

MEDIA RELEASE

WoolPoll Review - more missed opportunities.

19 October, 2020

Peak woolgrower representative body, WoolProducers Australia (WoolProducers) has stated that there are a number of missed opportunities in the recently released final report of the WoolPoll Review.

The WoolPoll Review was undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) in response to a recommendation from the 2018 Review of Performance of Australian Wool Innovation (AWI,) conducted by EY.

WoolProducers CEO, Jo Hall said, “While WoolProducers welcome the recommendation regarding the pre-determined levy rates, as that should remove some of the politicking on the issue, it is unclear on what basis AWI can propose an alternate levy rate and who would ultimately approve or reject this.”

There were ten recommendations made in the WoolPoll Review final report, covering a range of issues from consultation, WoolPoll Panel composition, levy split and frequency of the poll.

A major part of WoolProducers’ submission into this process was reducing the frequency of WoolPoll from three to five years, however this was contingent on alignment of strategic planning cycles with Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA).

“We are extremely disappointed that there was not a binding recommendation on the alignment of strategic planning periods between AWI and MLA and that a question will be posed through next year’s WoolPoll process to levy payers – this is an unfortunate waste of time.” Ms Hall said.

The report recommends that AWI undertake ‘scoping work with MLA to explore potential operational models for alignment’.

Ms Hall said “AWI, on the back of the release of their Annual Report are currently stating how their income has taken such a hit this past year, collaborating with MLA and returning bigger bang for levy payers through this partnership approach should be a given, which would also be of assistance to AWI’s finances.”

“Why wait until the end of next year to get growers opinions when that feedback was pretty strong throughout this process?”

The recommendations from the WoolPoll Review final report are non-binding, with the report stating that the implementation will be agreed to by DAWE, AWI and the Wool Industry Consultative Panel (WICP).

“WoolProducers also have concerns regarding the proposed implementation of these recommendations, as this is basically the same model that has been used to implement the contentious recommendations from the 2018 Review of Performance, which hasn’t delivered.”

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Other recommendations of the review, while constructive, point to long held concerns of WoolProducers regarding the lack of transparency and consultation that appears to exist within AWI.

Ms Hall said, “The fact that this review highlights the ongoing necessity for the board to have improved transparency and an ongoing dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders beyond the ‘WoolPoll Cycle’ is disappointing but unfortunately not surprising”.

ENDS

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