

WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

9:04am – 4:55pm (AEST) 25 August 2026, Dubbo, NSW / Microsoft Teams

Executive and Staff updates

- WoolProducers welcomed Georgie Trowbridge to the Executive as the new Health and Welfare Biosecurity Policy Director.
- Merino flocks continue to be lost to competing land uses, with the wool industry not having delivered sufficient productivity gains over the past thirty years to compete for alternative land use.
- WoolProducers is engaging with the Australian Veterinary Association regarding its recently revised mulesing policy, seeking to highlight the substantial common ground between the two positions, while emphasising the flaws in prescribing a deadline, given the complexity of the issue.
- WoolProducers continues to monitor Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI); the risk to sheep remains negligible, with no sheep-to-sheep transmission recorded internationally.
- WoolProducers' Austrade-funded trade diversification programme delivered a Natural Fibre Summit and an industry tour in Bangladesh, and hosted an Indian delegation of wool processors, since the last meeting.
- WoolProducers became a full member of the National Farmers' Federation under a new membership model and now holds a formal vote at the NFF deliberations.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Custom Footrot Vaccine Update

WoolProducers is progressing an approach to market process to identify research, development and manufacturing partners for a Custom footrot vaccine, with funding discussions underway with Research and Development Corporations, state and federal governments, and Animal Health Australia. The research, registration and commercialisation process is expected to take at least 3 years.

National Wild Dog Action Plan (NWDAP) Update

The Policy Advisory Committee reaffirmed its support for the National Wild Dog Action Plan.

WoolProducers' ongoing support remains conditional on government funding at least half of the programme's annual cost.

AHA Update

WoolProducers continues to engage with Animal Health Australia on a range of matters, including emergency animal disease categorisation, review of national disease response plans (including for bluetongue and foot-and-mouth disease), and the funding model proposed for Animal Health Australia's Annual Operating Plan special projects.

WoolProducers has sought greater transparency on the proposed funding arrangements for these projects.

Wool Industry Biosecurity Response Levy

WoolProducers is progressing work to establish a zero-rate biosecurity response levy for wool, which would only be activated to help repay cost-sharing obligations in the event of an Emergency Animal Disease response.

Economic analysis is being commissioned to inform the design of the mechanism, with industry consultation to commence in October 2026.

Kangaroo Island Sterile Insect Technique Project

The Policy Advisory Committee recommended increased funding support, through Animal Health Australia, for the Kangaroo Island Sterile Insect Technique project targeting sheep blowfly, reflecting revised project costs and timeframes.

Members noted the importance of proving the technique at a landscape scale.

Merino Lifetime Productivity Project

Australian Wool Innovation presented an update on the [Merino Lifetime Productivity Project](#), including recent grower-facing extension activities and future work on breeding values relevant to breech strike.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

Youth Ambassador – Advocacy Strategy

Youth Ambassador Toby Haylock presented a refined advocacy strategy exploring opportunities to grow wool's use in blended products to increase overall wool consumption. The strategy has been well received by AWI and other industry stakeholders.

Trade Diversification Update

WoolProducers' Austrade-funded trade diversification programme continues through to the end of the current financial year, with in-market events and two-way delegations planned across Bangladesh, India and Vietnam.

AWEX and AWTa Merger Proposal

The Committee received a presentation on a proposed merger between the Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX) and the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA).

The Committee expressed favourable sentiment towards the proposal, which will be considered by each organisation's members at their respective Annual General Meetings later this year.

Industry Services and Structures

The Committee held a general discussion on the structure of industry representation and research and development arrangements. No position was reached; WoolProducers will continue to develop its thinking before consulting further with members.

National Wool Declaration (NWD) Review

An update was provided on the National Wool Declaration review process.

AWI Update

WoolProducers attended the AWI Wool Industry Consultation Panel meeting, where topics included AWI's financial position, business unit updates, and the provided a presentation on the proposed wool industry biosecurity levy.

An update was also provided on the WoolPoll review process, with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry making a number of recommendations to the Minister.

Future Flock Strategy

WoolProducers reaffirmed its position that there remains too much reputational and financial risk to formally support the Future Flock Strategy in its current form.

Sheep Producers Australia and Future Flock Steering Committee representatives were invited to present to the WoolProducers Board, with a decision on next steps to follow.

Carbon Accounting and Research & Development

The Committee discussed emerging carbon accounting methodologies and their implications for wool growers. Further work, including a discussion paper, will be brought to the November 2026 meeting.

POST FARMGATE UPDATES

Trade:

- WoolProducers is working with exporters and government to help navigate Chinese requirements for export-listings of wool processing facilities.
- No major disruptions have been reported in the tariff environment affecting wool exports.

AWTA:

- AWTA's product testing division continues to perform strongly, helping offset a predicted decline in raw wool testing volumes.

AWEX:

- Uptake of the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS) continues to grow, supported by new broker-led certification model.

IWTO:

- The IWTO Congress was held in China in June 2026, with strong Australian representation including through the Young Professionals programme. The next Congress will be held in South Africa in April 2027.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Availability of Veterinary Chemicals

The Committee discussed concerns regarding the long-term availability of key veterinary chemicals relied upon by the sheep industry, and agreed to examine advocacy options further ahead of the November 2026 meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for 11 November 2026, in Melbourne.