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## Brand power, not regulation, is wool's way forward, writes Coleraine wool grower Peter Small

**IT WOULD seem one-time wool giant Sir William Gunn has been re-incarnated in the form of Wal Merriman.**

Mr Merriman now sounds like Sir William, who advocated a reserve price scheme for wool in the 1950s to '70s, when he cries the wool supply needs to be regulated.

Sir William got involved in wool industry politics as he saw the need to reform the then Australian Wool Board.

Mr Merriman more recently joined the board of Australian Wool Innovations because he too, saw the need for the wool institutions to be reformed.

In the end, on both occasions, it was the institution that reformed the chairman, not the other way around.

The wool bureaucracy has a deeply held belief, inherent in its statutory creation, that if it could only control the greasy fibre, their promotional endeavours would flourish.

The dark shadows following the collapse of the Reserve Price Scheme in 1991 still hang over our industry.

The loss of billions of dollars of capital from the collapse of the scheme still reverberates along the entire international wool pipeline.

Until growers have the courage to revolt against the statutory tax on their gross proceeds and our inept attempts at promotion are abandoned, the rot will not stop.

The solution to wool gaining its supremacy in the world fibre market is the evolution of strong brands.

The prerequisite to attracting new capital for this to happen is for the remaining remnants of our statutory institutions to be dissolved.

Let's cut the umbilical cord and end statutory intervention, casting cries like "let's regulate supply" to the scrap heap for ever.

- Peter Small is a Coleraine wool grower and chairman of Quality Softwools Australia, which owns the Tooralie knitwear brand



Wool action: Peter Small. Source: The Weekly Times

<http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/news/opinion/brand-power-not-regulation-is-wools-way-forward-writes-coleraine-wool-grower-peter-small/story-fnkerdb0-1226907721978>