

NLIS

WoolProducers has a long-standing interest and engagement with all industry stakeholders in ensuring the Australian wool industry has an effective livestock identification and traceability system to ensure biosecurity, food safety and product integrity that meet both domestic and international market access protocols.

WoolProducers were very disappointed that Victoria made the decision to implement mandatory electronic identification for sheep and goats despite the Victorian Government's commitment prior to the 2014 election to national industry bodies and other state and territories that they would not mandate electronic for sheep and goat tags until a national approach was agreed and which would include significant industry consultation.

The NLIS Advisory Committee (NLISAC) established a working group in 2015, which the member industries participated in, to develop the NLIS Sheep and Goats Business Plan (2016-19) (Business Plan). This Business Plan was developed in order to meet the enhancements required under Option 1 (enhanced mob-based system) of the NLIS Decision Regulatory Impact Statement (DRIS) and was presented to the NLISAC in July 2015.

The objectives of the Business Plan were:

- Enhance compliance of the NLIS (S&G) to achieve 98 % short-run traceability and 95 per cent long term traceability within four years. Establish agreed minimum essential national business rules for NLIS (Sheep and Goats) and facilitate the national consistency of the comprehensive compendium of NLIS (Sheep and Goats) business rules.
- Provide agreed monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms for the Ministers' to review in four years.

All members of the NLISAC, including state jurisdictions, endorsed the Business Plan with the exception of Victoria. Industry members and most states continue to work with the NLISAC to further develop the Business Plan and negotiate sustainable funding, to ensure the enhancements outlined by the DRIS can be implemented. This will only be successful with the cooperation of all NLISAC members.

In order to meet the enhancements outlined in Option 1, the Business Plan also incorporates the use of industry organisations to complete further compliance audit and communication programs, a review of the NLIS database and a process to ensure legislative changes are made as required, to underpin a functional and nationally consistent NLIS.

An example of legislative change required to ensure that the current system is sound is the mandating of property to property (P2P) movements. The NLIS DRIS states that failure to mandate P2P movements creates weaknesses in the system. Victoria has never legislated this requirement – which was incumbent on them to make the paper-based system more robust.

It is illogical that the EID requirements for Victoria starting 1 January, 2017 still has P2P movements as a voluntary requirement for database transfer. Regardless of which identification method is employed, if the basic framework has such monumental gaps as this, any future system is destined to fail.

The fact that the Victorian Government has chosen not to implement all of the NLIS (Sheep & Goats) Business Rules in its current system, along with the retraction in state government resources in this area, has undoubtedly played a significant part in the perceived 'failure' by the Victorian Government of the current mob-based system.

Despite this, Victoria has made the decision to mandate EID for all sheep and goats starting 1 January, 2017 so the onus is now on that state to ensure that their system is complimentary to the national identification system.