

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### WoolPoll Options Questioned

WoolProducers Australia has expressed disappointment over the levy options put to wool growers to vote on in this year's WoolPoll, claiming that the glaring omission of 1.5% as an option does not provide growers with an opportunity at an incremental decrease in compulsory levies paid.

0%, 1%, 2%, 2.5% and 3% have been put forward for consideration in this year's vote – leaving growers with the option of only a 50 or 100% decrease on the current 2% levy. WoolProducers is aware that other representatives on the Panel put forward 1.5% as an option.

'WoolProducers, along with other grower groups with a representative on the Panel were asked to put forward levy options for consideration, we put forward 0%, 1%, 1.5%, 2% and 2.5% as this enabled producers a fair range of options to vote on.' WoolProducers Vice-President Ed Storey said.

The WoolPoll process is overseen by an appointed panel of representatives from grower groups as part of the Wool Services Privatisation (Wool Levy Poll) Regulations, however any decisions made by the WoolPoll Panel are at the discretion of the Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Board.

'We know that other groups put forward options and included 1.5% as it is a reasonable alternative that enables growers the opportunity to reduce the amount of levies paid without having to make the drastic decision to halve the current amount going towards research, development and marketing, so it is disappointing that growers were not given this choice.' Mr Storey continued.

Whilst very supportive of the process that allows wool growers to vote on such an important decision, the questions around transparency of the process need to be asked – particularly when, according to AWI the cost to growers to conduct the WoolPoll is \$1.4 million.

'The Board may have very sound reasons to not include 1.5%, but if that is the case what is the point of convening a Panel and having the expense of bringing this group together for numerous face-to-face meetings when their preferences can ultimately be ignored, particularly when the levy options put forward have remained the same for the past four WoolPolls?' Mr Storey said.

WoolPoll is a triennial vote undertaken by eligible wool growers to determine the amount of their wool cheque that goes towards research, development and marketing which is administered by AWI.

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Media Contacts:

Ed Storey, Vice-President  
WoolProducers Australia  
0438 309 500

Jo Hall, CEO  
WoolProducers Australia  
02 4836 7369  
0488 554 811