

MEDIA RELEASE

WoolProducers throws support behind Holmes, Hocking-Edwards and Henderson for 2019 AWI Elections

4 November, 2019

Peak woolgrower representative body, WoolProducers Australia (WoolProducers) is calling on all Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) shareholders to vote in this year's director elections and not leave proxies undirected.

WoolProducers have carefully considered the eight candidates and are recommending that registered shareholders vote for Dr Philip Holmes, Dr Janelle Hocking-Edwards and Mr Noel Henderson.

WoolProducers President Mr Ed Storey said, 'In considering the nominees, WoolProducers identified the need for change at the board level of AWI.'

'WoolProducers have been vocal regarding our concerns over the transparency, accountability, consultation and governance of AWI, which has led us to identify these three (Holmes, Hocking-Edwards and Henderson) as being most suited to address these concerns, along with meeting the skills matrix as identified in the Statutory Funding Agreement.' Mr Storey said.

In considering the suitability of candidates, WoolProducers took a principled approach to this decision with consideration being given to the need for board renewal, research and development, corporate governance and business acumen skills.

WoolProducers strongly believe that the Dr Holmes, Dr Hocking-Edwards and Mr Henderson provide strong attributes to address these needs.

'Of course, production, marketing and trade knowledge are essential skills to have on the board of AWI, but WoolProducers believes that existing directors of AWI adequately address these requirements.' Mr Storey said.

WoolProducers concerns regarding the operations of AWI were somewhat vindicated by the findings of the 2018 Ernst Young (EY) Review of Performance, which made 82 recommendations to improve governance and accountability of the organisation.

Mr Storey said 'Unfortunately WoolProducers don't feel that there have been many genuine changes to the operations of AWI despite public and private assurances following the EY Review that there would be.'

'Following this WoolProducers are surer than ever that a change of culture is what must happen at AWI which can only be done with board renewal'. Mr Storey said.

WoolProducers thanks all candidates, who are obviously passionate about the Australian wool industry, for putting their name forward for the AWI director election, in acknowledgement of what can be a very political process.

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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.