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AWGA WELCOMES AWI ABANDONING LEGAL CLAIM AGAINST ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP

The Australian Wool Growers Association (AWGA) welcomes the decision by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) to abandon its allegations under section 45DB of the Trade Practices Act, against animal rights lobbyists.

AWGA has opposed the expensive legal action since the political stunt of serving papers on TV's 60 minutes program in November 2004. Legal advice at the time doubted the chance of success, describing the action as "novel".

AWGA Chairman Martin Oppenheimer said "There are better ways to deal with threats to marketing our natural fibre. Improving our practices and highlighting the many positive attributes of Australian Merino as a natural, renewable, and ethically produced fibre is obviously the way to go"

"The Australian sheep and wool industry has done more, and invested more resources into improving animal welfare, during the past 18 months than ever before. We are committed to improving our already high standards."

"The estimated \$10-12 million spent on fighting lobby groups would be better spent on more R&D and more and better marketing. The old saying really applies here 'Do good and get credit for it'"

The Australian wool industry is in the midst of more changes as it moves forward from a collective Research, Development and Innovation focus, to also develop a greater marketing and promotion presence.

"There has been continued debate as to the merits of more Marketing and Promotion. This year we can let the growers decide how their money is spent, at WoolPoll 2006. With wool prices in recovery mode we must make the most of the new confidence throughout the wool pipeline"

"The fact that AWGA, WoolProducers and AWI signed a 'Compact' with US Retailers in 2005 proves that the Australian Wool industry can respond in a united fashion, against threats to our markets. Building demand must now be our primary focus."

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