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## McBride to run for AWI board

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WESTERN division pastoralist Robert McBride will run for election to the Australian Wool Innovation board on a “pro-mulesing more-marketing” ticket with Walcha woolgrower Martin Oppenheimer.

Mr McBride announced his candidacy yesterday, saying he offered a fresh approach to wool growers.

“I think the (AWI) board has made huge in-roads over the last three to four years and I am very proud of the efforts that they have done but I think I can bring expertise from the Western Division of New South Wales and from South Australia.”

The Adelaide resident has been a wool grower at Tolarno Station, between Mildura and Broken Hill since 1996 and also owns the New South Wales properties Peppora and Wyoming, collectively running 20,000 sheep at the start of a flock rebuilding phase. The sixth generation woolgrower is also a director of A.J. and P.A. McBride Pty Ltd, one of the largest woolgrowing concerns in Australia.

Referring to the skills assessment process all AWI board candidates have to go through under AWI’s statutory funding agreement with the Federal Government, Mr McBride said he studied economics and accountancy at the University of Adelaide, and worked in private enterprise in Australia and London for about 12 years.

“They are looking not just for a woolgrower, but somebody with an accounting background. “I think it would be wonderful for somebody with both an economic and agricultural background to bring some strength to the board,” he said.

The 47-year-old had no issues with the skills assessment process. “We do want to bring expertise to the industry, there is no use in having Dad and Dave on the board to make up numbers.”

South Australia has not had a representative on the AWI board since former chairman Ian McLachlan stood down in 2008, Mr McBride said. “You want to have freshness on the board....maybe it is time for a new guard to come over and add some talent to the industry.”

Mr McBride said he would support mulesing with pain-relief until a total solution was found. “I’m not going to promise foreigners that we are going to come up with a solution tomorrow.

“I’m saying within the ability that we have as an industry at the moment we have to mules....but we will do it in the most cost-effective and most painless way to protect the animal.”

Mr McBride has two children, Kate, 13, and James, 12.

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