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Dear Industry

For some months the AWI Board has received numerous approaches from industry expressing their views on the Sheep Standards and Guidelines. These views have ranged from mild concern, through to outraged disbelief.

As the research, development & marketing organisation for the wool industry, our role in these issues is quite well defined. As such, during this time the AWI Board has adopted an approach to provide information on the issue in an attempt to encourage informed debate. This includes the Information Forum AWI held on 4 July 2013.

Considering the continued concerns raised and requests by a cross section of industry, AWI has sought extensive legal advice on the Standards and Guidelines, specifically the implications these may pose for woolgrowers.

As a result of this advice which states that these prescriptive guidelines could, and would, most likely be used to argue the case of the Standards in a court of law, the AWI Board feels obliged to share this advice and the potential risks the Standards and Guidelines may present to individual woolgrowers. The Board has considered this action at length, and appreciate this is a highly unusual and unique step to take. However as the industry services organisation for the Australian wool industry, our charter and obligation is to support the profitability and productivity of the industry.

We feel these guidelines have the potential to undermine this outcome.

Regards,

Wally Merriman
Chairman