

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **WoolProducers questions Board Nomination Committee transparency**

14 October, 2019

WoolProducers Australia has questioned the transparency and independence of the AWI board director nomination process, following the announcement of the four recommended candidates from the Board Nomination Committee (BNC) today.

AWI today announced that the BNC have recommended that new candidates Mr Noel Henderson and Dr Michelle Humphries and incumbents Mr Wally Merriman and Mr David Webster.

WoolProducers President, Mr Ed Storey said, 'These nominees may very well possess the skills that BNC believes fit the skills matrix required under the Service Level Agreement, but the issue that we have is that the BNC recommendations went to the AWI Board without being made public first'.

'That coupled with the fact that there has been no reasoning behind the recommendations means that the whole process is questionable'.

AWI's media release states that the function of the BNC was 'shaped' by recommendation 1.12.3 of the Ernst Young (EY) Review, however that recommendation also states that this process should be 'robust and transparent'.

'This particular recommendation was one of the six that was negotiated between AWI and WoolProducers, however these negotiations only referred to the composition of the BNC'.

'WoolProducers certainly believed that the requirement for enhanced transparency of the process would have been upheld by AWI'. Mr Storey said.

WoolProducers now has no faith in this process or the entire Review of Performance conducted by EY in 2018.

'WoolProducers raised our concerns over the lack of transparency of this process with both the Department of Agriculture and Minister McKenzie's office over the past few weeks, who have done nothing'. Mr Storey said.

'Unfortunately, we are now of the firm belief that the entire EY Review was a complete waste of time and significant money, which cost taxpayers and wool growers an astounding \$913,827'.

'All WoolProducers have ever wanted from our Research and Development Corporation is to be transparent and accountable to their compulsory levy payers.' Mr Storey concluded.

ENDS

**Ed Storey**  
**President**  
**0438 309 500**

**Jo Hall**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**0488 554 811**

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### **About WoolProducers' Australia**

WPA plays a critical role in working closely with companies and entities funded by woolgrower funds including compulsory levies or fees for service.

Its mission is to develop constructive and profitable outcomes for woolgrowers nationally.

The agency is responsible for appointing a director to each of the Australian Wool Exchange and the Australia Wool Testing Authority, promoting good corporate governance and ensuring that the interests of growers are met.

WPA maintains a working relationship with Australian Wool Innovation as the voice of woolgrower shareholders. It aims to contribute to AWI's programs for the benefit of growers, promoting responsible use of levy funds and ensuring good corporate governance.

WPA is the sole wool industry member of Animal Health Australia, and as such, carries a significant responsibility for decision making on behalf of the industry in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak.

As the only wool grower organisation with membership of the National Farmers' Federation, WoolProducers is responsible for providing key policy advice on behalf of our members, and other wool growers, to Australia's peak farm body.

WoolProducers also works closely with the Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources on key issues such as animal health and welfare, biosecurity, pest management control, natural resource management, drought preparedness, emergency animal disease outbreak preparedness and industry development, including research and trade.