enthusiast He Sui.

AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company also offered extensive training to Lane Crawford retail staff, ensuring they were well-versed in the performance benefits of wool along with how to care for the products, so they could inform their customers and influence their purchasing decisions.

Lane Crawford is a global luxury fashion, beauty and lifestyle department store that offers the largest designer portfolio in Greater China. Based in Hong Kong and China, yet with a truly global perspective, the department store has a unique take on luxury that draws from more than 160 years' success.

"As part of Lane Crawford's commitment to supporting emerging Chinese talent and design innovation, we are excited to be collaborating with The Woolmark Company on two worldwide exclusive collections with designers Helen Lee and Particle Fever," said Lane Crawford Chief Brand Officer Joanna Gunn.

"These capsules incorporate Merino wool into innovative and technical athleisure pieces that showcase the versatility of the sustainable fibre and its importance to the future of fashion."

HELEN LEE

With the theme of Work Out Work, Helen Lee's collection aimed to motivate urbanites to get moving and aspire towards a healthier, balanced lifestyle. Her layered looks combine modern prints in contrasting colours, such as bright yellow and grey, while the use of lightweight and versatile Merino wool fabrics make each garment easy to combine and extremely comfortable to wear. The collection includes sweat-tops, leggings and work out pants.

"The fabrics I used in this capsule were in fact incredibly light and breathable, and this project has completely changed my perception of wool," said Lee. "I aimed to design athleisure pieces in this capsule collection that are practical and easy to mix and match, but also comfortable, stylish and trendy."

PARTICLE FEVER

From concept development to production, the designers at Particle Fever were inspired to completely reinvent their conventional approach to activewear, using Merino wool fabrics. The wool-rich collection features multifunctional pieces including pinstripe wool and mesh bomber jackets, birds eye weave parkas that can wrap up into a backpack, plus wool-lined boxer shorts, crop tops and leggings in a muted palette with distorted graphics.

"Right from the beginning of my design process, I prioritised functionality over aesthetics," said Particle Fever chief designer Lin Hai. "Drawing the inspiration from Merino wool, I hope to bring up that wool-rich athleisure collection can also be stylish and innovative."

MORE INFORMATION
www.lanecrawford.com



He Sui wearing a Helen Lee design.

Supermodel He Sui wearing one of Particle Fever's designs.

'Spring Ponds' woolgrowers **David and Skye Ward**, with daughter **Harriet**, meet fashion designer **Gabriela Hearst** (centre).

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE WINNER GABRIELA HEARST VISITS THE SOURCE OF AUSTRALIAN WOOL

While in Australia to take part in the judging of this year's International Woolmark Prize regional final, **2016/17 competition winner and Uruguayan woolgrower Gabriela Hearst visited a wool-growing property** to find out more about the source of Australian Merino wool.

More than 12,000 kilometres away from her family's ranch in Uruguay, fashion designer Gabriela Hearst visited an Australian wool-growing property, going back to the source of the fibre that makes up a large part of her 2016/17 International Woolmark Prize-winning collection, available now in leading retailers worldwide including David Jones' Sydney City store and online.

Visiting Dave and Skye Ward's 'Spring Ponds' property, near Goulburn in NSW, Hearst was taken on a tour of the farm to meet the sheep and witness Australian farming practices. In addition, Hearst hosted an intimate lunch with the region's women of wool including founder of Sarah Jane Bond blankets and local woolgrower Vanessa Bell of 'Greendale' at Breadalbane; freelance journalist and local woolgrower Lucy Knight of 'Collingwood' at Gunning; and Skye's mother Trish Dixon who grew up at 'Spring Ponds' and is an esteemed writer and photographer. They shared her experience of winning the International Woolmark Prize and their joint passion for producing Merino wool.

"It was very interesting to see how wool-growing is done in Australia," said Hearst. "I have been surrounded by Merino sheep all my life and this is where the best of the best is bred. I also have a high appreciation of the way of life, the respect of nature and long-term views when it comes to producing. Australia is one of the most wonderful countries in the world and it has a special

place in my heart. I am so appreciative of Woolmark for this opportunity."

Producing superfine Merino wool, 'Spring Ponds' owners Dave and Skye Ward have a life-long association with the Australian wool industry, both growing up on Merino properties. The couple has run the property for close to a decade and was founded by Skye's great-great-grandfather in the early-1900s.

"The wool industry is in very safe hands with ambassadors like Gabriela Hearst."
DAVE WARD, WOOLGROWER

"It was a rare privilege for us as woolgrowers to meet an international designer of such high calibre and one who is so passionate about wool and genuinely interested in us as Australian Merino producers," said Dave. "The wool industry is in very safe hands with ambassadors like Gabriela Hearst."

"Gabriela's ethos is also very aligned to the wool industry and our own values, as she designs sustainable, luxurious and timeless fashion that demonstrates all the amazing attributes of the Merino," added Skye.

Hearst said she was not only impressed by the superior quality of Dave and Skye's Merinos, but also by the passion and love they put into their product. "Their children are sixth generation growers, as am I, so I understand



2016/17 International Woolmark Prize winner **Gabriela Hearst** examines superfine Australian Merino wool produced at 'Spring Ponds' near Goulburn, NSW.

that it can take generations to take this product to the next level," she said.

WINNING COLLECTION NOW AVAILABLE

Gabriela Hearst's womenswear collection that won the 2016/17 International Woolmark Prize used ultrafine 14.5 micron Merino wool for luxurious knitwear, through to 21.5 micron wool to create a wool-velvet fabrication.

Via the International Woolmark Prize Retail Partner network, Gabriela Hearst's winning collection has launched into the world's most influential global retailers, including: Boon the Shop – Seoul; Boutique1 – Dubai; David Jones – Sydney; De Bijenkorf – Amsterdam; Harvey Nichols – London; Hudson's Bay – Toronto; Lane Crawford – Hong Kong and Shanghai; L'Éclairer – Paris; and MyTheresa.com.

The winning collection from this year's menswear winner – the London-based label Cottweiler – has also been unveiled in key global stores.

INTERNATIONAL WOOL

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 around the globe.

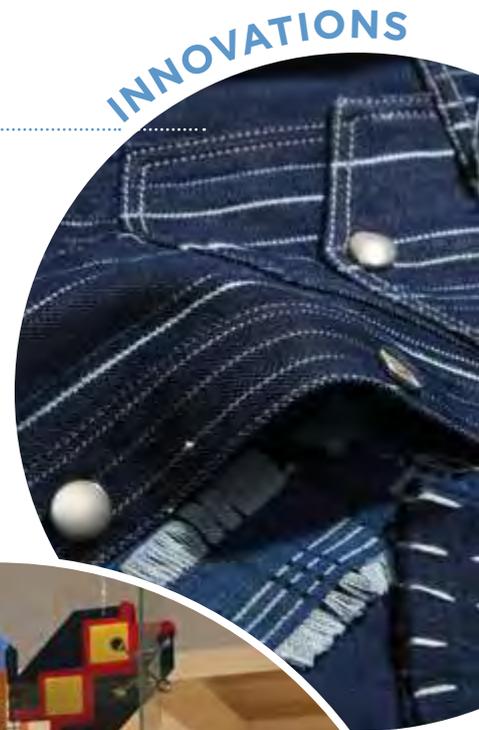
Furthermore, the phenomenal interest in these awards from fashion communities and media globally is helping put wool back on the agendas of a broader range of fashion designers, manufacturers, brands and retailers, and consequently into retail stores for consumers to purchase.



WOOL EDUCATION

384 designers from **65 countries**

have received an extensive wool education from product development to sourcing, including: **The Wool Lab, Wool Appreciation Course, Trade Partner Program** and **Mentoring**.



INNOVATIONS

Every year, up to **70 designers**

develop and present the most innovative designs, made from at least **80% Australian Merino wool**.



INTERNATIONAL FINALS

The designs from regional winners are judged by some of the most **famous and respected authorities on fashion**, and presented in front of the world's media.



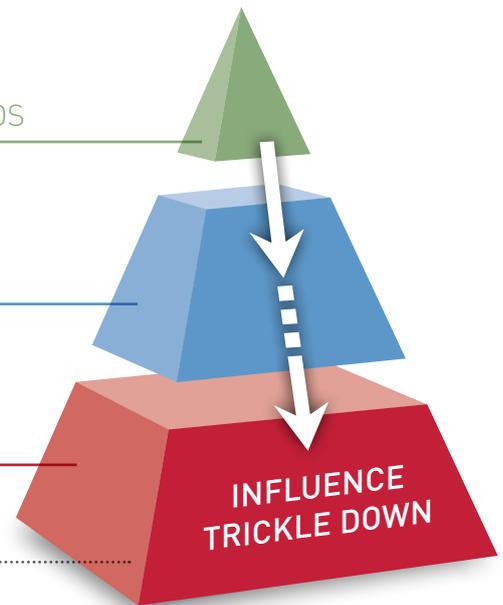
RETAIL

MARK PRIZE EXPLAINED

HIGH END FASHION
LUXURY DESIGNERS AND PREMIUM BRANDS

MIDDLE MARKET
AFFORDABLE LUXURY RETAIL BRANDS

MASS MARKET
HIGH STREET RETAILERS



TRICKLE DOWN

The involvement of the world's leading fashion designers with Australian Merino wool is extremely important because of their **enormous influence in setting global trends**.

What we see on the world's catwalks this year quickly makes it into the mainstream fashion sector. The **broader fashion industry looks to designers for the latest trends**; their work with fabrics like Australian Merino wool has a trickle down effect that should not be underestimated.



MEDIA

The interest in the International Woolmark Prize from the global fashion and consumer media has been enormous.

The winning collections are stocked in **10 program retail partners**, some of the world's most prestigious department stores and boutiques.

The program's **384 alumni** are imbued with a love of wool which often translates into wool-rich collections.

\$169 million

in editorial value (earned media) has been generated across **traditional channels** (magazines, newspapers).

165 per cent

increased in **social media engagement** in 2016/17 from the previous year.

129 million

people reached across **social media** (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube) in 2016/17.

Full impact

has been made in the media by having **high profile partners** such as Victoria Beckham and Vogue Magazine.

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE REGIONAL FINAL



Designs from International Woolmark Prize Australia & New Zealand regional finalists: **AMXANDER**, **Chris Ran Lin**, menswear winner **BLAIRARCHIBALD**, **Elissa McGowan**, **Thomas Puttick** and womenswear winner **Harman Grubiša**.

As the **2017/18 International Woolmark Prize regional finals** wrap up, we take a look at which emerging design talents will compete at the global finals in January.

The 12 emerging design talents to compete in the global finals of the International Woolmark Prize have been selected at regional competitions across the world, with events in: Asia; Australia & New Zealand; British Isles; Europe; Indian Subcontinent & the Middle East; and the USA.

The International Woolmark Prize aims to increase the global demand for Australian Merino wool, by promoting the versatility of the fibre and aligning young talent with commercial opportunities and ongoing mentorship from industry heavyweights. It remains AWI's most successful marketing strategy and provides design talent across the globe with the opportunity to be stocked in the world's most influential retailers.

New demand is generated not only from the loyalty to wool from the designers, but also from consumers who are experiencing the immediate presence of Woolmark-branded apparel in the world's best boutiques and online retailers.

"I think the International Woolmark Prize is a fantastic initiative to be able to support emerging designers and provide financial support, mentorship and expansion in retail stores," explained Australia & New Zealand regional judge Nicole Warne, whose blog Gary Pepper Girl has more than 2.3 million followers. "It's going to help the winners with global expansion in every way. I think it is the most prestigious award you could win and being

Australian I feel very connected and very proud of what Woolmark stands for."

The judging of the Australia & New Zealand regional final was held at AWI's office, followed by an industry gathering where Melbourne-based menswear label **BLAIRARCHIBALD** and womenswear label **Harman Grubiša** were announced as the winners.

Incorporating an old Army blanket and recycled wool fabric into his winning coat, **Blair Archibald** was able to uphold the sustainable practices which lie at the heart of his label to produce trousers made from 17.5 micron and a turtleneck which uses 21 micron.

"It's completely gratifying to be part of something that's so innovating in itself," said **Blair Archibald**. "It's my job as a designer to be really informative and educational with

my clients and the public. To be able to win something like this means I can continue with sustainable practices and be really proud to be an Australian-made brand."

Praised for its versatility – the 16 micron wool dress transforms into a clutch – **Harman Grubiša** was inspired by the urban nomad, with the winning look satisfying the needs of the **Harman Grubiša** woman.

"It's a real honour to even be nominated and included, and we just feel extremely privileged that Woolmark exists," said **Madeleine Harman** and **Jessica Grubiša**. "It encourages designers to think about the material they use and to be part of that journey is so wonderful." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmarkprize.com



The **Australia & New Zealand regional finalists** relax after the judging. Left to right: **Thomas Puttick**, **Elissa McGowan**, **Madeleine Harman**, **Chris Ran Lin**, **Jessica Grubiša**, **Rong Chen**, **Blair Archibald**, **Jason Alexander Pang**.



The Australia & New Zealand regional judges.
 Left to right: 2016/17 International Woolmark Prize womenswear winner, **Gabriela Hearst** (see page 11); Head of Design at R.M. Williams, **Jeremy Hershman**; Editor in Chief at Harper's Bazaar Australia, **Kellie Hush**; Founder of Gary Pepper Girl, **Nicole Warne**; General Manager Womenswear at David Jones, **Damian Burke**; Fashion Director at Men's Style, **Kim Payne**.



ASIA WINNERS
 Menswear model with winner **Six Lee** of **SixLee** from Hong Kong; South Korean womenswear winner **Kathleen Kye**, from winning label **KYE**, with model.



AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND WINNERS
 Menswear model with menswear winner **Blair Archibald** of **BLAIRARCHIBALD**; designers **Jessica Grubiša** (centre) and **Madeleine Harman** (far right) of womenswear winner **Harman Grubiša** with model (second right).



BRITISH ISLES WINNERS
 Menswear model (left) with menswear winner **Matthew Miller**. Womenswear model (second from right) with winner **Samantha McCoach** of **Le Kilt**.



EUROPE WINNER
 Womenswear winner **David Laport** from The Netherlands with model; menswear winner **L'HOMME ROUGE** designers **Jonatan Härngren** and **John-Ruben Holtback** (right) with model (centre).



INDIAN SUBCONTINENT & MIDDLE EAST
 Indian designer **Ruchika Sachdeva** of **Bodice** (far left) was announced the womenswear winner. Indian menswear winner **Antar-Agni** (far right) with model.



USA WINNERS
 Womenswear winner **Zaid Affas** (second from left) with model; Menswear winner **Christopher Bevans** of **DYNE** with model (far right).

CUSTOM-MADE MERINO WOOL SOCKS

Brooklyn-based brand Thursday Finest is changing the way we shop, letting customers take control of the design stage and tailoring Merino wool socks specifically to individual feet.

Knitted by robots, finished by hand, packaged by humans: that's the philosophy of innovative Brooklyn-based company Thursday Finest, turning the traditional manufacturing process upside-down, and using next-generation knitting machines to make custom order on-demand wool products direct from its New York studio.

Reducing the manufacturing time from months to a matter of minutes, Thursday Finest's Merino wool socks, scarves and ties are designed by you – the customer – and then made-up by a 3D-knitting machine, allowing for total transparency and zero waste.

"3D-knitting generates fully-fashioned items that don't need to be cut and sewn – each item comes out of the machine as a full, holistic object," explains Thursday Finest co-founder Veronika Harbick. "And because these items are generated from digital files, they can be digitally manipulated on a per item basis."

"Put those two together, and we're able to generate custom-fitting and personalised goods in minutes with extreme precision and quality. We are excited to pair this new technology with the wool – the original technical fibre – to deliver amazing, one-of-a-kind products for our customers for years to come."

Using 16.5 to 18.5 micron Australian Merino wool for a range of scarves and men's ties, Thursday Finest is this month expanding its range to include seamless Merino wool socks, with two styles available. The no-show ankle socks and the full-length socks are designed by the customer, who picks the design, colours and even a personal message and are shaped to follow the natural slope of your toes.

"Socks used to be something you'd hide under your pants and not think much about. Now, they're the top accessory for men and women. You actually want your socks to show; you want them to reflect your personality and your sense of style."

"We're taking this trend to a whole new level with our custom Merino socks. We enable you to customise the style, colour and text message that's knitted right into the back of your socks. All the socks are 3D-knitted on demand which enables us to make each pair individually and make it with a fully seamless, contoured toe for an extremely comfortable fit. We love that they are odour resistant"



Thursday Finest makes custom-made seamless socks made from Australia Merino wool.

so that people will be able to wear the socks for multiple days before washing. We love that with Merino, the socks will be breathable and insulating so that the same sock can be worn in the summer and your feet will remain cool and in the winter to keep to your feet warm."

AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, recently partnered with Thursday Finest, assisting with product development. They also joined forces to host an event for the design community in New York, that included a panel discussion moderated by Assistant Professor of Fashion Design and Sustainability at Parsons School of Design, Dr Timo Risannen, with AWI Country Manager Michelle Lee and Veronika Harbick speaking about the merits and eco-credentials of Merino wool.

"We brought our 3D-knitting machine and made custom socks on the spot. We've discovered that there is a real disconnect between the products we purchase and the people and the machines that make them. It's really rewarding to bring this new retail experience to life for people and create a deeper connection with the product they purchase."

"At Thursday Finest, we think holistically about a product's journey – from development to production to wear – and it's been fantastic to meet new yarn suppliers through Woolmark and to nerd out with The Woolmark Company team about the future of fashion, sustainability and textiles." **B**

Thursday Finest founders **Veronika Harbick** and **Michael Carlson**.

MORE INFORMATION
www.thursdayfinest.com

CIVIC PRIDE

A **Merino wool jacket** being released this month by US brand **Taylor Stitch** as part of its new **CIVIC** collection. This innovative jacket is made from the **water and wind resistant Optim™ fabric** that was originally developed by the **AWI-supported Wool Development Centre**. Also pictured are Merino blend chinos.

With AWI's assistance, San Francisco-based apparel company **Taylor Stitch** has combined **the natural benefits of Australian Merino wool with the latest technical innovations to create its new CIVIC range of clothing** designed for the urban commuter.

American clothing brand Taylor Stitch set out to change the way clothes were made. The brand grew in a short amount of time, and their customers range from the urban commuter to active folk, at home riding the city's subway during the week and trekking a mountain come the weekend.

The company is this month releasing a new line of clothing – CIVIC – for the urban dweller, that effortlessly follows you through the most demanding of city commutes, be it by bike, foot or bus, into the office, and out on the town. Every CIVIC garment is made from Australian Merino wool or Merino wool blends, with the label actively encouraging and supporting sustainable travel as a means to healthier lives, stronger communities, and a thriving environment for generations to come.

"I had never really tried it [Merino wool]; I bought three pieces and wore those pieces for two weeks straight. I became an advocate.

CIVIC DIRECTOR, ERIK JOULE

"CIVIC is effectively a new brand which was launched and validated under the Taylor Stitch umbrella," explains CIVIC director Erik Joule. "I pitched it about 18 months ago to Taylor Stitch and they offered to let my partner and I use the workshop to validate it and potentially launch it. We did so and

because of its success – via customer votes – are launching it full-blown in September."

It was as a backpacker in 2005 that Erik first encountered the naturally inherent benefits of Merino wool. During a hiking trip throughout New Zealand, Erik was advised to purchase some Merino wool apparel for the hike.

"I had never really tried it [Merino wool]; I bought three pieces and wore those pieces for two weeks straight. I became an advocate.

"I have worked on sustainable initiatives with apparel companies since the late-1990s and Merino is not only sustainable but holds so many qualities, from moisture wicking to cooling and never really smelling bad, let alone the durability of the fibre. I became fascinated with the concept of natural performance.

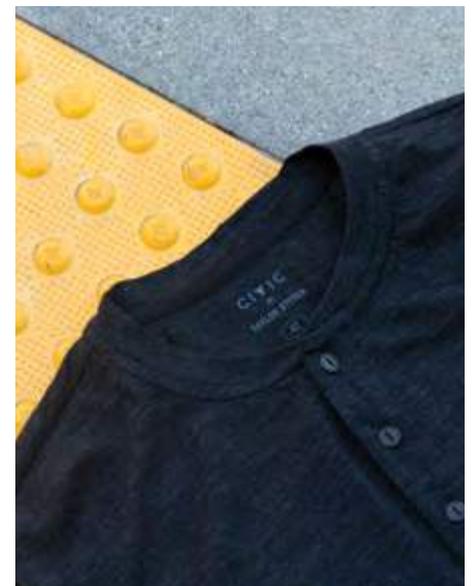
"In 2006 I saw [Icebreaker founder] Jeremy Moon speak at TED and I was energised. I chose Merino wool because I believe that for performance it is quasi-perfect: engineered by nature and enhanced by humans."

Erik was connected to the Americas team of AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, to assist across a gamut of areas including sourcing, production, brand launch, digital marketing and product innovation – the latter leading CIVIC to stock a range of Mercerized Merino T-shirts and become one of the first American brands to stock apparel crafted from the innovative water and wind resistant Merino wool Optim™ fabric.

"Woolmark has been inherent to our success; we are very small and they have given us tremendous resources and knowledge."

Officially launching this month, CIVIC will stock a range of performance menswear items including chinos, shorts, shirts and jackets. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.taylorstitch.com



The Mercerized Merino T-Shirt from the CIVIC collection by **Taylor Stitch**. The mercerisation process creates a smoother wool fibre surface and improved comfort especially in next to skin products..



A Merino wool item from **Max Mara's Autumn/Winter 2017 main line collection.**

MAX MARA

DEEPENS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH WOOL

Global brand Max Mara has expanded its deep relationship with wool, adding a range of Wool Denim pieces to its Autumn/Winter 2017 main line and showcasing the collection across the world with its own Wool Week celebrations.

Contemporary luxury brand Max Mara – one of the largest international fashion houses – has long been an avid supporter of the Australian wool industry and wool is deeply rooted into the brand's DNA. With coats and tailored apparel a signature of Max Mara, Australian wool has played – and continues to play – an integral role in the development of the label.

It was only a matter of time, then, before the brand expanded on its traditional use of wool, incorporating Merino into their denim range and offering consumers a luxury alternative to traditional denim apparel.

For Max Mara's Autumn/Winter 2017 collection, the global brand has worked alongside the technical team of AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, to co-develop an innovative Wool Denim range that forms part of its main line, celebrating the unique qualities of Australian Merino wool.

"Merino wool has always been a major fabric for Max Mara since it is used for coats, jackets and lightweights, and has always been important ever since Max Mara was founded in the 1950s," explains Max Mara Fashion Director Laura Lusuardi.

"Wool is very present in both our spring/summer and autumn/winter collections. First of all, wool is natural – the shearing, the combing, the carding – and it is

comfortable, soft, resilient, without season, is fresh in summer and warm in winter. A woman wearing a woollen garment is always impeccable, at any time of the day, from morning through to night. This is the main feature of wool for Max Mara."

Max Mara has utilised innovative 100 per cent Wool Denim fabrics that replicate the look and style of traditional denim – retaining the traditional 3/1 weave – but have added benefits thanks to the natural qualities of Merino wool, including increased softness, warmth and resistance to wrinkles. The twisted, strong wool yarns have been dyed with ecological dyes to imitate natural indigo and have been tested against the stringent guidelines to gain Woolmark certification.

Wool denim features in the form of a double-breasted blazer, palazzo trousers with front pleats, a shirt dress and a single-breasted jacket.

"What is important and what we want to communicate is that wool is natural, renewable and biodegradable," said Ms Lusuardi. "We know it and we use wool for these qualities, but we want to bring this story to the final consumer. Consumers trust Max Mara for the quality of garments but we decided, together with The Woolmark Company, to also tell them the qualities of wool because the value of a dress is not just about the style and fashion trends, but also the fabric quality, and we have decided that all Max Mara wool denim garments will be Woolmark-certified to ensure this quality."

In addition to joining the Woolmark licensing program, Max Mara has worked closely with AWI's technical experts on product development.

"Our team at AWI has provided in-depth training and education for more than 250 global Max Mara retail staff on the benefits and versatility of wool along with tips to pass onto their consumers, such as how



Left: AWI's Global Strategy Advisor **Fabrizio Servente** with Max Mara Fashion Director **Laura Lusuardi** and Max Mara Chairman **Ignazio Maramotti**.

Below: The Woolmark-certified collection of leading Italian fashion brand **Max Mara** at the brand's store in **Sydney**.



to care for wool," said AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "We see this retail education as another way AWI is boosting the demand for wool and ensuring both staff and consumers are well versed on the extraordinary benefits of the fibre."

To highlight the collaboration between Max Mara and The Woolmark Company, the two brands embarked on a global road show with 13 consumer and five press events telling the story of wool and pushing the Wool Denim collection. Titled the Max Mara Wool Week, events were held in Milan, Moscow, London, Beijing as well as at Max Mara's Westfield Sydney store in June. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.maxmara.com

FAST FACTS:

- Italian brand Max Mara, founded in 1951, is one of the largest international fashion houses and has used wool throughout its history.
- The brand has expanded its use of wool this season and introduced a Wool Denim range into its main line collection.
- Max Mara Wool Week events have been held across the world, including in June at Max Mara's Westfield Sydney store.
- Max Mara has joined the Woolmark licensing program and works closely with AWI's technical experts on product development.
- AWI has provided in-depth training to Max Mara retail staff on the benefits and versatility of Merino wool.



Taking inspiration from sailors, **Band of Outsiders** has included innovative **Wool Denim knits** into its Spring/Summer 2018 collection, uniquely unveiled at a comedy club in London.

JUST FOR LAUGHS: WOOL DENIM TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Fashion brand Band of Outsiders has taken the stage for its Spring/Summer 2018 launch, hosting a comedy show in central London.

The fashion industry is often mocked: think Patsy and Edina in the 'Ab Fab' TV comedy, the debate over cerulean in 'The Devil Wears Prada' movie or The Woolmark Company's very own mockumentary 'Unravelled' as part of the International Woolmark Prize promotion earlier this year.

But rarely do we see brands take the mickey out of their own clothes, yet that's exactly what happened when apparel label Band of Outsiders unveiled its Spring/Summer 2018 collection at a tongue-in-cheek launch event, with designer Angelo Van Mol and brand director Daniel Hettmann staging their collection launch at the Top Secret Comedy Club on Drury Lane in London.

"We asked ourselves what we could do instead of a classic show, and since comedy is very close to the brand's DNA, we thought this is it," said Hettmann.

Recruiting comedians Joe Sutherland, Elliot Steel, Alistair Williams and Mo Gilligan, the on-stage talent mocked the industry including aspiring models in their mid-20s, before segueing into the brand's clothing which took cues from traditional sailors' rags – "but not the chic sailors".

A highlight of the show was the feature of a Wool Denim knit, designed in collaboration with AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company. Having been presented The Wool Lab Denim earlier in the year, Band of Outsiders has now introduced a selection of Wool Denim styles across its Spring/Summer range.

"I am really excited to have worked with Wool Denim this collection, as it allowed me to innovate in material rather than just form," said Van Mol. "It embraces the workwear feel whilst retaining the look of denim, which I think made for a great end result that looks and feels the part." **B**



The Woolmark Gold Spring/Summer 2018 menswear collection was launched at Beijing's Oriental Poly Time Museum.

NEW WOOLMARK GOLD COLLECTION LAUNCHED IN CHINA

The Woolmark Gold Spring/Summer 2018 collection was recently launched, once again **positioning Australian Merino wool as the prestigious fibre of choice in the rapidly growing Chinese domestic market for premium apparel.**

AWI has collaborated with three luxury Chinese menswear labels to unveil the latest Woolmark Gold collection, under the theme The Gentleman's Guild.

The Spring/Summer 2018 menswear collection brought together Chinese tailoring labels Beautyberry, TRANDS and UPPER, with each piece in the collection made using premium Woolmark Gold fabrics.

The collection was launched at Beijing's Oriental Poly Time Museum. An accompanying Woolmark Gold exhibition included an introduction to all the 17 Woolmark Gold-accredited weavers and spinners, as well as Merino wool elements from farm to fashion, a menswear tailoring display, and a virtual reality experience of an Australian wool-growing property. Suits made with Woolmark Gold fabrics were also on display to highlight the versatility and beauty of Merino wool.

AWI Country Manager Jeff Ma said the Spring/Summer 2018 collections from Beautyberry, TRANDS and UPPER, which are commercially available, are a nod towards

China's growing luxury menswear market, where style-conscious customers demand premium quality materials, exquisite craftsmanship and modern silhouettes that reflect the latest global trends.

"This year we continue to present the Woolmark Gold collection in China, once again showcasing the finest weavers and spinners, as well as the most premium menswear brands," said AWI Country Manager Jeff Ma.

"The suit is the modern gentleman's coat of armour, and there is no armour more befitting the sophisticated, elegant and intrepid spirit of the modern gentleman than a tailor-made suit crafted with luxurious 19.5 micron Australian Merino wool."

Acknowledging the spirit of the modern gentleman, Woolmark Gold also honoured at the event a group of outstanding gentlemen from diverse industries who not only embody the values of "elegance, responsibility and uncompromising quality", but have also made notable contributions in cultural outreach, social responsibility and entrepreneurship. **B**

ABOUT WOOLMARK GOLD

Launched five years ago, the Woolmark Gold program positions Australian Merino wool as the prestigious fibre of choice in the rapidly growing Chinese domestic market for luxury apparel. The program was established to meet the increasing demand for premium products and fibres, and allows luxury consumers to know more about the story behind the Merino wool product.

Woolmark Gold represents the finest Australian Merino wool cloths and yarn made by a select group of 17 traditional British and European spinners and weavers.

Offering superior quality fabrics for high-end menswear, the Woolmark Gold brand has become a trusted favourite among the China's most discerning designers and consumers.

WOOL DENIM

at major trade shows including King Pins (Amsterdam), Première Vision (Paris) and at Hong Kong Fashion Week, where AWI's Technical Manager Brenda Yang conducted a seminar, generating interest from overseas buyers and brands to incorporate Wool Denim into their own collections.

"The Wool Denim project is successfully using the latest technology to create a high-performance fabrication and increase the use of Merino wool in urban wear and lifestyle markets," said AWI Key Account Manager for Hong Kong, Daniel Chan.

AWI also showcases The Wool Lab Denim – a sourcing guide to commercially available Wool Denim fabrics – at the world's major trade shows, as well as offering one-on-one meetings with brands, designers and students. Each volume of The Wool Lab Denim showcases the very latest technical developments for application across a wide range of products. Unveiled in January, this unique sourcing guide is already proving to be extremely popular in the industry. **B**



Wool Denim apparel created by **Mou Fung** on display at **AWI's Wool Resource Centre** in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong-based denim manufacturer Mou Fung is the latest company to incorporate Wool Denim into its product offering.

From your favourite pair of denim jeans, to stepping out in double denim, there's no denying the fact that this traditional indigo fabric is a staple in anyone's wardrobe. Wool Denim fabrics are a new approach to improving the aesthetics of traditional denim, whilst highlighting the natural benefits of Merino wool such as increased warmth, breathability and resistance to odour.

Hong Kong-based denim fabric maker Mou Fung has collaborated with AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company to include Wool Denim in its product offering, co-developing various products including Wool Denim jeans, skirts and vests.

The resultant fabrics were then constructed into a collection of urban apparel, showcased



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**Boehringer
Ingelheim**

RECOGNITION FOR THE THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS OF SUPERFINE MERINO WOOL

The scientific credentials of superfine Merino wool's benefits for eczema sufferers have been established through publication of a clinical study of infants, in the high-ranking peer-reviewed journal the *British Journal of Dermatology*.

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.

In a significant development, the results of an AWI-funded study at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute (MCRI) in Melbourne were earlier this year peer reviewed and published in the *British Journal of Dermatology*. Journals such as the *British Journal of Dermatology* that use peer review enjoy an excellent reputation and are trusted by experts in the field.

The study challenged generalisations that wool was to be avoided by children with



The daughter of **Rheannan Williams** was one of the infants that took part in the **AWI-funded study** that has now been published in the **British Journal of Dermatology**.

eczema and concluded that traditional management guidelines for eczema should be modified to include superfine Merino wool as a recommended clothing choice.

"With eight per cent of consumers not buying wool because they think it is itchy, it is important to challenge these myths and champion wool's therapeutic benefits," explains AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "By sponsoring these clinical trials and publishing the findings in credible peer-reviewed medical journals, we aim to increase the demand for superfine Merino wool products, not only amongst eczema sufferers but also the wider population."

AWI is in the process of broadening the

environmental and demographic reach of this research and commenced a study of superfine wool's benefits for children and adults in the USA (Louisville, Kentucky) earlier this year. It will conclude mid-2018.

To further advocate this message, AWI's in-house videography and marketing team has produced an animated video to explain how and why superfine Merino wool is good for the skin. It will be promoted globally to relevant medical associations, along with a fact sheet explaining the studies and their findings. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

The published article can be downloaded free from www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com

MINIJUMBUK'S HOSPITAL WOOL FLEECE

MiniJumbuk's new Hospital Wool Fleece has been designed to reduce the risk of bedsores and alleviate pain, particularly for hospital patients and wheelchair users.



MiniJumbuk recently released a range of **Hospital Wool Fleece products** – including covers for beds and wheelchairs, as well as a chair cushion.

With an increasing amount of evidence championing the health and wellbeing properties of wool, Australian bedding brand and Woolmark licensee MiniJumbuk recently released a range of new products – including fleeces for beds and wheelchairs, as well as a chair cushion – targeting hospital patients, wheelchair users, or simply office workers who spend much of the day sitting on a chair.

The MiniJumbuk Hospital Wool Fleece has been designed to help minimise pressure, alleviating pain from sore spots and reducing the risk of bedsores or pressure ulcers. Made from extra-thick Australian wool pile, MiniJumbuk says it provides exceptional comfort as each wool fibre acts like a spring to lift and support the body while you sleep. As an added benefit, the products are also fully machine washable.

"A wool fleece can help minimise pressure, spreading and more evenly distributing

weight around 'at-risk' areas," explains MiniJumbuk CEO Darren Turner. "Being highly absorbent, wool draws moisture away from the body, keeping surrounding skin dry and comfortable and helping the patient to maintain a consistent core temperature."

Designed to provide extra padding to a bed, the MiniJumbuk Hospital Wool Fleece 'Bed Cover' is also suitable for use in a chair or on the floor. Measuring 150cm in length, the fleece can be positioned to relieve pressure from the shoulders to the ankles. MiniJumbuk says the 'Wheelchair Cover' will ease stress on the back and coccyx, while remaining firmly in place with its strong elastic strap. Light, transportable, and perfect for travellers, the 'Chair Cushion' will provide a comfortable pad to help alleviate discomfort wherever it is required. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

www.minijumbuk.com.au

The new **Range Rover Velar**.

WOOL INTERIOR IN NEW RANGE ROVER VELAR

Land Rover's new Range Rover Velar is available with an innovative wool blend interior which Land Rover says is the first ever non-leather premium interior option on a volume-manufactured model.

The Range Rover Velar, the highly lauded fourth member of the Range Rover family, will soon land on Australia's shores, and the car's interior furnishings - developed with Danish technical fabric specialists Kvadrat - are available with a wool blend fabric.

Unique to the SUV segment, the Velar offers what Land Rover calls a 'Premium Textile' as an alternative to leather in the creation of a contemporary and beautifully crafted interior.

"Our collaboration with Kvadrat couldn't have been more appropriate. Kvadrat shares Land Rover's ethos and desire to continually innovate, to offer more curated customer choice and to define the future of luxury materials in our respective design industries," said Land Rover Colour and Materials Chief Designer, Amy Frascella.

Kvadrat worked closely with Land Rover to develop the unique and luxurious wool blend upholstery. This material has been designed and created to meet Land Rover's leading standards for premium appearance, comfort and durability.

"Land Rover approached us to do a textile for the Velar - a textile that should fit the very high-tech interior but that should also bring some warmth into the interior, and of course there were a lot of requirements in terms of quality, a lot of demands for durability, but finally we ended up with the right composition with the right blend of wool and polyester," said Kvadrat's Head of Design Management, Charlotte Bastholm Skjold.

"It's really a breakthrough that Land Rover has introduced a car where you have a

textile with a wool blend. It's not normally used in the car industry.

"The fact that you have wool in it gives it very nice properties: it's a natural material, it's biodegradable, it's renewable, and if it's very hot then you will stay cool, and if it's very cold then you'll actually have the warmth and the comfort of this textile. So this of course is really premium because of the benefits of the wool and also the look and feel that it gives.

"What Land Rover has tried to do is really take elements of your living room, where you feel warm and comfortable, into the car; and I really see that's a tendency that we will see coming more and more."

B

MORE INFORMATION

www.landrover.com

www.kvadrat.dk



The wool blend interior of the **Range Rover Velar**.



Land Rover Colour and Materials Chief Designer, **Amy Frascella** with **Kvadrat CEO Anders Byriel** showcasing to the press the interior of the **Velar** at **Milan Design Week**. "Together [Land Rover and Kvadrat] are bringing high-end interior feel and quality into the premium automotive segment," said Kvadrat CEO Anders Byriel.

TRADE SHOW PRESENCE

HELPS BUILD DEMAND FOR WOOL

AWI exhibits at the world's most important international textile trade shows to inspire the world's leading manufacturers, brands and retailers to include wool in their upcoming collections.

Trade shows are golden opportunities for AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, to develop business-to-business relationships with the world's leading textile and apparel companies. The shows are like a mecca for leading product developers, brand buying and sourcing teams, designers, manufacturers and retailers from across the world.

"International trade shows are vital to showcase and promote Australian wool, new product developments, and AWI's The Wool Lab sourcing guide," explained AWI General Manager, Processing Innovation & Education Extension, Julie Davies.

"Our presence at trade shows provides an important source of leads for continual business development as well as the opportunity to support our trade partners.

"We use these shows to affirm The Woolmark Company's role as a leading authority in the fashion, sports and textile industries, through face to face meetings, displays, seminars, media coverage, partner feedback, and importantly post-trade show follow up.

"Also of great interest on our stand is the 'virtual reality farm tour', where visitors can wear virtual reality headsets and be 'transported' to an Australian sheep farm to visually experience first-hand the source of Merino wool."

Julie explained that June to October is a crucial time in the yearly fashion cycle. It is during this time that retailers and brands in the northern hemisphere collect product ideas for their following year's autumn/winter collections. It takes up to 12 months for brands to design collections, manufacture fabrics and garments, and then stock them in stores.

"The Woolmark Company has a 'window of opportunity' each year to convince brands and retailers to stock wool for a particular season – it's important to get the timing right. There would be no point in us doing our trade marketing a month after they had already made their buying decisions," Julie said.

For the northern hemisphere's 2018/19 autumn/winter season collections, The Woolmark Company is therefore exhibiting at the following large and influential trade shows in 2017, ie marketing at precisely the time the retailers are considering what products to put in their seasonal collections:

- Pitti Uomo men's apparel fabric show, Florence (June)
- Pitti Filati yarn and knitwear show, Florence (June)
- Milano Unica apparel fabric show, Milan (July)
- SpinExpo yarn and knitwear show, Shanghai (August)
- Première Vision apparel fabric show, Paris (September)
- Intertextile show for apparel fabrics, Shanghai (October).

In the weeks following trade shows, workshops are also held by The Woolmark Company's global offices individually with retailers and brands. Training of retail decision makers, such as the company's buyers, merchandisers, designers and technologists, is undertaken to both stimulate interest and build their confidence to invest in wool product lines.

"Education and training of supply chain participants ensures wool remains a competitive processing sector against other fibres; and inspires designers, brands and retailers to use wool in their product ranges," Julie said.

"Activities are aimed at leveraging the intrinsic properties of wool to grow profitable demand for wool products for the benefit of Australian woolgrowers." **B**



AWI attended or exhibited at 18 international trade shows in 2016/17 showcasing **The Wool Lab** (pictured above, and described in the column to the right), new **product development**, and the source of wool on an Australian sheep farm via **virtual reality** headsets (pictured top).

THE WOOL LAB

A DRAWCARD AT TRADE SHOWS

The new edition of AWI's **The Wool Lab – the seasonal guide to the best wool fabrics and yarns in the world** – was launched in June 2017 at the Pitti Uomo trade show and proved to be as popular as ever.

The Wool Lab contains a selection of the most innovative and quality wool fabrics and yarns commercially available on the market from the best spinners and weavers in the world.

Since the launch of the first edition six years ago, The Wool Lab continues to be a global success and an important tool for the fashion industry, including brands, retailers, manufacturers, spinners, weavers and the media. Each edition now generates about 10,000 swatch requests from the textile trade.

The Wool Lab has proven to be an extremely popular exhibit at the trade show stands of AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company. Each season, an increasing number of brands and designers look forward to seeing the latest offering as it provides the opportunity for them to explore an actual sourcing guide for commercially available products.

It is a key way for The Woolmark Company to engage with supply chain partners, targeting the premium end of the apparel and interior markets to stimulate the demand for Australian wool.

The Wool Lab guide for Autumn/Winter 2018/19 was launched in June 2017 at the Pitti Uomo trade show in June. Seven fashion-oriented themes were presented. In addition, The Wool Lab Sport and The Wool Lab Denim returned this season, with each of the popular books updated to include the latest innovations and technical fabrics.

The Wool Lab is also released in a preview format for spinners and weavers three months prior to the release of the main The Wool Lab book.

A magazine of The Wool Lab Preview is also made available for purchase for a broader audience. The magazine is sold in the best trade fairs and professional bookstores and is distributed in more than 25 countries. 

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com



Z Zegna's latest **TECHMERINO™** collection was launched to the trade at the **Pitti Uomo** trade show.

TAILORING MEETS PERFORMANCE WITH Z ZEGNA'S SPORTS-LUXE COLLECTION

Unveiled at the Pitti Uomo trade show, Z Zegna's wool-rich **TECHMERINO™ SS18** collection is perfect for all seasons, classic for any occasion, and ideal for those on the go.

Luxury Italian sportswear label Z Zegna – the sportswear line of the iconic Ermenegildo Zegna Group – unveiled its **TECHMERINO™** Spring/Summer 2018 collection, in collaboration with AWI, during the Pitti Uomo trade show in Florence.

Using 17.5 micron Merino wool, **TECHMERINO™** is a fusion of the best attributes of Merino wool with the most sophisticated wool processing and finishing techniques. The result is a breathable water-resistant fabric that adapts to the ambient temperature and is quick drying.

Innovation in **TECHMERINO™** tailoring debuts with **TECHMERINO™ WASH & GO** suiting, which is domestically machine washable while maintaining the same performance with a natural casual fit. The vintage regatta influence extends

into the accessories, featuring a selection of **TECHMERINO™** sneakers, water-repellent **TECHMERINO™** backpacks, ocean hoods and soft-shell sailing hats.

"We are very pleased to partner with Ermenegildo Zegna for this project," explains AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "The activewear market is continuing to grow at an explosive rate and our collaboration with Ermenegildo Zegna further positions Merino wool as a versatile, multifunctional fibre in the sportswear sector. As the global authority on wool, we not only pride ourselves on being at the forefront of innovation, but also on the transfer of our knowledge of the fibre."

The Spring/Summer 18 **TECHMERINO™** collection will be available globally from February 2018, during which the shop windows of 120 Zegna flagship stores will be set up to highlight the exclusive features of this noble fibre. 

In collaboration with AWI, Japanese student designers from a leading fashion university in Japan earlier this year created graduate collections using Merino wool, with one lucky student given the opportunity to visit a wool-growing property in Australia.



Kenta Nishimura at Bunka Fashion Graduate University in Japan in February with his winning collection made from Merino wool.

JAPANESE GRADUATES DISCOVER THE BENEFITS OF AUSTRALIAN WOOL

Continuing to foster the development and education of emerging fashion designers in important markets for Australian wool, AWI has partnered with the prestigious Bunka Fashion Graduate University (BFGU) in Japan to put wool in the hands of its student design talent.

BFGU is the first professional graduate fashion university in Japan. Students at BFGU were treated to a Wool Appreciation Course by AWI as well as a presentation by former International Woolmark Prize menswear finalists Agi & Sam. Promotional collateral was also promoted around campus, highlighting AWI activities and the versatility of wool.

During the Bunka Fashion Graduate University Fashion Week in February, AWI

also sponsored the Next Generation Award, with students encouraged to incorporate Australian Merino wool into their graduation collections. AWI organised for Japanese suppliers to provide wool fabric for students to create their collections. The judging panel chose Kenta Nishimura as the winner, praised for his thinking behind how to use Merino wool along with his bold and creative design that maximised the inherent benefits of the natural fibre.

VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

Kenta was awarded a trip to Australia, where he met with key AWI staff to further broaden his knowledge of wool, and visited Ian, Pam and Austin McLennan's property 'Connen Hill' in the Goulburn district of NSW to discover the source of the fibre.

Kenta was very impressed with the visit and now has a strong will to be an ambassador for wool to help others to know the benefits and origin of the fibre.

"It was a precious opportunity for me to see the wool-growing and shearing process at the farm, because until our recent wool education at university I had never looked at sheep as a source of wool fabric or wool textile; when I was designing clothes, I saw wool only in the form of yarn or fabrics," he said.

"I think it is important to know the provenance of wool and the production process. Many Japanese designers can distinguish wool, cotton or silk, however they don't necessarily know where they come from." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com



Three of the 100% Merino wool knitwear designs inspired by AWI's The Wool Lab, on show at the Pitti Filati trade show in Florence, Italy, in June. PHOTO: Proj3ct Studio

Twelve Italian students of Creative Knitwear Design had the opportunity to create Merino wool yarns and outfits earlier this year, which were then showcased at the Pitti Filati trade show for knitting yarns and knitwear in Florence in June.

The students, from the Accademia Costume & Moda (Academy of Costume and Fashion, in Rome), drew inspiration from the latest edition of The Wool Lab, which is AWI's definitive seasonal guide to the best wool fabrics and yarns commercially available on the market.

Collaborating with some of Italy's most prestigious knitwear and yarn companies

and with the technical support offered by knitting machine manufacturers Stoll and Shima Seiki, the degree has been created for young designers interested in focusing on knitwear design and innovation.

Participants also had the unique opportunity to create new yarns working directly in the factory of Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia – a world leader in the production of fine yarns for top-quality knitwear, and large buyer of Australian Merino wool.

The Wool Lab Autumn/Winter 2018/19 edition was brought to life by the students, who created 12 innovative outfits using 100 per cent Merino wool yarns. As well

as being showcased at a fashion show at Pitti Filati, the garments were on display at Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia's stand during Pitti Filati.

The fashion show in which the garments featured was promoted and organised by the Fondazione Pitti Immagine Discovery together with the Accademia Costume & Moda fashion school and the Italian fashion archive Modateca Deanna, in collaboration with AWI and the Max Mara and Avant Toi fashion brands. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com
www.pittimmagine.com

THE WOOL LAB INSPIRES ITALIAN STUDENTS' KNITWEAR DESIGNS

The latest edition of AWI's The Wool Lab was brought to life at the Pitti Filati trade show via a fashion show at which Italian knitwear students presented 12 innovative knitwear designs made from 100% Australian Merino wool yarns.

CONNECTING INDIAN FASHION STUDENTS WITH WOOL

Following last year's inaugural **Wool Runway design competition**, tertiary fashion students in India once again have the opportunity to take part in this AWI initiative that connects the students with industry leaders whilst working with wool.

A tertiary education initiative that launched as a pilot program last year in India will officially kick off again this month, giving tertiary students in India the opportunity to design an outfit made from Australian Merino wool and connect with key representatives from the textile and fashion industry.

The program, called Wool Runway, was initiated by AWI's Education Extension team last year to inspire emerging fashion designers to work with Australian Merino wool and educate the next generation of consumers.



Last year's winning design of **Ankit Kajla**.

Three of India's leading fashion universities – National Institute of Fashion Technology, Pearl Academy and National Institute of Design – will once again take part in the program, this year expanding to engage 15 campuses across the country. Similar to last year's award, students will have the opportunity to win an internship with a leading retailer, designer or media outlet.

"The students thoroughly study the wool fibre and use it to its full potential which directly reflects in their quality of work," explained AWI Country Manager India, Arti Gudal.

"We constantly endeavour to unleash budding design talent and bring them to the forefront as they explore the infinite possibilities of working with Merino wool. We are happy that Wool Runway has done just that and been a nurturing and innovative platform for students of this new generation. It has been an exciting journey right from the beginning and we are so happy to have industry leaders and designers support Wool Runway."



Renowned fashion designer **Troy Costa**, actress **Vaani Kapoor**, second runner-up **Miloni Kothari**, winner **Ankit Kajla**, AWI Country Manager **Arti Gudal**, second runner-up **Apoorva Wadhwa**, first runner-up **Kavya daultani**.

2016'S COMPETITION

During last year's competition, 450 participating students attended a Wool Appreciation Course and were also given the opportunity to discover The Wool Lab sourcing guide and its themes. Seventy of the students took part in the competition, submitting a design statement, mood board and five sketches of wool looks.

Eighteen finalists were then chosen to make their hero look, with fabric kindly provided by Raymond Fine Fabrics, and present it at a star-studded fashion show in Mumbai in front of a judging panel made up of industry leaders and influencers.

A key highlight of the awards night was an exclusive fashion show held by the House of Raymond, which included its made-to-measure, ready-to-wear and fine fabrics ranges. Celebrated youth icons and showstoppers Shraavan Reddy and Ruslaan Mumtaz were sent down the runway for Raymond, designed by Dhruv Vaish.

"Wool Runway has been a truly educative platform for students to challenge their designing ability and further their horizon by working with a fibre like Merino wool," said Raymond Limited President (Textiles) Sudhanshu Pokhriyal.

"The effort that the winners have put into their designs is truly commendable. Their innovative designs have captured the essence of Merino wool and its adaptability. Innovation is a core value that we always support and I'm glad that Raymond has once again been a part of an enriching experience."

WOOL BACK AT WOOLLOOMOOLOO

Bales of wool hoisted onto a ship at **Woolloomooloo Wharf**, Sydney, in the 1930s, where there is now the **Ovolo Hotel**.

Ovolo Hotels chose quality wool carpet by Woolmark licensee Godfrey Hirst to fit out its new hotel on the iconic Woolloomooloo Wharf in Sydney. This is highly appropriate, not least because of the century-old wharf's rich history with wool; it spent most of its working life as an export point for Australian wool.

Ovolo Hotels is an independent, dynamic and growing hospitality company that owns and operates a collection of individually designed lifestyle hotels and serviced apartments in Hong Kong and Australia. The hotels attract the modern traveller through award-winning interiors, detail-driven comforts, and cutting-edge en-suite technology, all done in signature style.

Last year Ovolo opened a new hotel on the impressive Woolloomooloo Wharf in Sydney – the largest and most distinguished timber wharf building in Sydney Harbour.

Built in 1915, the wharf (originally known as Finger Wharf) spent most of its working life handling the export of wool, but it also acted as a staging point for troop deployment to the World Wars as well as a disembarking point for new migrants arriving in Australia.

It fell into disrepair during the 1970s and the NSW Government decided in 1987 that demolition was the only option. However, people were opposed to losing the wharf and in the early 1990s it was acquired by a developer who has turned it into a fashionable complex housing a hotel, restaurants and residential apartments.

In 2015, the lifestyle hospitality company Ovolo chose the wharf as its latest Australian venue.

Following the success of the Ovolo Laneways in Melbourne, the Hong Kong-based company enlisted Hassell Design to reinvigorate the iconic location and bring the brand's vision to life. The spectacular refurbishment earned Hassell Design a

spot on the shortlist for the Interior Design Excellence Awards 2016.

Bridging between heritage and modern luxury, the hotel design indulged in the rich history of the wharf complemented by contemporary designs and tech-savvy inclusions.

With an established design aesthetic, the rooms at the Ovolo needed carpet that could pack a punch. With locally sourced products and luxury at the heart, Godfrey Hirst quality wool carpet fit the brief.

"Our Woolmark-certified 'Caribbean' wool carpet is soft and textured, and the level loop pile construction gives the flooring a subtle grainy texture. Speckles of colour throughout the heathered yarn add a textured depth," John Harrison, Godfrey Hirst Marketing Manager said.

"The versatility of this stunning neutral carpet is never more evident than in this

project. Where each room varies in colour, style and artwork, this wool carpet clearly holds its own."

Godfrey Hirst is also one of the oldest Woolmark Interiors licensees, gaining certification in 1968. A mark of quality assurance, customers know that products stamped with the Woolmark logo are made from high-quality pure new wool.

"We have had a long-standing relationship with The Woolmark Company and it's a relationship which we value highly. We believe the Woolmark logo has very high customer appeal and that's why we are proud to display the logo on all residential and commercial products," Mr Harrison said.

MORE INFORMATION
www.godfreyhirst.com.au

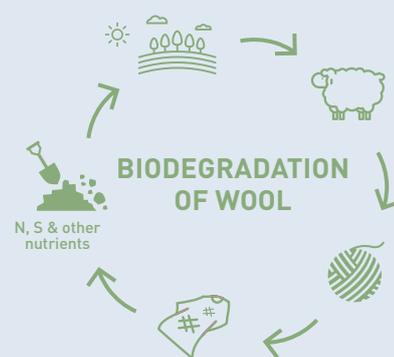


A **Godfrey Hirst** Woolmark-certified wool carpet at the **Ovolo Hotel** at **Woolloomooloo Wharf**.
PHOTO: Nicole England

WOOL FACTS

WOOL IS 100%

BIODEGRADABLE



Wool is a natural and renewable resource. As long as there is grass to eat, sheep will continue to produce wool. **When wool is disposed of, it will naturally decompose in soil in a matter of months or years, slowly releasing valuable nutrients back into the earth.** Synthetic fibres, on the other hand, can be extremely slow to degrade and significantly contribute to the world's overflowing landfills.

HOW DOES WOOL BIODEGRADE?

All materials of animal and vegetable origin have some degree of biodegradability, meaning that they are capable of being decomposed by the action of living organisms, such as fungi and bacteria.

Wool is composed of the natural protein keratin, which is similar to the protein that makes up human hair. When keratin is broken down naturally by microorganisms, the products do not pose any environmental hazard.

WOOL READILY BIODEGRADES IN MOIST, WARM CONDITIONS

On disposal, if wool is kept warm and moist or buried in soil, fungal and bacterial growths develop which produce enzymes that digest wool.

On the other hand, thanks to the unique chemical structure of keratin and wool's tough, water-repellent outer membrane, clean and dry wool fibres do not readily degrade. This allows wool products to be resilient and long-lasting in normal conditions.

HOW QUICKLY DOES WOOL BIODEGRADE?

Wool biodegrades readily in as little as three to four months but the rate varies with soil, climate and wool characteristics.¹ This releases essential elements such as nitrogen, sulphur and magnesium back to the soil, able to be taken up by growing plants.² Some studies found marked weight loss after only four weeks' burial in soils.³

Research has shown that processing treatments such as dyeing and anti-shrink treatment can affect the rate of biodegradation in soil, causing an increase in the initial resistance of wool fabric to degradation. However, this is a short term effect, typically not persisting beyond eight weeks.

WOOL RETURNS ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS TO THE SOIL

On burial in soil, wool becomes a slow-release fertiliser providing nutrients for uptake and growth by other organisms. Some have even used wool fertiliser to foster herb and vegetable growth.⁴ This is known as natural closed loop recycling; restoring the initial inputs of soil and grass. Other beneficial effects of adding wool to soils include enhanced water holding capacity, improved water infiltration, soil aeration and reduced erosion. Ground-up wool carpet, when used as a fertiliser, increased the dry matter yield of grass growth by 24% to 82%.⁵

WOOL DOES NOT ADD TO LANDFILL VOLUMES OR MICROFIBRE POLLUTION

Natural fibres biodegrade naturally in a relatively short period in soils and aquatic systems and therefore do not accumulate in landfill and oceans. Results from a University of Canterbury study demonstrate that wool degrades in a marine environment.⁶ In contrast, synthetic textiles persist for many decades and can disintegrate to small fragments. Commonly known as microplastics, or microfibrils when less than 5mm in diameter, these fragments accumulate in aquatic environments and land disposal sites where they have negative effects on ecosystems when consumed by organisms. A single polyester fleece garment can produce more than 1900 fibres per wash.⁷ Ingestion has a negative impact on organisms, sometimes causing death through starvation as plastic replaces food in the stomach.⁸ Once in the food chain, microplastics potentially also affect human health via seafood consumption.⁹

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The latest intake of six Young Farming Champions, sponsored by AWI, will promote positive images and perceptions of the wool industry to students participating in Art4Agriculture's school program who might never have considered a career in agriculture.

The Young Farming Champion program continues to create an Australia-wide network of enthusiastic young professionals to promote Australian agriculture as a dynamic, innovative, rewarding and vibrant industry.

Co-sponsored by AWI, the initiative is a program developed by Art4Agriculture – a network of young people who share a passion about teaching others the pivotal role Australian farmers play in feeding and clothing the world. AWI has been involved in the program since 2012 and this year is sponsoring six more Young Farming Champions.

They will actively engage with the public and school students, spreading their passion for wool, bridging the rural-urban divide, and inspiring the next generation of youngsters to consider a career in the wool industry.

Here we introduce the six new Young Farming Champions for the wool industry.

MORE INFORMATION
www.wool.com/yfc

LUCY COLLINGRIDGE



Born and bred in Cootamundra NSW, Lucy was a self-confessed 'townie' who developed her love for the wool industry during holidays in her early years of high school with family near Condobolin. She went on to study a Bachelor of Agriculture at UNE and then worked as a farm hand on a sheep property. Lucy is now a biosecurity officer with the Central West Local Land Services in Nyngan and is studying a Graduate Certificate in Agriculture (Animal Science) through UNE.

"We need to continue to educate the next generation about agriculture... Just because someone is born in a large city, doesn't mean they won't have a passion and interest in agriculture on a ground level or as a consumer."

NEW YOUNG PROMOS

HAMISH MCGRATH



Hamish was brought up on a 14,500-hectare Merino station, 'Womboin', at Marra Creek, 110km north of Nyngan NSW. He is currently in his fourth year at the University of Sydney, studying Agriculture Science with a major in pasture agronomy. During work experience he has seen many different ways of managing farms and sheep stations but he found two weeks spent on the Northern Tablelands particularly interesting looking at a completely different way of managing a Merino production system.

"It worries me that whole generations of some of the most comprehensive farming knowledge in the world will be lost with the ageing farmers of Australia. As a Young Farming Champion, I want to help young people see the benefits of a career in agriculture."

CAITLIN HEPPNER



Being Barossa born and bred, Caitlin grew up surrounded by viticulture and it wasn't until she was 10 that she discovered sheep and wool, when she met the Australian Shearing and Wool Handling Team at Portree Station. It was then that the young South Australian began working as a wool handler in local sheds, at 14 learnt to shear and started competing in shearing and wool handling competitions, and at 18 she fulfilled her dream and became a registered woolclasser.

"Essentially my aim is to close the gap between producers and consumers and create a better understanding and appreciation of what really happens in the wool industry."

DEANNA JOHNSTON



Deanna is from a wool-growing property at Naradhan in the Central West of NSW. She completed her Certificate IV in Woolclassing and Certificate II in Shearing by the age of 16. Since then, shearing competitions and wool handling competitions have become her weekend hobby. Finishing Yanco Agricultural High School last year, she aims to study a double degree in Agriculture and Business at UNE with a long-term view to go back to the family farm and take over the sheep enterprise.

"Communities cannot survive without agriculture, and agriculture cannot survive without the support of communities. By showing the exciting future of agriculture, it will only encourage people to be part of it and will strengthen the sector."

KATHERINE BAIN



Sixth-generation farmer Katherine Bain of Stockyard Hill in the western districts of Victoria is studying an Agribusiness degree at Marcus Oldham College. She has been involved in agriculture her entire life in many different ways, mainly helping on the farm but also being heavily involved in the local show at Beaufort. The Bains currently run a flock of about 3,500 Merinos plus 4,500 crossbred sheep. Katherine is the 2016 recipient of a Horizon Scholarship sponsored by AWI.

"With the platform of the Young Farming Champions program, I hope to share my knowledge of the wool industry to those who don't have exposure to agriculture, from sheep husbandry right through to selling a finished product."

FARMING CHAMPIONS TINING WOOL

First-generation Australian-Chinese Samantha Wan from the urban suburbs of Sydney might not be the typical demographic of someone in the Australian wool industry, but you would be hard pressed to find someone as passionate about the industry as she is. Here new Young Farming Champion Samantha gives us an entertaining account of her entrance into the wool industry.



Young Farming Champion **Samantha Wan** at last year's Sheepvention in Hamilton, Victoria.
PHOTO: Tracey Kruger

SAMANTHA WAN

Mill owner's daughter. Foreign exchange student. Victim to the lamb-is-a-poodle scam. These are my favourite and most amusing cases of mistaken identity.

Hi there, I'm Samantha Wan and I'm a Technical Officer and Auctioneer for Elders Wool, based at the National Wool Selling Centre, Melbourne. I'm a first-generation Australian-born Chinese. My Mum is from Hong Kong with Macanese heritage and Dad is Chinese Malaysian. I'm the eldest of two and from the western Sydney suburb of Blacktown, 35kms west of the Sydney CBD.

Looking back, I didn't know what lamb tasted like until I was around 10 and I have a not so fond memory of Dad putting it into a herbal Chinese soup. The closest thing I had to seeing agriculture in action was Fairfield City Farm in western Sydney, more a petting zoo that showed me how to milk a cow and feed chickens.

A career in agriculture never seemed an option so I continued on my merry way expecting to be something (anything) in

the Information Technology race. That was until high school when I was introduced to Agriculture. A great teacher, keen classmates and a mixed bunch of black Corriedales opened up the world of ag shows, sheep classes and junior judging. Even though I was quietly sure this was the start of something bigger, my family weren't sure what to make of the pieces of satin I hung so proudly and if the fun and enjoyment would ever amount to anything.

Wool broker doesn't quite make the top three careers your Chinese child should be (see doctor, lawyer and accountant) so it's a good thing my parents didn't fall too hard into stereotypes. After all, my first car would have been my grandma's old Corolla hatchback instead of a Commodore ute, and I'd say it takes a bit of willpower to let your firstborn journey off to places like Yass, Hay, Dubbo, Molong and Warren after you have only had them pointed out on a map.

"If by sharing my story I'm able to convey my passion for an industry that adopted such a black sheep, it might open the eyes of someone who didn't think agriculture was the place for them."

**SAMANTHA WAN,
YOUNG FARMING CHAMPION**

As was expected, I went to university: the University of Sydney for Science in Agriculture. I also did cross-institutional Wool units with the University of New England (UNE). There was more than a bit of alarm when I decided to take a break for a Certificate IV in Agriculture at Richmond TAFE. It was different to say the least and I relished the opportunity for a more hands-on go at animal husbandry, including halter breaking in steers. I did eventually go back to university to complete a project on 'Vitamin B12 Response Trial in Merino Ewes Incorporating Iodine Supplementation Pre-lambing'.

Through my Wool units at UNE, I was accepted into a short-term student research position with the Australian Wool Testing Authority in Melbourne 'The Measurement of Colour on New Zealand Wool using Near-Infrared (NIR)'. The industrial training gave me a huge insight into the processes and innovation associated with wool testing.

To date, I've been with Elders just over five years. Each day has something a bit different to deal with – putting AWEX IDs on wools from across the country, seeing the wool in the shearing shed and now as samples in boxes on the showfloor, analysing and valuing clips, auctioneering on sale day, discussing markets with clients and keeping an eye on the dollar. The challenge of assisting with benchmarking events such as the Ovens Valley wether trial, the Gippsland Sheep Breeders' wether trial and the Elders Balmoral Sire Evaluation Trials through data calibration, wool valuing and AWEX-IDing wools also adds another dimension to the work.

Volunteering as a sheep steward while studying allowed me to network, seek out opportunities and be on the front line of hearing what judges discussed and favoured. Now working in the industry, the advantages are still the same but with a stronger sense of being part of the chain.

Agriculture has allowed me to see truly stunning areas of Australia, add to my experiences and meet amazing people, most of whom I still list as my mentors today. I get to tell the best stories to bewildered aunts and uncles while my sister envies how soft lanolin makes my hands.

I love how dynamic the industry is and the tales about how the industry used to be, how many generations have been farming the same land, and hearing the tales come to life rather than just reading it from a book.

The teachers and mentors in my life didn't just give a suburban kid a glimpse of a world outside the city. They enriched my life. From them I drew direction into an incredibly rewarding, constantly evolving industry. If by sharing my story I'm able to convey my passion for an industry that adopted such a black sheep, it might open the eyes of someone who didn't think agriculture was the place for them.

Participants at the 2016 Breeding Leadership course at Clare in South Australia.

BREEDING LEADERSHIP APPLICATIONS OPEN

Applications are now open to young woolgrowers from across the country to join AWI's 2018 Breeding Leadership course in Clare, South Australia, aimed at helping foster the next generation of leaders within the wool industry.

If you are passionate about your industry and want to develop your skills to make a difference in the future, AWI's Breeding Leadership professional development course is for you!

Breeding Leadership is designed for anyone 25 to 35 years old currently working in agriculture with a focus on the wool industry. Held every two years, the course is next being held 18–23 February 2018 in Clare, South Australia.

It is an excellent opportunity to network with more than 20 like-minded people from across Australia. Participants will get the opportunity to learn from skilled deliverers and be trained in areas such as people management, corporate governance,

strategic planning and time management. The week's events involve a mix of both classroom and field-work and, as well as excursions to stud and commercial operations, there will be an exposure to a variety of non-woolgrowing enterprises.

At the end of the course, participants will have developed foundation leadership skills that will enable them to become enthusiastic, influential, dynamic and dedicated leaders within the wool industry and their local community.

More than 125 young Australians have attended the course to date, with many previous participants now holding leadership positions within business and industry.

Breeding Leadership was established in 2002 by the South Australian Stud Merino Breeders Association and became a national program through the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders in 2004. Since 2012 AWI has funded the course.

Participants are required to pay a course fee of \$370 (GST inclusive) which contributes to the cost of the program.

Applications close on Monday, 16 October 2017.

B

MORE INFORMATION

The application form is available at www.wool.com/breedingleadership

NEXT GENERATION ON THE HORIZON



Amelia Gibson

Amelia Gibson from South Australia is the 2017 recipient of a Horizon Scholarship

sponsored by AWI while she studies veterinary science at the University of Adelaide.

The Horizon Scholarship is an initiative of the Rural Industries R&D Corporation and aims to support the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Under the scholarship, AWI is supporting Amelia throughout the course of her studies at the University of Adelaide by providing her with a financial bursary and professional support in the form of mentoring, professional development workshops and industry placement.

Amelia grew up on a company-owned Merino station in the north-west pastoral area of South Australia and is now in her first year of studying veterinary science at the University of Adelaide.

"I spent my gap year working on the station and absolutely loved it," Amelia said.

"I chose to study vet science because I want to work in an area that is going to challenge

me and allow me to be involved at a hands-on level.

"Ideally I would like to work with production animals and livestock. I plan to continue to live in rural Australia – I love the lifestyle and people and how rewarding it can be."

The Horizon Scholarship will provide Amelia with the opportunity to network with different people from the agricultural industry and take part in wool industry work placements.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity not only to gain experience in the veterinary industry, but also network and learn from people in all areas of agriculture and animal production," Amelia said.

B

MORE INFORMATION

Applications for 2018 Horizon Scholarships open on 1 November. See www.rirdc.gov.au

FARM BUSINESS BOOT CAMPS MOTIVATE YOUNG FARMERS

Five three-day interactive workshops supported by AWI have been held across Victoria to provide **young farmers with the financial skills to help them manage their farm business** now as well as planning for their business into the future.



Young farmers at an **AWI-supported Farm Business Boot Camp**.

The Young Farmer Farm Business Boot Camp workshops were delivered between April and June in Hamilton, Bairnsdale, Benalla, Maryborough and Horsham to a total of 101 young farmers representing 69 farm businesses.

The Boot Camps enabled the young producers, who had an average age of 31, to increase their understanding of business risk, and provided them with the skills and knowledge to manage it. It also helped them develop a business plan to grow their business and to have confidence that there is a future in agriculture for them.

The workshops – supported by AWI, MLA and Agriculture Victoria – utilised a series of farm case studies as real-life examples. Participants also had ample opportunity to discuss their own individual circumstances with the presenters throughout the workshops.

The first day of the Boot Camp provided an introduction to farm business management and set the scene for the two days that followed a fortnight later. Day two covered analysing a farm business, profit map, whole of business performance indicators, a SWOT analysis, evidence-based decision-making and finance. Day three covered planning for profit, risk, succession and pathways to farming for young people.

An evening meal allowed young farmers to network and hear from inspiring guest speakers who shared their experiences working in farm businesses.

The provision of follow up one-on-one mentoring offered in July provided the opportunity for participants to enhance the skills they developed during the three-day workshop and apply it to their own business.

Following the three-day Boot Camp all participants said they were confident about their long-term future in agriculture.

The majority (91%) of the young farmers were either operating their own farming business or were from a family farm. One of those from a family farm was Brenton Roberts from Brimpaen in the Wimmera region of western Victoria.

He and his father run a sheep and cropping enterprise, which includes a self-replacing Merino flock of about 1,500 ewes. Brenton saw an advert for the Boot Camp at Horsham in the newspaper and decided to go along to help him increase his knowledge about the business side of farming.

“My dad has been interested in giving me more responsibility in the running of the property and so I was keen in learning more about the bookwork side of things,” Brenton said.

“I hope one day to take over the family business, and attending the workshop has helped the conversation with my dad about our succession planning – it has shown him that I am interested in taking it on.

“It was great to attend a workshop with so many young people and discuss the farming issues that are affecting people of our age.

“I love the wool industry and think that it has a bright future. Our Merino flock is making good money for us and we’ve shifted the focus of our mixed enterprise more towards sheep.” **B**



AWI is excited to announce the introduction of an **18-month Graduate Training Program** which enables graduates to embark on their career in the Australian wool industry with AWI.

The program is aimed at graduates from a broad cross section of disciplines who have a background in or connection with the Australian wool industry.

The 18-month program starts each year in March and provides the successful applicant with a thorough understanding of the wool supply chain from fibre to fashion.

Based primarily at the AWI office in Sydney, the graduate will also be given the opportunity to gain a global exposure to the wool supply chain through two international rotations: three months in China and Hong Kong, and three months in London.

Whilst in Sydney, the graduate will gain exposure to the following areas of the business:

- Sheep Production
- Woolgrower Services
- Processing Innovation & Education Extension
- Marketing (including Marketing Services, Digital, and Fashion Communications)

Applications for the inaugural Graduate Training Program close on 28 September. To apply, please select the AWI Graduate Training Program at www.wool.com/careers or apply through your Seek or LinkedIn profile. **B**

NATIONAL MERINO CHALLENGE 2017



Champion of the Tertiary Division **Emily Attard** of the University of Melbourne with NMC steering committee member and South Australian woolgrower **Sydney Lawrie**. PHOTO: Jamie-Lee Oldfield/NewsPix

FAST FACTS

- More than 100 students from across Australia enjoyed an introduction to the wool industry at this year's National Merino Challenge.
- Now in its fifth year, the AWI educational initiative connects the future 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. Cummins Area School was the Champion Team in the secondary school division, whilst Charles Sturt University was the Champion Team in the tertiary division.

More than 100 students from across Australia came together in May for the National Merino Challenge (NMC), this year held in Melbourne.

An AWI initiative, the NMC involves presentations and demonstrations from industry professionals to enable young people to develop their industry knowledge, skills and networks.

Now in its fifth year, the annual two-day event has provided around 500 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 the two-day event, the students are 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.

Other highlights of the NMC program included a shearing demonstration, including an Upright Posture Shearing Platform, and a careers session in which students were provided with advice on entering the agricultural sector from a panel of five young professionals already in the industry.

Students 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 speeches were delivered by the President of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders, Georgina Wallace, and AWI director Colette Garnsey.

The winner of the Tertiary Division was Emily Attard, a second year Bachelor of Agriculture student from the University of Melbourne. Home for Emily is on the Mornington Peninsula, where her family has a hobby farm, but her interest in sheep began in secondary school at Flinders College which has a Corriedale stud. With her friend Kate Methven, she has now set up the Tuerong Valley Corriedale stud with seven breeding ewes.

"I found the National Merino Challenge to be a very informative and rewarding experience," Emily said. "It is practical and hands-on, with a range of industry professionals imparting their experience and advice to students. My favourite activity was the economic part where we were presented with a poor performing sheep and a sheep that performed well and we had to examine their difference in profit.

"Networking with other ag students and professionals from across the country was another highlight. It is great that AWI runs this initiative as it enables ag students to get involved in the sheep and wool industry and see the opportunities in it – there is nothing like the NMC in any other industry."

After completing her Bachelor of Agriculture, Emily hopes to study for a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Melbourne with a focus on sheep and cows.

"Attending the National Merino Challenge has not only made me more knowledgeable, but definitely keener to pursue a career in the sheep industry."

AWI manager of extension, Emily King, said the NMC has quickly established itself as a leading education program for young students interested in a career in the wool industry.

"The NMC fits well with the strong focus on education within the current AWI Strategic Plan which aims to not only train the next generation of woolgrowers and wool specialists but the next generation of textile professionals who wish to work in the wool industry," she added.

AWI thanks the following partners of the 2017 NMC without whom the event would not be possible: Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, Australian Wool Education Trust, Australian Wool Network, Landmark, Rodwells, Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders, Elders, Fox & Lillie Rural, Michell Direct Wool, Techwool Trading, as well as the dedicated volunteers for their time and expertise.

SECONDARY SCHOOL DIVISION AWARDS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Champion | Brooke Watts, Molong Central School |
| Second Place | Zoey Phelps, Cummins Area School |
| Third Place | Caitlyn Watts, Molong Central School |
| Champion Team | Cummins Area School (Shaelee Meyers, Matthew Charlton, Ruby Green, Zoey Phelps) |
| Top Performer in Wool Section | Matthew Charlton, Cummins Area School |
| Top Performer in Production Section | Brooke Watts, Molong Central School |
| Top Performer in Breeding Section | Claire Pitchford, Urrbrae Agricultural High School |
| Winning Trainer | Lisa Richardson, Cummins Area School |

TERTIARY DIVISION AWARDS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Champion | Emily Attard, The University of Melbourne |
| Second Place | Elliot Lade, Charles Sturt University |
| Third Place | Annika Alexander, The University of Melbourne |
| Champion Team | Charles Sturt University (Elliot Lade, Edith Gregory, Aleksandra Vasic, Sam Scarlett) |
| Top Performer in Wool Section | Emily Attard, The University of Melbourne |
| Top Performer in Production Section | Emily Attard, The University of Melbourne |
| Top Performer in Breeding Section | Annika Alexander, The University of Melbourne |
| Winning Trainer | Susan Robertson, Charles Sturt University |



Students testing their skills in sheep selection.

PARTICIPATING SECONDARY SCHOOLS WERE:

- Cleve Area School, SA
- Cummins Area School, SA
- Molong Central School, NSW
- Urrbrae Agricultural High School, Netherby, SA
- WA College of Agriculture – Cunderdin, WA
- WA College of Agriculture – Harvey, WA
- WA College of Agriculture – Narrogin, WA

PARTICIPATING TAFES AND UNIVERSITIES WERE:

- Charles Sturt University – Wagga Wagga, NSW
- La Trobe University, Melbourne, Vic
- Moonah (Property), Coombe, SA
- Murdoch University, Perth, WA
- Training Worx Australia, Kojonup, WA
- University of Adelaide, SA
- University of Melbourne, Vic
- University of New England, Armidale, NSW



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



Students saw new technologies like the Upright Posture Shearing Platform in action.



Over the two-day event, students are assessed on their skills across a wide range of areas.



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

MERINOS IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN

AWI runs hands-on sheep classing workshops

across the country to help woolgrowers in their sheep selection and breeding programs and increase the productivity of their Merinos.

AWI regularly runs one-day sheep classing workshops, for people of all ages and enterprises, that are a practical way to learn about increasing the production of their Merino flocks.

Through a combination of theory and hands-on components, experienced sheep classers lead the workshop and take commercial producers through the process of classing sheep, including understanding the type of sheep that breeders are aiming for, comparing individual traits between sheep, and other sources of information.

AWI's sheep industry specialist, Stuart Hodgson, is a highly experienced sheep classer and former Merino stud stock agent, who has been running sheep classing workshops for AWI for the past two years.

"The aim of the workshops is to help woolgrowers become better and more confident when classing their sheep," Stuart said. "The workshops are open to anyone in the industry, but it is especially useful for younger people in the industry to get some hands-on, practical advice.

"During the day, we look at visually assessing the sheep and identifying the good and bad traits, and identifying those sheep that should be retained or culled to best meet a breeding objective. It's important that woolgrowers



Participants at a sheep classing workshop at **Julian and Annabel von Bibra's 'Beaufront'** property at **Ross** in Tasmania, hosted by the Stud Merino Breeders Association of Tasmania and run by AWI's sheep industry specialist **Stuart Hodgson**. PHOTO: Karolin MacGregor/Newspix

have a balance in their breeding program though and not focus too much on one trait.

"There are many tools now in the industry to help woolgrowers; while objective assessment is useful, we also need people to be able to do hands-on assessments.



AWI's sheep industry specialist **Stuart Hodgson** (back left) with students from **St Stanislaus' College**, Bathurst, at a sheep classing workshop held in May.

"By using the tools available, woolgrowers can produce an animal that meets their business requirements. These animals need to be productive and profitable for their environmental conditions and able to compete with alternative enterprises."

The workshops also provide participants with the opportunity to talk to other sheep producers about their breeding objectives, and compare each other's thoughts on the sheep they are examining at the workshop. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

AWI last year issued a workshop package on Merino visual classing. It covers the principles of visual classing (including practical activities in the yards), flock objectives and selection for a 'type' to suit the environment, and the importance of balance between visual and objective assessments. A 91-page PDF of the workshop presentation is available from www.wool.com/workshop-resources



SHEEP SELECTION TOOLS BOOKLET LAUNCHED

AWI has published a new 20-page booklet that provides a summary of a wide range of industry tools available for woolgrowers to help achieve their breeding goals, along with the strengths of each approach, and what is needed to incorporate these approaches into a commercial or ram breeding situation.

Topics covered are sheep shows, wether trials, flock ewe competitions, Merino Sire Evaluation (and the Merino Lifetime Productivity project), MERINOSELECT, Visual Sheep Scores, RamSelect, workshops, sheep classers and advisors, and saleyards.

The booklet provides an ideal introduction for new entrants to the industry; late secondary school, university and TAFE students; as well as other woolgrowers who would like a recap on all the tools now available. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

Download the booklet from www.wool.com/publications or request a free hard copy from the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.



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In the far west of NSW on a weekend in June, **wild dog experts** from across the country and local landholders gathered at a wild dog control workshop to discuss tactics to tackle the problem of wild dogs in Australia.

WILD DOG CONTROL

At Moorabie Station, 200km north of Broken Hill on the western edge of NSW, runs the wild dog fence marking the border of NSW and South Australia. The fence was originally built as a rabbit-proof fence in the 1880s but was upgraded to a wild dog fence in the 1940s to help protect the sheep flocks of south-eastern Australia.

For a group of the nation's top wild dog control experts, it was a very fitting location to gather to discuss and share best practice information.

Attendees included AWI-funded wild dog coordinators from NSW, WA, Victoria and Queensland; researchers; the National Wild Dog Management Facilitator, Greg Mifsud; AWI Program Manager Vertebrate Pests, Ian Evans; Chairs of the local wild dog management groups and local landholders.

Organised by the AWI-funded wild dog coordinator for the Western Division of



Attendees of the **wild dog control workshop** and local landholders at a trapping course examining a first-rate example of a bait drying rack that was funded by AWI.

NSW, Bruce Duncan, the weekend's activities started on the Saturday with presentations and discussions – see box below.

There was also a trip through the fence to Quinyambie Station in South Australia, directly opposite Moorabie, for a first-hand look at the different landscape there and the effects of unmanaged wild dogs on properties.

“Feedback from the wild dog control workshop has been very positive with presenters and attendees already suggesting that they would love to return to a location

like Moorabie, if another event was planned, where issues can be discussed in a hands-on, practical setting,” Bruce Duncan said.

AWI Program Manager Vertebrate Pests, Ian Evans said getting together so many experts from the wild dog management field and having time to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the future was very helpful.

“It has been valuable for us all to learn from experts in different environments, and interesting to hear feedback from local landholders and sheep producers who are the

PRESENTATIONS AT THE WILD DOG CONTROL WORKSHOP

- AWI involvement and funding for wild dog control: on-ground work, facilitators and research (Ian Evans, AWI)
- The role of the National Wild Dog Management Facilitator and the National Wild Dog Action Plan (Greg Mifsud)
- Research into improving the management of vertebrate pests; wild dog collaring project; aerial bait rate trial results and implications (Peter Fleming, Principal Research Scientist, NSW DPI)
- “Seeing in the dark”; detecting pest animals at night, spotlighting, night vision and thermal optics; muzzle blast suppressors and operator hearing protection (Rob Hunt, Senior Pest Officer, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service)
- The dog fence and the challenges of maintaining it; the role of canid pest ejectors (Laurence Doidge, Operations Manager, Wild Dog Destruction Board)
- Community led wild pig control; wild pig behavior and exploiting their weaknesses; pig collaring project results; potential for activities in Western NSW (Darren Marshal, feral animal researcher, Queensland Murray Darling Committee)
- Peri-urban management of wild dogs; GPS collaring in coastal regions; lethal trap devices (Paul Meek, Invasive Species Officer, NSW DPI).



The iconic dog fence on the NSW/South Australia border near **Moorabie Station**, 200km north of Broken Hill, at which a gathering of wild dog experts was held in June. *PHOTO:* National Wild Dog Action Plan

WORKSHOP

ones that ultimately experience the financial and emotional cost of attacks on their flocks," Ian said.

"Wild dog control has been and continues to be one of the main areas of focus for AWI. Our investment on behalf of woolgrowers has been calculated to produce a return of \$8.60 for every dollar invested over the past few years.

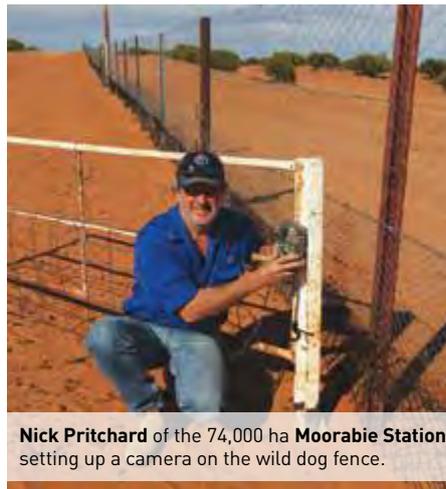
"The investment is in three main areas. Firstly, up to a million dollars a year is used to establish activities and infrastructure that help community based groups in on-going long-term wild dog control, for example by providing funding for aerial baiting, trapping workshops or canid pest ejectors.

"Secondly, about another million dollars each year provides help in coordination and facilitation of wild dog control groups across all land tenures, with AWI-funded coordinators now stretching from Geraldton in WA to Longreach in central Queensland. And thirdly, about 10% of our vertebrate pest budget funds pure research into and development of new and emerging technologies to enhance producers' abilities to control wild dogs."

TRAPPING COURSE AT MOORABIE

Following the wild dog control workshop, a trapping course was held for local landholders, with the wild dog coordinators and others also participating. Two dogs were killed during the time at Moorabie with one being taken on Border Downs directly south of the venue. This was the first dog ever trapped on Border Downs, where previously there have only ever been dogs shot.

The trapping course at Moorabie was part of a larger Trapper Training Program, which was being held for the second year in the area. The Moorabie course was preceded by a three-day course at Mt Jack near Wilcannia that was attended by 12 landholders. Three dogs were trapped by participants directly following the course, based solely on the skills learnt during the course.



Nick Pritchard of the 74,000 ha **Moorabie Station** setting up a camera on the wild dog fence.

"Feedback from the two trapping schools was very positive with 17 out of 21 participants rating the training a full 10 out of 10, and all participants said the training sufficiently equipped them to confidently put their newly learned skills into practice, and would recommend the training to others," Bruce said.

"The structure being a mix of theory and practice was well received with a lot of interest on ecology and biology of wild dogs in relation

to management, especially from landholders in new or emerging wild dog control groups. Using three different trappers to deliver the course was highly regarded as were the three trappers themselves."

Nick Pritchard of the 74,000 ha Moorabie Station said the trapping course was a very worthwhile program with participants gaining skills they will now be using on a regular basis for management of wild dogs.

"Since purchasing Moorabie Station seven years ago, we have been keen to learn as much about wild dogs and their control measures as possible. When the option came up to both participate in and host a trapping school at Moorabie we didn't hesitate. We saw this as a valuable opportunity in our local fight against wild dogs," Nick said.

"We have seen a steady decline in dog numbers over recent years, largely due to the combined effort with all our neighbours and the advent of programs like the aerial baiting program. This enabled us to reintroduce Merino sheep onto Moorabie in 2014 after many years where it had been cattle only. Even with this decline in dog numbers we have shot and or trapped 15 dogs so far for 2017.

"The trapping training was delivered over three intensive days, with valuable information about wild dogs and their habits, which removed a lot of the mystery about the trapping process. It was done in a very practical and professional way with a wealth of knowledge provided by the three skilled trainers.

"Due to our location on the NSW, SA border, and our western boundary being the dog fence, we were also able to visit Quinyambie Station to gain a better understanding of how dogs operate in an unmanaged environment. This provided a real insight into and reinforced what we learnt in the training." **E**



JOINING WILD DOG CONTROL GROUPS A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

FAST FACTS

- Woolgrower Richard Wilson got on the front foot in combatting wild dogs and foxes on his family's new property by joining his local wild dog control group.
- An AWI-funded wild dog coordinator in the region works with woolgrowers, livestock producers and other key stakeholders to help them achieve long term on-the-ground control of wild dogs.
- AWI has provided direct assistance to the wild dog control group by funding, for example, the purchase of freezers, so meat for baiting is accessible, and therefore lay a secure foundation for long-term pest animal control.

Richard Wilson with his son Jed run 9,000 Merino breeding ewes and 500 breeding cattle on their 120,000-hectare 'Yalda Downs' property, near White Cliffs, 335 km north east of Broken Hill.

They had been farming cereals in South Australia before the move across the border four years ago by three generations of the family: Richard and his wife Shirley, his son Jed and partner Stacey with their now three children Clancy, Indi and Charlie.

When woolgrowers Richard and Jed Wilson and their families moved from South Australia to a new property north-east of Broken Hill in 2013, one of the first things Richard did was join the Barrier Area Rangecare Group (BARG) local Landcare group that undertakes wild dog control in the area.

While 'Yalda Downs' is managed by his son Jed, straight after the move Richard took on the task of seeking out information about wild dog problems and control in the area.

He found joining the BARG local Landcare group was a good way to be involved; he received a lot of advice from neighbours and the Landcare group, which has helped him become confident that local landholders are on the right track.

"The BARG group has a well-established management program involving about 40 properties and I'm very happy with what I've experienced throughout my involvement to date," Richard said.

A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

While the area doesn't see a lot of wild dogs, and the number of foxes has dropped off, Richard thinks it important to continue with organised baiting.

"We need to be part of the overall program, where everyone is baiting at a similar time. It's a community responsibility to be part of the organised initiative," he said.

Richard finds it disappointing when landholders take the attitude that someone else is baiting and so they don't need to.

"Absentee land owners who don't do baiting are very frustrating for us, and unfortunately baiting is not compulsory.

"As you get further away from the dog fence, I feel people believe there is not as big a problem. Often they don't recognise the problem until they start to see the impact on lambing percentage.

"It doesn't take much to justify the baiting of foxes and dogs when running livestock enterprises."

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

The BARG group undertakes a spring and autumn baiting program. This includes an aerial baiting program conducted with the Local Land Services (LLS) for non-accessible areas in addition to ground baiting.

"Aerial baiting for inaccessible areas has also been one of the greatest things implemented. We have a lot of areas inaccessible by vehicle," Richard said.



Richard Wilson and his wife **Shirley**, their son **Jed** and partner **Stacey**, and Jed's older brother **Luke**, with Jed and Stacey's three children **Indi**, **Clancy** and **Charlie**.

Apart from the normal baiting program, Richard has also done spot baiting if he has seen any presence of predators. His approach is to only use dog strength baits. As a result, both wild dogs and foxes are targeted with the same effort.

Richard will soon be implementing canid pest ejectors.

"Everyone is doing the best they can with the tools available and the knowledge they've got. The ejectors are the new tool being adopted and will be a big benefit once in place."

He is currently grading some tracks into the less accessible areas for installation of ejectors.

"We are finding that dogs like a smooth graded pathway so we are trying to open up some country to create some smooth pads for dogs to move along, and we will then strategically target areas for baiting," Richard explained. Through this process, Richard is strategically creating an environment to target dogs.

COORDINATION IS VITAL

Richard has valued his involvement with the AWI-funded wild dog coordinator for the Western Division of NSW, Bruce Duncan of NSW Farmers, and the associated forums and workshops that have been provided.

"Bruce has been very present in the region. His energy is very good; he has a very full role," Richard said.

Bruce liaises with woolgrowers, livestock producers and other key stakeholders to help them achieve long term on-ground control of wild dogs. Collaboration between local landholders is vital when dealing with wild dog issues but can be challenging without external help, especially in western NSW where distances to travel are greater and there are a larger number of absentee landowners.

"Bruce has been very helpful and particularly with the aerial baiting program. It's a demonstration of AWI and NSW Farmers understanding that it's a good thing to have someone way out here. It has been a very good move, and I hope they continue to fund it for some time.

"There is a lot of information around. This is a good thing. I don't think anyone would see lack of information as an excuse to not being involved in baiting."

Richard says he also talks frequently to biosecurity officers Tim Wall and Grant Davis from Western Local Land Services.

"We rely on them to help on our programs; they add great value. It's more than the baiting role on the day, they also provide information and knowledge sharing which is so critical. We need them, as they are accredited to use the 1080, and because baiting programs are getting bigger and bigger."

GROUP FUNCTION AND FUNDING

There are eight different control groups within the BARG group, covering more than 1.5 million hectares. Each group coordinates when their baits get injected.

"The assistance with aerial baiting has been invaluable," Richard said. "We need to see some level of baiting continue because dogs will impact on the entire economy if we don't get this pest under control."

Someone in each control group organises the baiting for their respective group. "We are right on the eastern boundary of BARG so we organise baiting ourselves. It suits us a bit better to go out on our own, but in a coordinated way as part of the overall BARG program," Richard explains.

The group is very organised. People have been proactive in seeking funding and, as a result, members don't pay a lot for membership.

Through AWI support, people have put in freezers, so meat is accessible, and put in drying racks at an appropriate height allowing the LLS to inject more easily. This makes the whole process simpler for all involved.

"AWI looked at ways of assisting with grant money for small projects – such as the freezers. Simple things can make things so much easier and quicker," he said.

"Working together with those who do the injecting and having everything ready (meat thawed and dried on racks) does create efficiencies. Doing this locally and having it ready allows the logistics to be so much easier," he explained.

Simple things such as using the cleaned out old chemical containers hooked to the ute, rather than using plastic bags, makes the process easier.

"Being involved with Landcare helps us by having a large parent body to support a range of different things. Wild dog control is an important part of it, and a big part of it, but it's involved a lot of other activities as well," Richard added.

AWI COMMUNITY WILD DOG CONTROL INITIATIVE – FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding is available to groups under AWI's 'Community Wild Dog Control Initiative'.

Applications are open to new groups as well as those groups that have previously received funding from AWI. If you would like to apply, please complete the Community Wild Dog Control Initiative application form available at www.wool.com/wilddogs and submit it along with a plan, a map and a project budget to wilddogs@wool.com

If you need clarification or assistance please contact Ian Evans at AWI on 0427 773 005.



Richard Wilson and his son **Jed** run 9,000 Merino breeding ewes on the 120,000-hectare 'Yalda Downs' property, near White Cliffs, 335 km north east of Broken Hill.



BRINGING HOME LIFETIME EWE MANAGEMENT

27-year-old Luke Hall from Wagin in the Great Southern region of Western Australia is undertaking a Lifetime Ewe Management course – and he is already seeing productivity benefits in his own business after adopting the course’s learnings.

For Luke Hall, Wagin is very much home. He was educated at Wagin District High School and the WA College of Agriculture at Narrogin, just north of Wagin. He is the fourth-generation of his family in the Wagin district and has always lived in the shire. He also had the honour this year of being chosen by Wagin Woolorama as its Rural Ambassador for 2017.

Luke has spent ten years on the family farm and manages the family’s mixed sheep and cropping enterprise. The property is 3000ha, comprising ‘Glendower’ bought in 2008 and the family’s home farm ‘Buchanan Hills’ that has been in the family since 1954.

“On the sheep side of the business, we run 2,500 breeding ewes and turn the wethers off as finished lambs at approximately five months old,” Luke said.

“We are in the process of building the flock. Three quarters of the flock have been mated to Prime SAMM rams to get some more growth rates into our lambs’ genetics. After approximately three years we will then put pure Merinos back over the flock to bring the wool cut back into line. At the moment, we cut an average of 21 micron.”

LTEM COURSE

The Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course 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.

Last year, Luke began an LTEM course with local producers Pete Cumming, Tom Patterson, Lindsay Johnson and Campbell Lloyd – with the group facilitated by Narrogin-based sheep consultant Jonathan England of AgInnovate.

“We have lifted production from averaging 95% at marking last year to 115% this year, or from 4 to 6 lambs/ha.”
LUKE HALL

“Pete Cumming heard about the Lifetime Ewe Management program and asked if I’d be interested in joining a local group,” Luke said. “We didn’t really have an intense or production-pushed breeding program at home so I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn a thing or two. Plus, with the AWI subsidy provided to woolgrowers to undertake the course, I thought it was value for money.”

LTEM groups meet six times in the annual sheep calendar during a period of 12–18 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. Luke’s group has so far met five times, with one session to go.

APPLYING LEARNINGS

Luke has already been applying what he has learnt so far in the course to his own flock.

“At the moment, I’d say one of the most useful things I’ve learnt and applied on-farm is the benefit of pregnancy testing, and feeding each mob differently based on what they are carrying.

“We used to pregnancy scan if we were keen to sell a mob of sheep, but really for no other reason. But this year we did multiple scanning and gave the multiples a lupin and oat mix while the singles already had enough feed, so we saved on food because we would normally have supplementary fed all of them.

“We have lifted production from averaging 95% at marking last year to 115% this year, or from 4 to 6 lambs/ha.

“It’s been hard though, because despite having a good start to the season, feed has been tight since April and still is!”

“Through the group, I was also encouraged to mate seven-month old lambs to a SAMM ram. By monitoring condition score and keeping weight on them, they pregnancy scanned at 103%, which is a good result in my book, and I recently marked them at 96%.”

Luke said the LTEM program is only as good as the effort you put in.

"If you are keen to learn from case studies and try different things or throw different ideas around, you can learn a heap.

"For instance, we had a tight situation a few years back and had to sell some mobs of sheep, and so we are having trouble building flock numbers as we don't have a line of three, four and five-year olds. But through the group, I got advice and we mouthed the older ewes and gave them extra care and attention and got the highest percentage of lambs out of the eight-year old ewes."

Luke says they shear the flock mid-January.

"We like it because we don't have trouble with flystrike as the ewes have either got a short back end from crutching or from shearing, but also I find that the ewes only have three months wool on them during lambing so they hopefully look after their lambs a bit better because they themselves feel the cold."

OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE

Luke is enthusiastic about the future of his business, saying there is plenty of positives in farming and money to be made. He said that

while it is sometimes tough as a farmer being at the mercy of the weather, the sheep and wool are a very profitable part of his business and not just a risk management strategy.

"Merinos at the moment are obviously very profitable with the price of wool being where it is, and the price of meat has been growing during the past ten years too. I do think the wool price is strong and from everything

Luke inspecting available feed in one of his paddocks.



I have been told, it at worst should at least be stable for a few years hopefully."

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.

LTEM 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.

There were more than 600 new AWI-funded enrolments in LTEM last financial year (exceeding the AWI target of 500 new participants).

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, or to set up an LTEM group in your local area or to join a group in your area, call RIST on freecall 1800 883 343 or visit www.rist.com.au
Mark Scott, AWI Project Officer,
mark.scott@wool.com
Dr Kirsty Kennedy, RIST National Lifetime Ewe Management Leader,
kkennedy@rist.edu.au

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REALISING PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL WORKSHOPS

A new AWI workshop – titled **Realising Performance Potential** – has been rolled out to help **woolgrowers lift the lifetime reproductive performance** of their Merino flocks.



One of the new Realising Performance Potential workshops funded by AWI was held at the 'North Bundy' property of Peter (above centre) and Lisa McCrabb near Hay in the Riverina of NSW.



AWI's new Realising Performance Potential one-day workshop, developed for commercial enterprises with self-replacing Merino flocks, identifies key practical actions to implement on-farm to convert reproductive potential into profit.

Built around scanning, condition scoring and wet/dry assessment at lamb marking, the workshop helps woolgrowers to develop the practical skills required to identify 'performers' from 'passengers' among adult ewes within their enterprises. The reproductive efficiency of a flock can be significantly improved by culling the poor performers and retaining the good performers.

The workshop assists the commercial self-replacing Merino production sector in recognising and placing appropriate importance on the total lifetime productivity potential and value of their Merino ewes (fleece, meat, surplus stock) and aims to achieve a minimum weaning rate of 95% from Merino joinings.

The workshop is designed to complement the Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course, which has now involved approximately 3,000 sheep producers across Australia. Realising Performance Potential offers beneficial management skills for both pre- and post-LTEM participants.

Lifting the reproductive performance of the Merino flock is a key focus within the current AWI Strategic Plan, and the launch of the first Realising Performance Potential workshop

in May follows pilot workshops held in 2016 that gauged the needs of leading commercial woolgrowers and helped fine-tune the program for national roll out.

The first workshops were held in NSW and Victoria, and AWI will look to roll out workshops nationwide during the remaining months of 2017 and through 2018.

The workshops are conducted on commercial properties using commercial sheep, with a maximum of 20 participants per workshop.

POSITIVE RECEPTION FROM WOOLGROWERS

Woolgrower Peter McCrabb and his wife Lisa, who run a large self-replacing Merino flock at 'North Bundy' at Boooroban in the western Riverina district of NSW, hosted a workshop on their property in July.

Peter, who is a graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership Program funded by AWI, is already achieving 127% of lambs marked to ewes joined. He had seen that a workshop was being held at Bookham near Yass, and wanted to get involved by arranging a workshop further west in the Riverina for larger, pastoral producers.

"At 'North Bundy' I had a suitable venue and the sheep, so I gave AWI a call and the workshop was soon arranged. It was attended by 20 woolgrowers from across the region including a high proportion of young producers," Peter said.

"I've previously done Bred Well Fed Well and Lifetime Ewe Management courses, and the Realising Performance Potential workshop is an extension of the LTEM course, for those woolgrowers who want to find new areas to improve reproductive performance in their flocks.

"The workshop was a great success and provided attendees with very useful skills that I'm sure they will apply in their own enterprises. It was very encouraging to see so many young producers getting involved; I wish I'd had this knowledge 20 years ago.

"The projection data about the reproductive potential that we can get out of a Merino flock is very positive for the next few decades. Ewes' reproduction is repeatable. If you can increase weaning of lambs to ewes joined by say 20% then it will make a huge difference to an enterprise's profitability.

"I think this workshop is especially useful for producers in the pastoral zone because to increase profitability here you have to focus on maximizing production per head, which then increases production per hectare.

"It is important to see AWI rolling out these types of workshops to give woolgrowers access to current and relevant information, so woolgrowers can build on the many positive signs in the industry at the moment."

THE KEY 5 THEMES OF REALISING PERFORMANCE POTENTIAL

1. Understand ewe lifetime performance – passengers v performers
2. Lift ewe performance as a national priority
3. The 3 key performance practices:
 - Scan
 - Condition score
 - Wet/dry at marking
4. Turning potential to profit – lamb and wean well
5. Strategies for success – management calendar.

MORE INFORMATION

Keep an eye on wool.com/events for future workshops or if you are interested in hosting a workshop please contact AWI's Project Officer Mark Scott on 0417 056 079 or mark.scott@wool.com

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY MAKING FARMING EASIER

Imagine being able to monitor your livestock or property boundaries on the far side of your farm, all while sitting in the comfort of your homestead. With modern technology, this is a reality – and AWI aims to make it easier for woolgrowers across Australia to adopt the technology.

The digital revolution is a reality. Across the world, the internet has irrevocably transformed the way society, individuals and businesses operate and communicate.

How can woolgrowers in Australia take advantage of modern communications technology and the internet to benefit their business?

One of the issues facing woolgrowers is the limited internet access in rural and regional areas. While a homestead might be connected to the internet, through ADSL or the new NBN, many woolgrowers are unable to get reception when out in the paddock or in nearby farm-buildings. However, installing 'Wi-Fi hotspots' around the farm would provide more widespread internet access which can, for instance, help with online training in the shearing shed.

Furthermore, modern wireless technology can help woolgrowers with monitoring-type

jobs normally done in a ute or on a bike – such as checking mobs of sheep, stock water, pasture, fencing and gates – which can now be done while at the homestead using cameras positioned strategically on the property, thus saving on labour costs. While these new monitoring systems can be deployed without internet connection (so it won't use up bandwidth), an internet connection would allow woolgrowers to access, for instance, camera footage when outside their property.

There are innovative woolgrowers who are already using wireless technology for these sorts of tasks, to help take some of the hard work out of farming and contribute to their enterprise's bottom line (see below).

Purchasing the necessary infrastructure, like antennas and cameras, for a property can be baffling and costly if not done right. So AWI is investigating ways to provide woolgrowers with access to suitable products at a cost-effective price.

FAST FACTS

- AWI is investigating products and systems to help Australian woolgrowers establish more effective internet and other wireless connections across their properties.
- Increased connectivity would (1) provide Wi-Fi hotspots away from the homestead, such as in shearing sheds, and (2) enable woolgrowers to use monitoring equipment, such as remote cameras and sensors.
- AWI is seeking expressions of interest from ten woolgrowers who would like to be involved in an AWI trial project to test the feasibility and effectiveness of a potential widespread rollout of cost-effective wireless communications technology.

AWI is running a trial project to determine the feasibility of such a roll-out, and is seeking expressions of interest from woolgrowers who want to be involved. **See next page.**

WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY IS ALREADY PROVEN



Jock MacRae viewing **live footage** from locations around his property from the comfort of his homestead. *PHOTO: Dale Webster/Newspix*



One of **Jock MacRae's wireless antennas** that has been installed on his property.

Jock first got involved with the technology when he was getting the NBN installed on his property.

"We had a local company over, initially to install the NBN and add repeaters across the farm, but it was then that we realised there were more applications for the technology and so we added the surveillance system.

"I'm very excited about even more uses for the technology that we could implement in the future, like monitoring stock, mob based and individual."

Although Jock had the local company help him implement the system, he said that it was an easy to set up.

"It was a relatively straight-forward process – just 'plug and play' really. The whole network was set up in about a day. One pole was in an exposed location so we concreted that into the ground, but that wasn't essential for the other poles."

Jock MacRae who runs 1,000 stud Merinos on 'Eilan Donan' at Sutton Grange near Bendigo in Victoria is an example of an innovative woolgrower who has already set up wireless internet connectivity across his property.

His experience illustrates that wireless communications technology works, is easy to install, and is providing benefits to his business.

"Our motivation to implement the technology was initially for farm security," Jock said.

"We are not living on the property so we are keen to be able to monitor activities when someone enters the property. We have cameras and movement tags installed, so I receive an SMS message on my phone when someone enters the property through a gate, which alerts me to then view the live camera footage from around the farm."

READ MORE OVER THE PAGE

AWI'S WIRELESS FA

ABOUT THE TRIAL PROJECT

AWI has investigated simple and cost-effective ways for woolgrowers across Australia to establish more effective wireless connections on their farms.

Specifically, AWI has looked at ways to provide wireless point-to-point and/or point-to-multipoint network links to enhance and distribute internet and other wireless connectivity on properties.

Examples of locations where internet access, using Wi-Fi hotspots, could be sited include residential buildings, paddocks, sheds and workshops.

Monitoring equipment, such as cameras and sensors, can also be used using wireless technology. The monitoring system can be deployed with or without an internet connection, but an internet connection

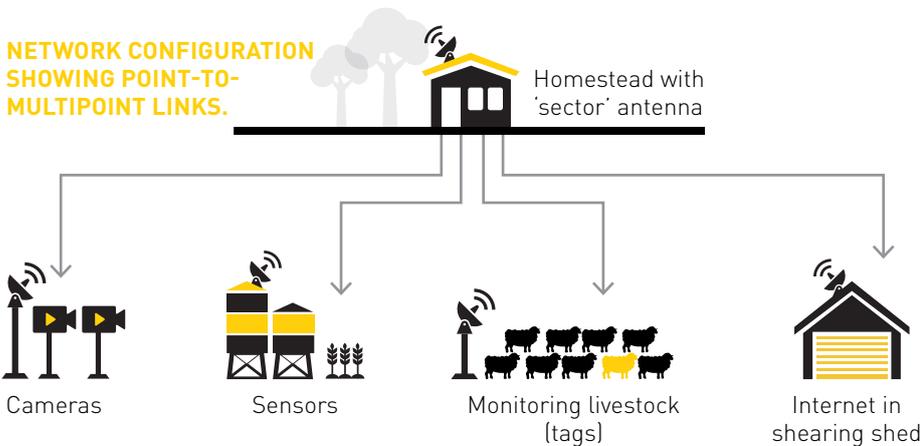
would allow woolgrowers to access, for instance, camera footage when outside their property.

AWI is running a trial 'Wireless Farm' project to determine the feasibility of a widespread roll-out of the technology to Australian woolgrowers, and is seeking expressions of interest from woolgrowers who want to be involved, of which ten will be selected.

The technology provider AWI has selected for the project is American technology company Ubiquiti, a large and well-respected company in the market place. It was founded by former Apple Engineer Robert Pera in 2005 and generated around US\$1 billion in revenue in the past financial year.

We know the technology works. The aim of the trial project is firstly to gauge the level of interest from woolgrowers in this type of technology, and secondly to assess whether a more widespread roll out of the technology is feasible, based on the outcomes of the trial from the perspective and feedback of both AWI and the trial participants.

NETWORK CONFIGURATION SHOWING POINT-TO-MULTIPOINT LINKS.



WHAT IS INVOLVED FOR TRIAL PARTICIPANTS?

After being selected by AWI, the ten trial participants will be required to **purchase** Ubiquiti products (see right) from AWI. AWI will verify your equipment requirements. Each of these products includes a three-year replacement warranty from Ubiquiti. The prices include GST but not shipping.

The trial participants will have to install the equipment themselves. It is important to note that the setting up of the equipment **will require time and other resources** that are not feasible for AWI to provide.

Information and guidance will be provided by AWI, and phone support will be available for the trial participants.

Aside from these Ubiquiti products that must be purchased, the resources that trial participants could need to provide themselves (following guidance from AWI) also include:

- poles on which the equipment can be mounted
- solar panels, to generate electricity
- solar charge controllers (battery regulators), which control the current flow from the solar panels
- waterproof boxes.

These items could be easily sourced, eg from Ubiquiti, at hardware stores or around the farm.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>LITEBEAM AC ANTENNA \$150 including 3 year replacement warranty</p> <p>Simple point-to-point links capable of creating reliable links over 20km range line of sight.</p> |
|  | <p>AIRMAX AC SECTOR ANTENNA WITH ROCKET M5 ACCESS POINT \$500 including 3 year replacement warranty</p> <p>A more powerful antenna (then the point-to-point above) covering 60 degree radius for multiple links across your property with 50+ km range and 150 mbps throughput.</p> |
|  | <p>EDGEROUTER POE \$299 including 3 year replacement warranty</p> <p>Needed if you want to connect up to 3 accessories (3 cameras or 2 cameras and Wi-Fi access point) to any link.</p> |
|  | <p>UNIFI VIDEO CAMERA G3 \$220 including 3 year replacement warranty</p> <p>Full HD IR camera with extended range; it can be used to alert and record video and sound on motion. It is also available with the powerful accessory that dramatically extends night-time range.</p> |

As well as be willing to set up the system themselves, trial participants **will be required to provide feedback to AWI** about the installation process and the effectiveness of the wireless network.

To run Wi-Fi hotspots, trial participants must already have ADSL or NBN internet at their homestead. Participants must also have a PC to run the required free Ubiquiti software.

WIRELESS TRIAL PROJECT

INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN THE TRIAL

Tony Butler at Newsted, Victoria. PHOTO: Zoe Phillips/Newspix



Tony Butler runs 8,000 sheep in a mixed enterprise at his 2,600ha family farm 'Joyce's Park', near Newstead in central Victoria. He says he would like this wireless technology on his farm because it would benefit the bottom line of his business.

"This technology will give us the means to remotely monitor a distant section of the property that persistently has been the target of sheep thieves in the past," Tony said.

"As stock theft is rampant across this part of Victoria, and sheep values are historically high, we would hope that this technology will offer a degree of security, and maybe deterrence, that we have not had access to up until now."



A satellite photo (sourced from Google Earth) of Tony's farm showing his homestead (top right) and possible placements of antennas and cameras with line of site indicated by red lines.

HOW TO LODGE YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest are welcome from woolgrowers across Australia, but the trial is limited to ten participants.

To express your interest to be one of the trial participants, simply email AWI at wireless@wool.com with the following information clearly stated:

1. Your name and contact details (email, phone, street address).
2. A satellite photo of the area of your farm in which you propose to install the network (eg a screenshot from Google Earth, similar to the photo of Tony Butler's property above).
3. An **approximate** indication of how many units (antennas, cameras etc) you anticipate you will use and where they would be located on your map. There has to be line of site between antennas, ie with no obstructions (such as trees, buildings) between poles/antennas. There can be a distance of up to 20 km between point-to-point antennas.

4. What you want to monitor, or to what location(s) you want to provide a Wi-Fi hotspot.

If you are selected by AWI for the trial, AWI will verify that the equipment requirements that you have estimated is appropriate for your requirements.

If you are interested in being a trial participant, please lodge your expression of interest by **Tuesday 31 October 2017**. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

If you have any technical queries, ring the Ubiquiti support line on (02) 7903 5046. For queries about lodging an expression of interest, email AWI at wireless@wool.com

Sheep grazing on wheat stubble. PHOTO: Philip Quirk

REINTRODUCING SHEEP INTO THE WHEATBELT

In this article, AWI's extension network in Western Australia, **The Sheep's Back**, provides a **model of cooperation** whereby a sheepbelt farmer running sheep on a wheatbelt farm's stubble can **provide benefits for both sets of farmers**.

The broadacre agricultural region of Western Australia can be categorised as either sheepbelt or wheatbelt. Typically, enterprises in the sheepbelt have a substantially higher proportion of sheep compared to wheatbelt farming systems.

There is anecdotal evidence that, for the wheatbelt, if one crops more than 70%, profits tend to decline and risk increases. The reason being, lower margin crops are planted on areas of the farm that otherwise wouldn't be cropped. This is a generalisation and naturally there are exceptions to this rule.

There has been a recent trend of wheatbelt farmers considering adding sheep to their farming enterprise. However, taking the plunge into sheep is not easily done because prices are at record levels meaning significant capital is required to fund your way into a sheep enterprise.

Could a model of cooperation between sheep farmers (sheepbelt) and wheat farmers (wheatbelt) be generated to satisfy both

communications such as emails and SMS to let them know about upcoming events and alerting them of husbandry problems, as they occur, making suggestions as to their alleviation.

The Sheep's Back also organises seminars, workshops and field days throughout the year on appropriate topics for its members. E

MORE INFORMATION

Web: www.sheepsback.com.au
 Email: admin@sheepsback.com.au
 Phone: Andrew Ritchie,
 Manager (08) 9736 1055
 Twitter: @sheepsback
 Facebook: @sheepsback

parties? We have outlined a simple method of cooperation that requires a sheepbelt farmer running sheep on the wheatbelt farm's stubble.

POST-HARVEST

The assumption that has been made is the wheatbelt farm has stubbles, in particular cereal stubbles, which are not being utilised by the sheep.

The other advantages, apart from financial, for the wheatbelt farm in having sheep graze on the stubbles are:

- Reduce summer weed numbers
- Ability to spray graze weeds meaning lower chemical spend
- Knocking down chaff piles so they can be seeded through
- Grazing chaff lines so they break down more quickly
- Recycling nutrients to benefit the following crop.

There is the concern that sheep cause soil compaction and thus reduce subsequent yields. It is correct that sheep cause compaction while grazing on stubbles, but it is shallow and transient and usually disappears after the soil wets again. Reduced water infiltration and yield from grazing is due to removal of cover rather than compaction, light grazing has no impact on subsequent grain yields. This was research carried out by Western Australian No-Tillage Farmers Association (WANTFA) and Grain & Graze 2.

The benefits to the sheepbelt farmers and their sheep are:

- Lower feeding costs (less hand feeding required)
- Growing into bigger sheep in the wheatbelt
 - Increased conception rates in ewes
 - Increased sale price for wethers.

EXAMPLE

Agist ewe lambs from the sheepbelt to the wheatbelt for the summer returning them at the break of the season, a period of 20 weeks. The cost of feeding ewe lambs over summer is calculated in Table 1 and includes no access to a fodder crop.

TABLE 1: COST OF FEEDING EWE LAMBS FOR 20 WEEKS

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| 20 kg oats @ \$240/t | \$4.80 |
| 20 kg lupins @ \$360/t | \$7.20 |
| Hand feeding cost | \$12.00 |

The average feeding cost of a July/August drop ewe lamb with access to only pasture and stubbles (no fodder crop) is about \$12/hd. How does this compare to agistment on wheatbelt stubbles? Table 2 includes the costs of freighting the ewe lambs both ways and 20 weeks of agistment.



THE SHEEP'S BACK is AWI's extension network in Western Australia that champions the wool-growing industry.

At present there are more than 1,600 members of the network. The Sheep's Back network provides them with up to date and timely information to assist with maximising the efficiency of the enterprise.

Members of the network receive regular newsletters and electronic

AWI GROWER NETWORKS

AWI extension networks are present in each wool-growing state and aim to increase the long-term productivity and profitability of producers. All woolgrowers are encouraged to get involved.

AWI-supported extension networks provide opportunities for producers to get involved in practical programs that focus on making positive changes to on-farm production and management practices.

The networks are fundamental to the spread of new ideas, continuing education and the adoption of best practice, as well as giving AWI a direct link to what is happening on-ground.



Examining sheep handling equipment at a **Precision Agriculture Seminar** at the Condobolin Agricultural Research and Advisory Station in June, hosted by Central West Farming Systems and supported by AWI's **Sheep Connect NSW** extension network.

In 2016/17, ongoing strong partnerships with state departments of agriculture, private providers and woolgrowers helped AWI ensure that the extension networks had another successful year, with increases in participation and reported benefit by woolgrowers.

AWI's national pastoral extension investment, Pastoral Profit, wound up in June 2017 following a successful

three-year collaboration with Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), engaging 2,133 producers in 110 activities. Moving forward, AWI will continue to invest in the pastoral zone through its existing woolgrower networks.

To learn more about the networks and how to get involved, refer to the website of your state network, or contact the network coordinator below.

| AWI GROWER NETWORK | COORDINATOR | PHONE | EMAIL |
|--|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Sheep Connect NSW www.sheepconnectnsw.com.au | Megan Rogers | 0427 459 891 | admin@sheepconnectnsw.com.au |
| BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB (Vic) www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/ bestwool-bestlamb | Lyndon Kubeil | 03 5761 1649 | lyndon.kubeil@ecodev.vic.gov.au |
| Sheep Connect SA www.sheepconnectsa.com.au | Ian McFarland | 0437 659 353 | ian.mcfarland@sa.gov.au |
| The Sheep's Back (WA) www.sheepsback.com.au | Andrew Ritchie | 08 9736 1055 | andrew@iconag.com.au |
| Leading Sheep (Qld) www.leadingsheep.com.au | Nicole Sallur | 07 4530 1270 | nicole.sallur@daf.qld.gov.au |
| Sheep Connect Tasmania www.sheepconnecttas.com.au | James Tyson | 0409 006 774 | james.tyson@utas.edu.au |

TABLE 2: COST OF AGISTING EWE LAMBS FOR 20 WEEKS

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Freight both ways | \$5.00 |
| Agist 40 c/hd/wk (20 weeks) | \$8.00 |
| Total cost | \$13.00 |

Husbandry costs associated with running the ewe lambs is assumed to be the same no matter where they are situated. However, in drier areas there tends to be less worm and fly pressure. As Tables 1 and 2 illustrate it will cost \$1/hd extra for sheepbelt farms to agist lambs in the wheatbelt rather than run them on the home property.

Why would a sheepbelt farmer bother, if for every ewe lamb they agist it costs them \$1? There are several reasons, some easy to value but many are not:

- Not having to manage and feed ewe lambs over summer
- Ewe lambs grow out quicker in the wheatbelt meaning:
 - Lower death rates
 - Increased wool cut at first shearing
 - Increased conception rates as maidens and subsequent lambings

- Sheepbelt property will run a lower summer stocking rate, advantages include:
 - More stubble area for remaining sheep
 - Less hand feeding required for remaining sheep
 - More soil cover in subsequent year

A typical number of ewe lambs from a sheepbelt property would be 1,500 head. Agisting these sheep into the wheatbelt would cost \$1,500 per year but it comes with all the added benefits listed above. For the wheatbelt farmer they get paid \$12,000 in agistment fees for managing 1,500 ewe lambs on their property.

Water infrastructure would be the biggest hurdle to overcome; checking and maintaining scheme and bore water is incredibly time consuming. This can be made easier with remote monitoring, but that is an added cost. Dam water is ideal but many wheatbelt properties do not have adequate dams.

The above is just one simple example that show mutual benefit to both the sheepbelt farmer and wheatbelt farmer. Any number of mutually beneficial agreements could be drawn up, some other examples include:

- Wethers – either transported both ways or sold from wheatbelt property

- Keeping sheep agisted on stubbles into winter on:
 - Dirty paddocks
 - Lower quality soil (lower crop margin)
 - Frost prone areas
 - In the event of a late break, some paddocks are removed from crop
 - Growing a legume pasture to sequester N for the next crop
- A wheatbelt farmer wishing to acquire sheep without the large capital cost, could 'swap' sheep for the agistment fee (no commission or freight).

CONCLUSION

This could be an area of mutual benefit for both parties. There are current examples of these types of arrangements, and it is clear that the modern Merino from the sheepbelt thrives when introduced to the wheatbelt. Freight in the past has been the biggest barrier to these types of arrangements. Usually they have started during dry times when sheepbelt farmers are trying to lower stocking rates without selling low value sheep. However, current sheep margins are very high so the added benefits such as increased lambing rates or increased wool cuts can now be traded off against the freight cost.



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Ewes and lambs in a prepared sheltered low worm-risk paddock. PHOTO: Deb Maxwell

DRENCHES FOR SPRING LAMBS

Should lambs be drenched at marking and weaning?

Are there differences between Merino and meat breeds of sheep? And what if weaning is delayed past the standard 14 weeks of age?

PRE-LAMBING PREPARATION AND EWE DRENCHES SET THE SCENE

Worm control in summer rainfall areas is greatly improved by preparing low worm-risk spring lambing paddocks – a topic that was discussed in the March 2017 edition of *Beyond The Bale* – and drenching the ewes with an effective short-acting pre-lambing drench. Together, these prevent the typical spring build up of worms in lambing ewes whose immunity is naturally suppressed.

In winter rainfall areas, worm-risk is declining in spring, but using the least contaminated paddocks for the most susceptible groups of ewes and lambs (for instance, twin-bearing or maiden ewes) is good practice.

Gauge the contamination level by monitoring worm egg counts of the sheep using the lambing paddocks during the months prior to lambing.

In these areas, ewes may not need a pre-lambing drench, but use a WormTest to decide this (details are in the WormBoss regional worm control programs at www.wormboss.com.au).

LAMB MARKING WORMTESTS INDICATE WHETHER PREPARATION WAS A SUCCESS

With effective pre-lambing worm control and lamb marking timed to occur when the oldest lambs are 6–7 weeks old, the drenching of lambs at lamb marking is rarely warranted. The lamb's primary diet has been milk, so they have eaten relatively little pasture to acquire a significant worm burden.

However, a pre-lamb marking WormTest is recommended for ewes, regardless of breed, particularly if the lambing paddock is likely to be heavily contaminated with worm larvae or the lambs appear not to be growing as well as expected.

Collect faecal samples in the paddock, as for a normal WormTest, but only sample from the larger ewe dung piles – not the lambs. If the test indicates the ewes need drenching, then also drench the lambs at marking, and where possible, if drenching is required, provide a fresh paddock. At this time, the worm burden of lambs is still maturing and those larvae consumed in the last 2–3 weeks will not yet be laying eggs.

BETWEEN MARKING AND WEANING CHECK FOR DEVELOPING WORM BURDENS

Provided lambs are growing well (at least 200g/day) there should be no need to drench lambs before weaning. If you are concerned that they are not growing well, WormTest the ewes and drench both ewes and lambs, if indicated by your WormBoss regional Drench Decision Guide.

AT WEANING (OR 14 WEEKS FROM THE START OF LAMBING) GIVE A DRENCH

If there is only one drench to be given to young sheep, it should be the weaning drench. Only the very dry sheep-rearing districts of Australia regularly get away without a weaning drench, and in areas where drenching is only required in some years, a WormTest is recommended before weaning.

It is industry practice that weaning should occur about 14 weeks after the start of lambing, especially for Merino ewes. This gives the ewes a suitable length of time to recover weight and condition before the next joining, and it allows lambs to be moved onto better quality pastures, crop or low worm-risk paddocks, with no competition from their mothers.

The weaning drench for lambs is generally considered a strategic treatment: it has

Young weaners, drenched and moved to a fresh paddock. PHOTO: Deb Maxwell



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The LiceBoss, WormBoss and FlyBoss websites are sources of detailed management information and regional programs that will assist in managing the major parasite risks for sheep. The websites have been developed by expert panels of parasitologists and veterinarians from across Australia.

ParaBoss provides access to the three websites at www.paraboss.com.au.

Subscribe to ParaBoss News, the twice monthly free email newsletter with state outlooks on the current state of sheep parasites as well as feature articles and the quick quiz to test your knowledge of sheep parasites. You can subscribe on the ParaBoss website.

Join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/paraboss.com.au to see weekly posts on flystrike, lice and worm control.

ParaBoss is funded by AWI and MLA and coordinated by the University of New England with industry oversight.

MORE INFORMATION
www.paraboss.com.au



benefits to not just those lambs, but to other sheep on the property by keeping levels of worm larvae on the pasture lower or by pre-empting a problem. It should be given (except in the dry areas) regardless of the worm burden of lambs at the time.

Weaning is a stressful time for lambs, which lose both the milk (albeit only a small part of their diet at this time) and the security from their mother.

Weaning of spring lambs often coincides with other stresses: in summer rainfall regions it is a time of increasing risk from barber's pole worm, whereas in winter rainfall areas the feed is typically drying off and feed quality and quantity are decreasing.

Weaners are also the most susceptible class of sheep on a property as their immunity to worms is undeveloped at this age. Combined with these stresses, weaners can rapidly acquire a serious worm infection at a time when growth is vitally important to their survival and enterprise profitability.

Sometimes spring-born prime lambs are not weaned, they are simply kept with their mothers for another month or two to avoid weaning stress before being sold.

Recent research in Western Australia and New South Wales has clearly shown that these lambs should also be drenched when the oldest are about 14 weeks old, as by this time they will have acquired enough worms to reduce their subsequent growth.

An effective, and preferably short-acting, combination drench given at weaning or about 14 weeks will remove a developing burden of worms that may not yet be apparent on a worm egg count, giving the lambs a head-start to face the stresses to come while their immunity develops.

AFTER WEANING (OR THE DRENCH AT 14 WEEKS) PROVIDE THE BEST PADDOCKS

In summer rainfall areas, move lambs onto prepared low-worm-risk paddocks, or in southern Australia, fresh paddocks or stubble. Monitor lambs with worm egg counts at 4–6 weekly intervals and use the WormBoss Drench Decision Guide for your region to decide whether to drench.

MORE INFORMATION

Further information on worm control in lambing ewes, lambs and weaners for your region can be found at www.wormboss.com.au/programs



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BREECH FLYSTRIKE PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS

AWI makes available publications about breech flystrike prevention on its website at www.wool.com/flystrikelatest. Here is a selection of the available publications:



AWI'S BREECH FLYSTRIKE R&D TECHNICAL UPDATE PRESENTATION

(July 2016)

Presentation slides from AWI's Breech Flystrike R&D Technical Update events held in 2016, 2014, 2012 and 2010.



AWI RDE AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY – BREECH FLYSTRIKE PREVENTION PROGRAM

(September 2017)

AWI FLYSTRIKE PREVENTION PROGRAM – REPORT CARD

(September 2017)

Each is a 2-page summary of AWI's current status/progress made during 2005–2017 in its Breech Flystrike Prevention Program; covering objectives related to breeding and selection; breech modification; improved management practices; grower and industry education and training; and supply chain education and training.



CSIRO ARMIDALE BREECH STRIKE GENETICS NEWSLETTER ISSUE 7

(November 2016)

An 8-page newsletter from CSIRO Armidale that undertook the Breech Strike Genetics project from 2005 with funding from AWI.



DAFWA BREECH STRIKE RESISTANCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER ISSUE 7

(July 2017)

A 12-page newsletter from the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) that undertook the Breech Strike Genetics project from 2006 with funding from AWI.



TAIL LENGTH IN UNMULESED AUSTRALIAN MERINO SHEEP

(December 2012)

A report that addresses the impact of tail length on susceptibility to breech flystrike of unmulesed Australian Merino sheep.



PAIN RELIEF: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(March 2017)

BREEDING LOWER WRINKLE AND DAG

(June 2017)

Each is a 2-page summary article from *Beyond the Bale*.

MORE INFORMATION

These publications are available at www.wool.com/flystrikelatest



MANAGING BREECH FLYSTRIKE MANUAL UPDATED

AWI's 'Managing Breech Flystrike' manual, which was released in 2011, **has been updated** and is available in hard copy and online.

It is designed to help woolgrowers further reduce their flock's flystrike risk and develop more effective flystrike control plans. The manual signposts to further information, primarily FlyBoss.

There are a wide range of management and breeding options currently in use. Different combinations of the available tools will suit producers in different enterprises and regions with varying risk of flystrike incidence.

The preferred combination of tools and strategies needs to fit individual woolgrower's sheep enterprise requirements and other farm operations. It is important that producers continually review their plan to ensure that it is most effective and fits in well with the future markets and seasonal variability.

The 44-page manual includes coverage of management options, such as the strategic use of chemicals, shearing and crutching; breech modification; scouring and worm control; breeding for breech strike resistance and moving to a non-mules enterprise. **E**

MORE INFORMATION

The Managing Breech Flystrike manual is available at www.wool.com/flystrikelatest or request a free hard copy version from the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099

WOOL HARVESTING INNOVATION WORKSHOP



The **ShearEzy** upright posture shearing platform from **Peak Hill Industries** in action.

AWI held a shearing industry day in June to help prioritise AWI's investment in wool harvesting innovation, with the aim of greater efficiencies for woolgrowers and the wider industry.

While the traditional method of shearing continues to serve the industry, over the years many alternatives to harvesting wool have been invested in, such as upright posture shearing platforms (UPSPs). The Wool Harvesting Innovation Workshop, held in Dubbo, examined the latest knowledge and innovation around the current technologies and asked the vital question of "what next?"

Woolgrowers, shearing contractors and trainers, UPSP manufacturers and wool brokers discussed current shearing related issues such as UPSPs alongside related issues such as shearing shed design, workplace health and safety, human resources, retro-fitting woolsheds and mobile shearing technology.

"AWI funds the in-shed training of shearers and woolhandlers to try to make the process as efficient as possible," AWI shearing industry development manager Jim Murray said. "But with the advent of the digital age we need to keep looking for new opportunities to make this monumental task easier for both shearer, sheep and woolgrower – and this is what the workshop discussed."

The day started with Bill Byrne of Peak Hill Industries presenting the current ShearEzy UPSP. Bill has been working on machinery

for the sheep and wool industry since the 1990s and has worked on various UPSP developments. He said an experienced operator can shear 200 plus head per day using the ShearEzy.

Woolgrower Grant Burbidge, who has been exploring alternative wool harvesting ideas for the past seven years, presented (with a video) an alternative upright wool harvesting model – based on the Andrew Wytkin (WA) system developed and operated in the 1980s.

Jim Murray then provided the workshop with an update on Bioclip. It is now 100% owned by Heiniger, which is currently looking at opportunities with potential for a commercial product to be available in the near future. Heiniger is also working on innovation with existing and new handpiece technology.

There was then an open discussion led by Jim on shearing shed design, with a focus also on what to consider when building or retro-fitting wool sheds for UPSPs or other technologies. Videos of woolgrowers discussing their new shed designs were shown: Rupert McLaren of 'Glenmore' (featured on page 61 of this edition of *Beyond the Bale*) and Magnus Aitkin of 'Steam Plains' (featured on page 34 of the December 2012 edition of *Beyond the Bale*).

Jim Murray also presented on 'Shear Jitsu', a way that shearers can prevent injury and increase the longevity of their careers. A video was shown featuring Pera Davies who developed the 'Stand and Deliver - Shear-Jitsu' technique (featured on page 48 of the June 2017 edition of *Beyond the Bale*).

Paul Oster and Shannon Warnest presented to the workshop various perspectives as shearer trainers, shearing contractors and woolgrowers. They highlighted catch and drag/release as major issues and noted that shearing patterns are continually being improved and reviewed.

The workshop participants then broke into groups to discuss: the challenges and opportunities of blue sky/long-term innovation; alternatives to conventional wool harvesting; training and retention; and shed design and retro-fitting.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Jim Murray said the workshop helped create a better understanding of the lack of widespread adoption of innovation in wool harvesting methods and the associated barriers, but also noted that there are opportunities for the industry.

"The workshop has helped increase industry awareness, communication and motivation for the need to innovate and improve wool harvesting methods," he said.

"In the short term, AWI will continue to invest in shearer and woolhandler training – both conventional and upright, and other methods if they emerge. AWI will also work on providing 'best practice shed construction' guidance, which includes independent assessments and considers OH&S and efficiency issues.

"In the medium term, there needs to be further investigation into mobile shearing and its application; establishment of a strategy for further development, training and adoption of UPSP systems; and support for ongoing research into alternatives to the hand piece and catch and drag.

"However, in the long term, it is important to look beyond the industry for solutions, such as robotics technology, and encourage lateral thinking towards wool harvesting."

There has already been progress since the workshop, with AWI jointly-funding the first UPSP school last month in Tarcutta, NSW, in conjunction with the Burbidge Wool Harvesting System. **B**

Merriman Shearing School at Brewarrina, east of Bourke in the far north of NSW. PHOTOS: Kate Ballis

SHEARING SCHOOL PROVIDES A BRIGHT FUTURE



The Merriman Shearing School's head trainer, Ian Bateman.

A shearing school for young Ingenious Australians is making them job ready for shed work and helping build the wool harvesting workforce, benefiting local communities and the wool industry.

In the far northwest of NSW, in the sleepy town of Brewarrina, lies the Merriman Shearing School. Established in 2010 and sitting on a 16,000ha property, the school provides training for Indigenous Australians and has changed the lives of more than 150 students, generally aged between 15 and 30. Owned by the Indigenous Land Corporation – which receives funding from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet for the school's operation – and supported by AWI, the school runs two 16-week courses each year, offering a Certificate Two in Rural Operations and aims to find jobs for young Indigenous Australians within the wool industry.

With more than 50 years' shearing experience, Ian Bateman – or 'Boof' as he is known in the industry – is the school's head trainer. An Indigenous man himself, he knows just how important it is for young Indigenous Australians to be offered training that can lead to employment opportunities.

"More than half our students have gained full-time employment after graduating," says a proud Ian. "In addition to shearing, the students are taught everything that's done on a sheep property: fencing, fixing troughs, building yards, wool handling, pressing and stock management. Not all of them want to continue as a shearer, but by the time they finish they have so many other skills."

In addition, valuable life skills are offered as trainees also learn about the benefits of health and nutrition. Every morning starts with a 9-kilometre run, walk or jog and

every meal is nutritiously prepared onsite by the school's live-in cook. Each fortnight, an exercise scientist from Bourke & Brewarrina Aboriginal Health Services visits the school for gym classes and measures the students' progress across the 16 weeks for strength and endurance. And with a zero-tolerance to illegal substances, Ian and his team take the issue of substance abuse very seriously: "It's not three strikes and you're out, it's zero strikes."

Attracting young Indigenous Australians into the wool harvesting industry and making them job ready for shed work will not only benefit the young people and their local community, it will also benefit the wool industry by building the number of trained people available to work in the sheds.

"AWI has been so supportive of what we do as they know what this means. There's only a few of us putting out kids to go in this industry and Australian woolgrowers benefit from us because we're putting people out there to go to work and enhance the wool industry. This is the only shearer training facility in Australia that takes youth off the street and turns them into good, young responsible people, who can go out and earn meaningful employment and live by themselves."

For the school's trainees, it's not only a ticket to full-time employment and the chance to earn a significant wage, it also an opportunity to travel the world and shear internationally. For the duration of the 16-week course the trainees are expected to work industry



22-year-old trainee **Morgan Wrigley** being congratulated by trainer **Graham 'Buck' Thurlow**.



As well as shearing, the **Merriman school training** included wool handling and stock management, plus other property management skills.

hours and are paid wages under the national training award. By the end of their time at Merriman, trainees are expected to be able to shear the industry minimum of 80 sheep per day. More than 50 per cent of graduates are immediately placed into ongoing employment upon graduation, with many now able to support their families and purchase a house.

"I saw this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," says 22-year-old trainee Morgan Wrigley. "I grew up surrounded by the wool industry – my old man's a shearer and my

brothers work in the wool industry, so I thought I'd try to keep it in the family.

"Apart from the farm skills I've learned that nutrition and fitness are important, as is healthy eating so you can keep up with your work. I'm aiming to shear 200 sheep a day."

Unlike Morgan, 16-year-old Sophie Noble decided early on in the course that shearing wasn't for her. What she did take a keen liking to, however, was wool handling – something she hopes to continue after graduation. Hailing from the tiny town of Walcha, Sophie decided to attend the

Merriman Shearing School to learn new skills and try something different.

"I was open to learn anything when I arrived," she said. "I've learned fencing, wool classing, shearing and crutching – but my favourite part has been wool handling and I intend to stay in the wool industry and get more skills when I finish here. I've made some good friends here and my advice to anyone would be to try your hardest and don't give up."

B

MORE INFORMATION

www.merrimanshearingschool.com.au

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The new, well-designed shearing shed of mixed enterprise farmer **Rupert McLaren** and his family in the heart of the Riverina's wheat and sheep belt is not only making their livestock operation more efficient, safer and more profitable but it is also an investment for future generations.

Located in Barmedman, NSW, 'Glenmore' is a mixed cropping and grazing enterprise run by Rupert McLaren and his family. For Rupert, installing a state of the art 6-stand woolshed meant he was able to ensure the health and safety of his family, staff and contract shearers employed to shear their Merino wethers.

"The Work Health and Safety advantages of working in a shed like this over a lifetime are enormous," Rupert said. "At the end of every day, I actually feel pretty good working in this shed as there is hardly any bending at all."

The Sawtooth shearing board was designed to maximise safety and efficiency for shearers and wool handlers. The design is unique, because it reduces the drag for each shearer but most importantly, minimises the need to turn when dragging. Each shearer has a separate work area, which reduces the chance of injury caused by shearing in confinement. The raised platform allows wool handlers to have full access around each individual shearer, something that attracted Rupert to the concept.

"I'm very impressed with the sawtooth arrangement. It is much easier for the shearers. Dragging straight out of the pen means that they don't have to turn another 90 degrees. Apart from the shearers, everyone is upright the entire working day.

After working on a flat floor in the old shed, the raised board is an absolute joy."

The shed fitout was tailored to Rupert's particular needs to maximise the space as well as ensure an effective flow of sheep from his old shearing shed into the new one. The concrete floor also allows for machinery storage when not in use.

"I had actually been thinking about doing something with my existing shearing shed for quite some time. After flicking through a pamphlet at Henty field days, I realised it was insane and that I should just build a new shed. It's a lifetime investment. We can now hold more than five hundred sheep in this shed with the connected old shed holding another five hundred."

For Rupert, this investment meant safe and efficient infrastructure would be in place for his sons to take over once they were ready.

"My sons are working here in the shed which is really important to me. They represent the future of my operation and the investments we're making now will help them, as well as the future generations who farm this land."

The 6-stand shearing board includes features that make the space more comfortable for the entire team. Each shearer has their own shelf for equipment and a power point. Handrails are placed along the board as well as an electrical cut-out button in case of emergency.

The holding pen configuration improves stock flow and efficiency when penning up, with slide swing gates that are braced overhead for strength. Sheeted fences are placed strategically to promote sheep flow into the catching pens, which are sloped towards the board to make the drag easier. For Rupert however, the number one design feature is the air conditioner, in terms of making the workplace more comfortable for himself and the team.

"I have an air-conditioner in my tractor – this is much harder work than my tractor! There is no way that I would not have an air-conditioner in the shearing shed. The shearers I've got, they're a good team, but they're big wethers. Anything that I can do to make their life a little bit easier is well worth doing."

For Rupert and his family, installing a new shearing shed was an investment they have considered for a very long time.

"It was something that I thought long and hard about. But when you compare it to the costs within the grain industry, it's actually extraordinarily good value. I think this is probably a one-hundred and fifty-year investment."

MORE INFORMATION

For more information and a video of the shed in action visit www.proway.com.au/2017/04/glenmore



The 6-stand sawtooth shearing board at Rupert McLaren's property 'Glenmore' in NSW is designed to maximise safety and efficiency for shearers and wool handlers.



Farmer **Rupert McLaren** (left) is very happy with the design of the boards.

MARKET INTELL

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI COMPARISON EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE FOR FINER AND MID MICRONS

EMI'S STELLAR 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 2017 – July 2017) in Australian dollar terms compared with the previous five years May 2012 to April 2017 (circles) and the decade previous to that, May 2002 – April 2012 (squares).

For the past three months, the monthly EMI averaged at \$15.15, tracking at the 99th percentile against the previous five-year monthly EMI. The percentile value (99th) indicates that the five-year monthly EMI recorded a price lower than \$15.15 for 99% of the time. Or to put it another way, in the previous five years the monthly EMI has recorded a price higher than the current \$15.15 (May 2017 – July 2017) for only 1% of the time.

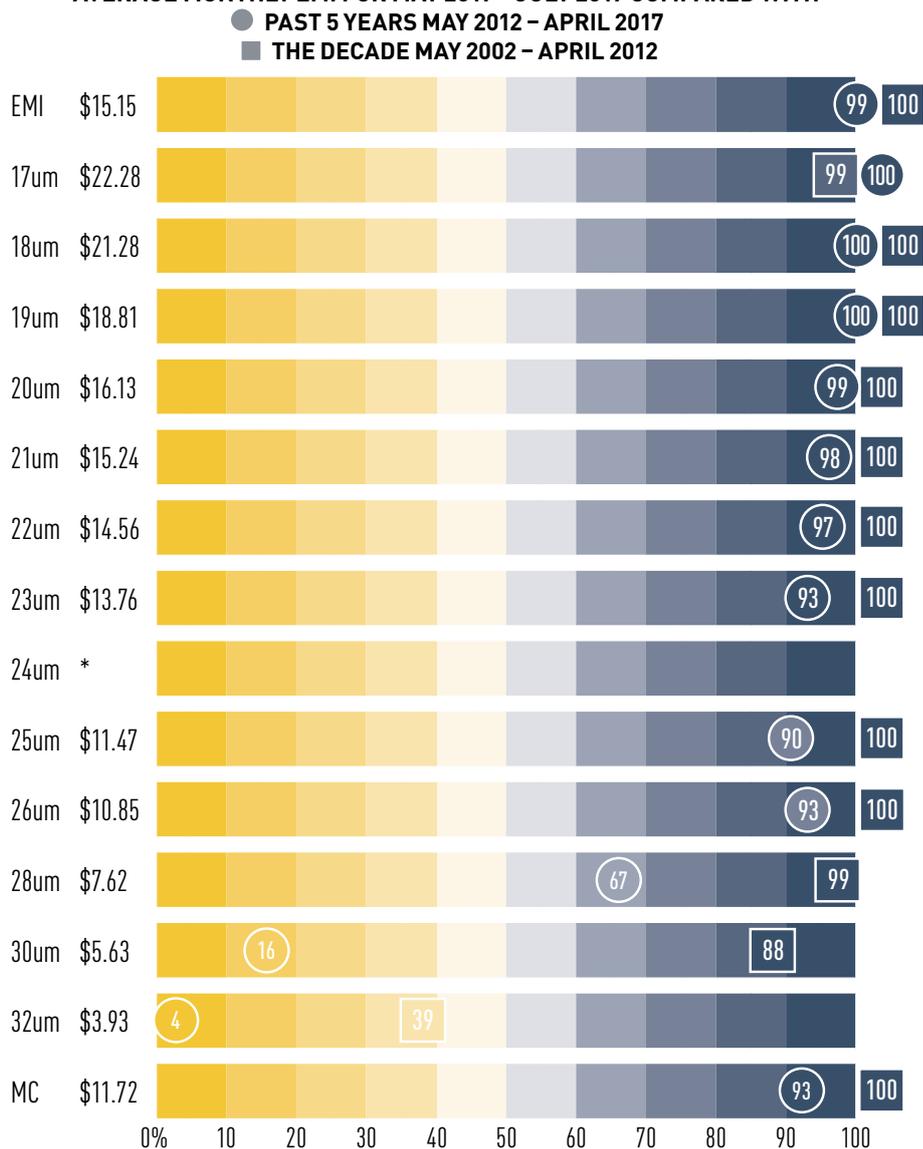
While the EMI is tracking at the 99th percentile over the previous five years, it is at the 100th percentile when compared to the decade May 2002 – April 2012. This means the current EMI of \$15.15 (May 2017 – July 2017) is higher now than it was for all that decade.

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 \$11.72, operating at the 93rd 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 \$21.28 (100th percentile for both periods), 21 micron averaged at \$15.24 (98th percentile and 100th percentile respectively), and 28 micron averaged at \$7.62 (67th percentile and 99th percentile respectively).

B

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI FOR MAY 2017 – JULY 2017 COMPARED WITH



*Insufficient data

MARKET INTELLIGENCE: FREE VIA SMS

In an initiative launched in March this 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.

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IGENCE REPORT

CHINA'S DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN WOOL

In this article, we look at information sourced from **Nanjing Wool Market in China** – which shows that **Australian wool is well sought after compared to wools from other countries.**

AUSTRALIAN WOOL PROVING POPULAR

In its analysis in July of wool markets, Nanjing Wool Market said that while prices were generally strong, within China there still exists a “fire and ice situation with ups of fine wool price and downs of coarse wool price”.

“Recently, the export orders (from China) were coming to a close, and the demand for raw materials was relatively low, so demand was centred around China’s domestic market. What’s more, the major China domestic demand stayed focused on the fake fur sector (see following page) which turned to be the driver of the real heat of the market. Some spinning mills had set down to produce fake fur and the wool raw materials become the focus with 21 micron (average) Merino and 26.8 micron (average) being in heavy demand.

“The demand of other products is not clear now, but what we can see is that New Zealand wool (broad end of crossbred types here in Australia) hasn’t met the demands of new products for consumption, because of the large production pressure coming from making fabrics (Merino) that are in favour. There is some heavy substitution of these broadest wool types in the fabric market and these have been replaced by the chemical fabrics, so the demand of wool broader than 32 micron is relatively low with wool price detained at the bottom of historical price cycles.”

This is reflected in the relative prices for Australian and New Zealand wool – see Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. AVERAGE PRICE INDICATOR OF ALL DESCRIPTION (RMB 0.01 YUAN/KG)

| STYLE | AVERAGE OF JULY 2017 | YEAR ON YEAR (JULY 2016) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Australian greasy wool | 103.70 | 13.33% |
| Australian China-combed wool top | 113.55 | 22.89% |
| Australian carbonised wool | 77.61 | 9.00% |
| New Zealand greasy wool | 26.06 | -26.78% |
| New Zealand China-combed wool top | 42.75 | -13.16% |
| New Zealand scoured wool | 27.15 | -25.27% |
| Uruguay wool top | 47.96 | 1.91% |
| China wool top | 91.90 | 10.59% |

WHERE DOES CHINA IMPORT WOOL FROM?

Table 2 below, sourced from Nanjing Wool Market, shows the top 20 countries from which China imports greasy wool for the six months January-June 2017 period, showing volume (kg) and amount (US\$).

It highlights the interdependent relationship between Australia and China, and the importance of Australia’s role in global wool production.

In the six-month period from January-June 2017, the volume of greasy wool imports from Australia accounted for more than 70% of all imports of greasy wool from the top 20 countries, while the next two ranking countries, South Africa and New Zealand combined, accounted for little more than 15%.

When looked at in value terms (US\$), greasy wool imports from Australia was even more dominant, accounting for more than 79% of all imports from the top 20 countries, whereas South Africa accounted for slightly more than 8% and New Zealand less than 4% (12% combined).

This demonstrates the premium quality of Australian wool, and the dominant role that Australian wool plays in the supply of greasy wool to China, the world’s foremost processor of greasy wool.

TABLE 2. GREASY WOOL IMPORTED BY CHINA (SORTED BY JAN - JUNE 2017 VALUE)

| COUNTRY | JAN - JUNE 2017 VOLUME (KG) | JAN - JUNE 2017 AMOUNT (US\$) |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Australia | 95,413,670 | 1,022,491,993 |
| South Africa | 10,499,663 | 104,995,624 |
| New Zealand | 10,601,003 | 49,997,323 |
| Argentina | 3,322,830 | 34,915,500 |
| Uruguay | 2,602,588 | 19,588,792 |
| Lesotho | 1,492,294 | 1,492,294 |
| Spain | 2,554,044 | 2,554,044 |
| Chile | 1,287,691 | 1,287,691 |
| UK | 2,756,680 | 2,756,680 |
| USA | 734,147 | 734,147 |
| Belgium | 964,680 | 964,680 |
| France | 864,109 | 864,109 |
| Germany | 660,834 | 660,834 |
| Netherlands | 381,933 | 381,933 |
| Hungary | 314,931 | 314,931 |
| Italy | 339,046 | 339,046 |
| Ireland | 163,650 | 163,650 |
| Kazakhstan | 399,540 | 399,540 |
| Canada | 58,293 | 58,293 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 74,350 | 74,350 |



China-based wool agent
Lizzy Shen

AN INSIDER'S VIEW ON CHINA

China-based wool agent Lizzy Shen provides in this article, written especially for *Beyond the Bale*, her insights into the rising **demand for Australian wool by the Chinese manufacturing sector for the wool fake fur market.**

Wool fake fur, the very fabric that has been pushing Australian wool to a higher price level, is doing the same now as it did last summer, but in a more aggressive manner this time. It is as hot as the high temperature throughout China, and nobody can avoid mentioning it when talking about the local wool industry.

Some early-bird wooldrop makers started booking the greasy wool for wool fake fur from April, but most did not start booking the greasy wool until mid or late May after they received the demand from the related yarn or fabric makers. Many greasy orders were written in May for June/July shipments. However, the selection of Australian wool began to diminish from June, so the extra demand easily pushed 21.0 micron fleece from under US\$11/kg in May to nearly US\$12/kg in June and US\$12.50/kg in the first week of auction after the recess in August.

Italians, Indians and Americans cannot understand the sharp price rises. Even those Chinese that keep themselves away from the fake fur market will be equally astonished by the high prices of 21.0–28.8 micron wool.

The difference lies in the microns and style that fabric makers use this year. Last year, 19.5 and 21.0 micron played the main role. This year, they are using coarser microns, due to higher wool prices compared to last year. A mill that used 19.5 micron last season is using 21.0 this season; previous 21.0 users now use 22.5. I also came across a fabric maker using purely 26.8 and 28.8 micron, no Merino wool at all. This is the very reason why we see 21.0–28.8 as the hottest microns at auction right after the recess. Last season, hardly anyone used Uruguayan 26.8 micron for the fabric because of its creamy colour,

but this year it is acceptable. Consequently, some mills are selling the fabric at a lower price level than last year, hoping more consumers will be able to afford it so as to expand the market.

While the production of wool fake fur apparel by the Chinese manufacturing sector is building, wool fake fur was not a huge success in the consumer market last winter. It looked and wore heavy (1kg of wool per coat). It was not widely spread out in the shops of first-line cities in China. However, this year, people are saying the fabric makers have overcome some technical problems, thus making better fabrics which should enjoy a better market this coming winter. Based on that prediction, some mills who made money from it last year are doubling their quantity this year. Those that failed to make any profit have gone back to concentrate on their profitable fabrics, for example, double face.

There are also garment mills who did not touch this fabric last year. They may have heard some others have made money, so they are starting to operate on this fabric now. The big population in China can always help the manufacturers to develop a new product if it can meet the needs of consumers and create fashion.

The new fabric has definitely brought higher profits to Australian farmers. Here in China, it has also brought a fortune to silk-lustre superwashing mills. Traditionally, those mills suffer a low season in July/August/September. Now with wool fake fur business, they are quite busy in these months. A client has to queue for more than one month to get his wooldrops superwashed. A mill owner said he has never had such a good business in superwash in all his lifetime. Another mill



An example of **wool fake fur apparel** in China.

owner told me his two superwash lines are making more profit than thirty top combing lines this summer, both on a commission processing basis.

Whether wool fake fur will perform well in the consumer market is still a question mark. We will not know until October when north China becomes cold enough. If it is no worse than last year, it will continue to survive next year. A friend of mine said she will book 1000mt of 26.8 micron when she sees US\$6.30 again (right now US\$8.50), but I don't think she will see it within two years. **B**

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WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY!

Pat Dwyer of Yass in NSW sent in this photo of his dog Archie being WHS conscious for a day cutting wood.



RAM MAN!

Textile artist Jeff Trahair of Adelaide sent in this photo of a piece of his work – Ram Man – exhibited at last year's Elmore Field Days, which won an award in the Ag Art competition. The work drew a lot of attention during the show. It features Merino rovings finger knitted direct onto the body form, and a Merino skull headpiece from the farm of his sister, Bev Weeks, who lives in Colbinabbin in central Victoria. The model is Tom Hughes of Rochester.



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.

Here are a few photos that we have recently received from readers.

WHO DOESN'T LOVE A PET LAMB...PART 1

Phoebe Macdermid of Ruffy, 175km north of Melbourne in Victoria, sent in this photo of Lizzabelle, named by her son Tom and his brothers.



WHO DOESN'T LOVE A PET LAMB...PART 2

Dean and Jane Phillips from south of Boyup Brook in Western Australia sent in this photo of two and a half year old Aubrey carrying her pet lamb Rosemarie at their sheep farm.



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Richard Palmer of Shelford, 40km west of Geelong in Victoria, sent in this photo of an aerial view of the Palmers' farm where they were shearing a small flock of Connemarran Merinos. The photo was taken by his share farmer with his quadcopter drone.



JACK TAKING A LOOK-SEE

Jane Lamb from Armidale, NSW, sent in this photo of Jack, an 18 month old crossbred who likes to get a height advantage to view his surroundings.



THREE GENERATIONS

Matthew Lang of 'Warrandah' in Warracknabeal, Victoria, sent in this photo of three generations of Langs in the shearing shed on their farm. Pictured is young Harry Lang with his grandfather Peter Lang and father Matthew Lang.



ALL IN A SPIN

Tilli Jessett learning to spin wool at her grandparents Ian and Caroline Kininmonth's 'Akoonah' property at Perry Bridge in Gippsland while visiting during shearing.



FEEDING SHEEP HAY

Janet Anderson of 'Bobby Byrne' at Garoo, 30km south of Tamworth in NSW, sent in this photo taken at her property by her good friend Sonya Breckenridge from Glenbrook in NSW, which was runner-up in this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show 'Rural Subject' photographic category.



ERIS AND MILLIE

Eris Heffernan of 'Dalkeith' at Gunning in the Southern Tablelands of NSW sent in this photo of himself at his farm with his son Luke and seven-month old granddaughter Millie. Millie and her parents Luke and Bonnie Heffernan of Camden were visiting for a few days and Millie loved seeing the farm animals and especially loved seeing her grandfather.



ON THE LOOKOUT

The Sutherlands of Varley in the southern wheatbelt of Western Australia sent in this photo taken in January 2017 of Robbo and Honey helping shift sheep farm to farm in preparation for shearing.



BEST BUDDIES

Karen Hunt sent in this photo of Tyson Mills, with Trixie the dog, watching his father Andrew shearing on their property 'The River' near Port Lincoln in South Australia.



SEEING DOUBLE!

German backpacker Luisa Hutnik, who has been working on a farm at Narembeen in the Western Australia wheatbelt, sent in this photo of twin lambs she named Erna and Frieda.

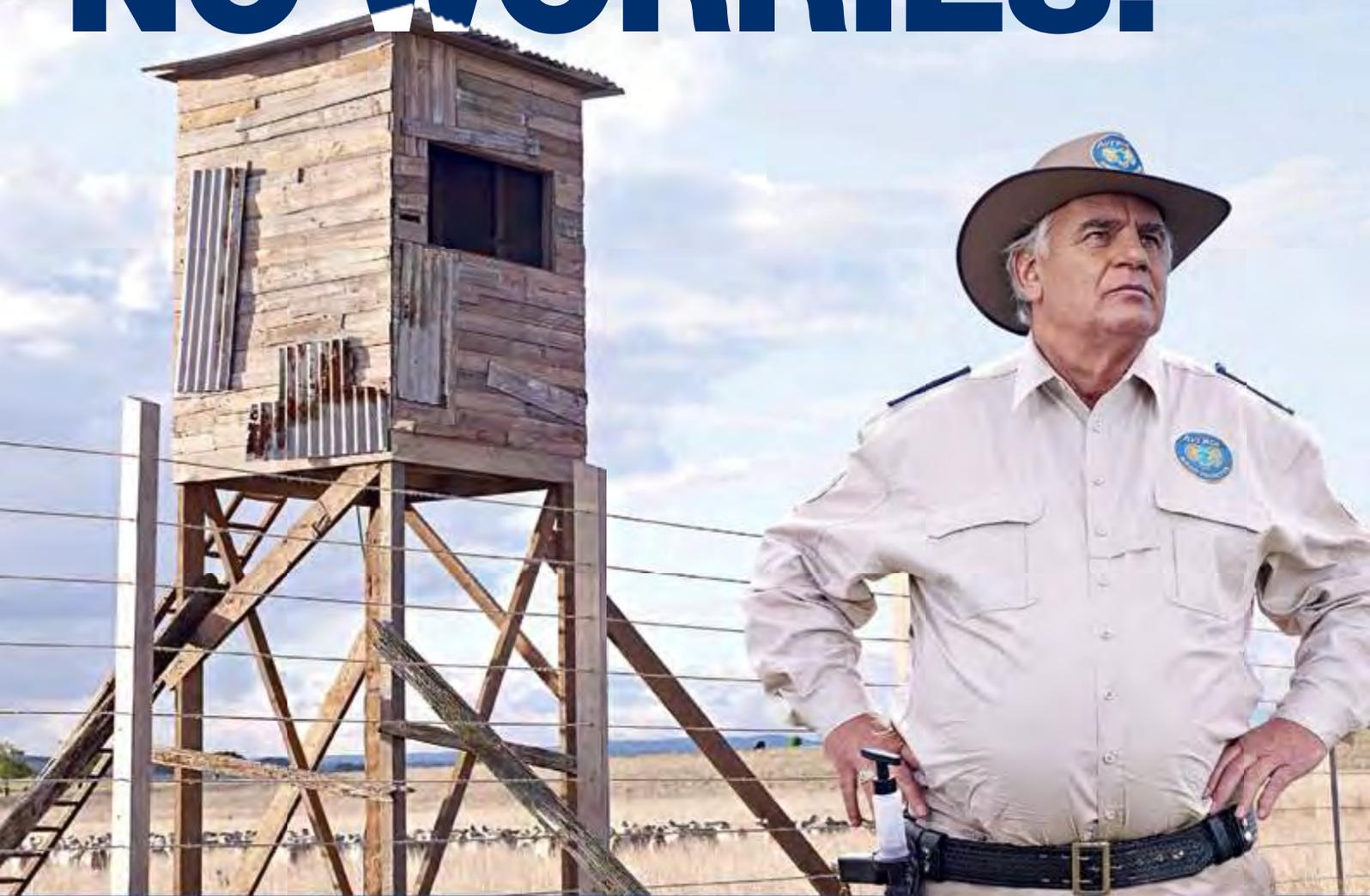


A BIG SMILE FOR THE CAMERA

Jazmine Hobbs sent in this photo her three-month old son Archie Clarke being closely watched while propped up in a wool bin for a photo in the shearing shed on the property they live on at Bendemeer, 40km north-east of Tamworth in NSW.



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