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Australian Wool Innovation needs to save Brenda McGahan not sack her

The influential Australian Wool Growers Association (AWGA) is calling for Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Chairman Ian McLachlan to state clearly his intentions for Woolmark Executive Director Brenda McGahan in the newly integrated AWI and Woolmark company.

“Recent reports of her proposed sacking by the AWI Board must be corrected,” states AWGA Chairman Martin Oppenheimer.

“ Brenda McGahan has been a tremendous gain for our wool industry. In a short time she has shown the drive, marketing skills and passion that are admired by retailers and brands around the world. She is the type of person that our industry needs in this new age of rebuilding the marketing profile and activities of Australian merino wool”.

“ She is the ideal person for many reasons. To have a female presence of her calibre in the new merged entity lends much confidence to woolgrowers and those in the wool pipeline. Women make most of the purchasing decisions for clothing today. With Brenda McGahan at AWI we may be able to turn the wool industry around.”

McGahan was responsible for the highly successful Test Marketing Program (TMP), funded by woolgrowers and International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) members in the US last year, that has seen retail giants Saks and Dillards now lining up again to stock wool in their fashion lines for this 07/08 winter. Reports show that there is no shortage of other willing retailers who would like to work with the wool industry in promoting merino wool because of McGahan’s work with this important marketing project. In essence, she has impressed many overseas retailers with her skill set, passion and marketing flair.

“ As reported at the IWTO Conference at Edinburgh recently, the TMP was a rare success at getting Australian wool in front of new customers, and building valuable marketing relationships with prominent retailers. It is a step in the right direction, and we encourage many more activities along these lines. Certainly, such marketing and sales promotions will build wool’s presence again around the world. Investment in the TMP is certainly more preferable when compared to the very poor investment record of levy funds over the past 5 years by this current AWI board.”

“ McLachlan’s AWI Board must state their intentions immediately regarding Brenda McGahan’s future, or be personally liable for further deterioration in the Australian wool industry. Sanity must prevail, AWI must save Brenda McGahan not sack her.”

Martin Oppenheimer Chairman AWGA 02 6777 2124 0413 580 040

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