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CHANGE AWI LEADERSHIP OR MORE OF THE SAME

Australian Wool Growers Association is calling for woolgrowers to use their voting power to change the Leadership of Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) after 6 years of industry decline.

Current AWI Chairman Brian van Rooyen was elected to the Board in 2002 and Director Chris Abell was appointed in 2003.

At that time Australia's sheep flock was approximately 115 million and has fallen to 80 million with a much smaller proportion of wool sheep.

AWGA Chairman Martin Oppenheimer claims that AWI is distracted and dominated by an anti-mulesing lobby, which is determined to end mulesing regardless of the welfare of the sheep, cost to the industry and growers continuing to reduce or exit wool production.

“In their rush to find alternatives AWI has made some notable mistakes. Recent research conducted on dead sheep has been an embarrassment to the Australian wool industry.”

“AWI's ‘Historic agreement with PETA’ (see link below) signed in June 2007, when Brian van Rooyen was Vice Chairman, may have ended the expensive legal action but will continue to cost woolgrowers. The settlement has resulted in a National Wool Declaration, including random audits, quarterly reports to PETA on mulesing research, and a PETA approved review panel for research. Also in the settlement are retail swing tags to help PETA identify non-mulesed wool.”

“Who can justify using woolgrower levies to help PETA?”

“Brian van Rooyen, in his short time as Chairman, has shown that he is unable to unite the AWI Board. For any organisation to succeed, the leader must be able to unite his team.”

“AWGA congratulates all the new candidates for standing for election to the AWI Board. Woolgrowers can decide to change leadership or have more of the same.”

Martin Oppenheimer
Chairman
Australian Wool Growers Association

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