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AWI TASKFORCE BUNGLERS TO SPEAK AT IWTO

The Australian Wool Growers Association (AWGA) is warning woolgrowers that Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) is again using growers' hard earned levies to send the wrong people to speak with wool's customers, at the upcoming International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) conference at Beijing, China.

AWGA Chairman, Martin Oppenheimer, claims AWI is sending the wrong people, with confused political messages, rather than with long term commercial solutions.

“Send marketing professionals and animal welfare experts, not agri-politicians.”

“Following the debacle of the AWI Taskforce visit to Sweden, led by agri-politician Don Hamblin, when retailers were left confused and without solutions to their concerns, there have been several commercial delegations, plus Federal government lobbying to moderate the stance of some retailers and fix the mess.”

“Now AWI is again sending Don Hamblin, with little international experience or qualifications, to talk to Textile organisations about mulesing alternatives. Why not send the AWI Animal Welfare Research & Development project Manager?”

As a result of the media coverage and industry panic caused by Hamblin's Taskforce trip to Sweden, NSW Farmers then called for an immediate ban on mulesing. All other Australian farmer groups, plus State and Federal government Ministers have since rejected that call.

AWGA notes that Manager of AWI Corporate Affairs, Matthew Flugge, is also to speak at IWTO, with an update on mulesing. AWI Corporate Affairs manages the Taskforce operations, and it is understood that woolgrowers majority fund Taskforce activities. AWI and the Taskforce were forced to deny allegations of bribery after a Taskforce employee was taped recently on Swedish TV.

“We are still waiting to hear from AWI of someone being sacked over this affair.”

AWGA questions the role, structure and effectiveness of the AWI Taskforce and says that appointments are political and accountability is poor.

“Who appoints the Taskforce and whom do they answer to?”

“Australian Wool needs a clean and positive perception to build confidence with customers. We need professional people representing us who leave no confusion and actually help solve customers' problems. We have to send the right people.”

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AWGA - News Update

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