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AWI invests in shearer and shed hand training initiative

Australian Wool Innovation Limited (AWI) has supported calls from woolgrowers and industry to invest in the development of shearers and shed hands, with the announcement today of a Pilot Shearer and Shed Hand Training Initiative.

AWI Chief Executive Officer, Dr Len Stephens said the company was aiming to ensure all woolgrowers had access to a viable shearing industry in the future and would thoroughly evaluate the pilot program before commencing an anticipated national roll out in early 2004.

Dr Stephens said AWI had called for Expressions of Interest from individuals and organisations wishing to be actively involved in the pilot program.

"Woolgrowers have for some time expressed concern about the shortages of appropriately skilled labour in the shearing industry. What we will achieve through the AWI Pilot Shearer and Shed Hand Training Initiative is to address these concerns with positive and long-term solutions to the identified problems."

He said the program would consist of five distinct components. These are:

1. Coaching and Training of Shearers and Wool Handlers;
2. Training Novices through Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools;
3. Employment Placement Service;
4. Group Training Organisation Feasibility Study; and
5. Evaluation of the Pilot.

Dr Stephens said it was anticipated that the first three components of the program would operate from August to December in two Australian states.

"Over the next few weeks AWI will look closely at any submissions we receive and examine ways to ensure the pilot program sets a firm basis from which to meet future shearer and shed hand training requirements."

"Support for the development of the AWI Shearer and Shed Hand Training Initiative is yet another positive step in helping ensure the future viability of the wool industry," Dr Stephens said.

An information package setting out the requirements to submit an Expression of Interest for involvement in the pilot program is available on the AWI website at www.wool.com.au or by calling 1800 070 099. AWI must receive all Expressions of Interest by close of business on 19 July 2003.

Ends

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