

MEDIA RELEASE

New thinking around mulesing is a must if the industry is to retain the practice

11 November, 2019

WoolProducers Australia is reminding those growers that haven't yet voted in this year's AWI director elections to make sure they have their say.

Unless you are attending the meeting in person, all votes to be received by AWI by 10am Wednesday, 20 November. WoolProducers are recommending that at this stage people vote online to ensure they make the deadline.

WoolProducers are also urging growers to vote for change by voting for Dr Holmes, Dr Hocking-Edwards and Mr Henderson, particularly if growers want to seriously address the issues around mulesing.

WoolProducers President, Mr Ed Storey said, 'These three candidates have all stated that they will bring a new line of thinking to this and other critically important issue.'

The two incumbent director candidates have had over a decade to address this issue and are now talking about 'novel' ideas to defend growers' rights around the need for mulesing.

'How much longer do they need given both Mr Merriman and Mr Webster have sat on the board for over a decade which has seen the eventuation of premiums for non-mulesed wool and the loss of markets for mulesed wool.' Mr Storey said.

WoolProducers have fielded phone calls from growers asking if our recommended candidates (Holmes, Hocking-Edwards and Henderson) would ban mulesing if elected, as some growers have been told that this would be the case.

'This is a ridiculous notion for a number of reasons, firstly these candidates have stated that they support the continuance of mulesing and bring fresh thinking to the AWI Board'.

'Secondly, the AWI Board does not have the capability or authority to ban anything. Mr Storey said.

WoolProducers have tried hard to work with AWI on this issue to retain growers social and legal right to mules over the last number of years but were repeatedly told by AWI that 'mulesing is not an issue' and that we were the 'only ones talking about mulesing'.

The fact that mulesing is now no longer acceptable to many of customers is solely the fault of AWI.

'It was simply not a viable business model that AWI employed which was to ignore your customers whilst continually not telling Australian growers the realities of the world market, despite WoolProducers trying to work constructively with them for many years on this very issue.'

'WoolProducers strongly believe that change is required and that it is up to growers to vote for change if we are to have a viable industry. I will be attending the AGM and willing to be shareholder proxies on the day'. Mr Storey said.

MEDIA RELEASE

ENDS

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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.