



25 February 2003

## AWGA back in business and seeking support

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The highly successful Australian Wool Growers Association is up and running again, this time to make sure the cultural change it started in 1996 is realised.

Victorian sheep grazier and new company Chairman, Will Crozier, said the AWGA set out to reform the wool industry by removing Government and agri-political interference and establishing a grower owned and controlled public company which had clear commercial goals.

“It largely achieved these goals in the 1999 restructure of the wool industry, which saw the creation of Australian Wool Innovation with its board of skilled and independent directors.”

“AWI was like a breath of fresh air, removing old vested interests, cutting a web of apron strings and getting a multitude of consultants and politicians firmly off the gravy train,” Mr Crozier said.

“It then laid the groundwork for the development of innovative new wool products and cost saving mechanisms for industry in its first 18 months of operation. However, the job AWGA set out to do is not complete as there is continued government involvement in the industry and ongoing grower ownership and accountability issues to address.”

“The current drought situation, dangerously low sheep numbers, insurance and workers compensation issues forcing shearers out of the industry and the technological impact on marketing the wool clip are also important to growers.”

Mr Crozier said AWGA would be looking to broaden its charter of growers representation to include the provision of commercial services over the coming months.

“But first we need to let wool growers know that AWGA is back in business and needs their support. We have a number of policies we will be announcing over the next few weeks and growers should look out for further information in their mail box in March.”

The seven directors of AWGA are: Will Crozier (Casterton, Vic), Peter Laird (Hillston, NSW), Marion Gibbins (Horsham, Vic), Stuart Coppock (Sydney, NSW), Wal Merriman (Boorowa, NSW), and Ross Wells (Jerilderie, NSW).

Mr Crozier said AWGA would be looking to appoint directors representing other sectors of the wool industry pipeline and to have spokespeople in each state. The decision to reform the company, which ceased operating in 2001, was taken by caretaker members at an emergency meeting in Sydney recently. The meeting was requested by many previous members of AWGA.

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