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The Land
Deanne Lush

AWGA calls for overhaul



AUSTRALIAN Wool Innovation's Industry Consultative Committee would be a more appropriate group to represent woolgrowers nationally, according to the Australian Wool Growers Association (AWGA).

AWGA director Chick Olsson said the ICC was ideal because it represented a wide cross-section of the industry and it could be enlarged to include meat breed bodies.

Mr Olsson said the OJD issue highlighted that reform in industry representation was needed.

“Historically, as the sheep industry lurches from one crisis to another, at the heart of each chaotic moment are two representative bodies – WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia,” he said.

“The OJD issue has made everyone realise we have got to have some industry-wide representation on the ground.

“In reality, without Animal Health Australia (AHA) funding, both WPA and SCA would struggle to keep their doors open, as they are very low on funds.

“It also begs the question that if they are so aligned to AHA, is it possible for them to remain independent and represent growers?”

WoolProducers Australia chief executive Jane Brownbill said while the organisation was not legislated as the wool industry's peak body, it conducted the same work and had the same structure as the Sheepmeat Council of Australia and Cattle Council of Australia, which were legislated.

She said there was “no basis” to claims that WoolProducers was influenced by AHA in supporting OJD changes because it was a key funding source for the lobby organisation.

She said sheep and wool levy money was held by AHA and it had no say in how the money was spent because it was kept in trust for the industry.

While just less than 50pc of WoolProducers' budget came via AHA, it could only be spent on specific industry animal health and welfare projects.