



26 September 2007

The 'departure' of Brenda McGahan

Is there no end to AWI's ability to score own goals, to the detriment of the Australian woolgrower and the international wool industry?

The 'departure' of Brenda McGahan removes from two organisations with precious little talent an individual who possesses considerable marketing experience and newly acquired wool knowledge; who, with refreshing humility enjoys open dialogue with growers and the downstream industry alike, and who garners respect from the retailers she worked with and whose language she understands. She proved beyond doubt that the targeted promotion of our fibre and education of retail buyers and sellers substantially lifted Saks' and Dillard's wool sales in a single selling season. That knowledge is now part of their culture and will benefit them and our industry for decades to come. It is unquantifiable.

I suspect that she was simply too good for AWI.

Is it possible that interest in the Test Marketing Project from other brands has brought about a revival of merino wool campaigns the likes of which I have never witnessed before in the London High Street? Regrettably for AWI much of it sells as Italian merino knitwear. None has dared to boast it is Australian. If it sells well we will all end up winners. These promotions are a welcome change, and the momentum must be encouraged and supported as the first cold winds of a consumer downturn start to blow in from America.

I know, whatever Mr McLachlan may think, that we all owe Brenda a huge debt of gratitude.

Yours faithfully,

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