

Organisations in the Australian wool industry

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The following is a brief description of many of the major organisations associated with the Australian wool industry:

WoolProducers Australia

www.woolproducers.com.au

WoolProducers is the peak national body for the wool industry in Australia and represents over 14,000 farmers whose primary business is growing wool. It is the national voice of producers, advocating their interests to both the Federal Government and internationally.

WoolProducers represents and supports the industry on issues as diverse as trade, animal welfare, research and development, marketing, accountability of grower funds, the environment and industrial relations.

State-based wool grower representative organisations

Each of the main wool producing states in Australia also has a member-based organisation to represent the interests of growers in individual states. Representatives from these state organisations also make up the WoolProducer's council membership.

State groups include the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), New South Wales Farmers Association, Agforce (Queensland), Tasmanian Farmer and Graziers Association, South Australian Farmers' Federation, the WA Farmers Federation Inc (Western Australia), Pastoralists' and Graziers' Association of WA Inc.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI)

www.woolinnovation.com.au

AWI was originally established as a subsidiary of Australian Wool Services in 2001, but became a fully independent public company limited by shares and owned by Australian woolgrowers in 2002.

AWI's mission is to drive research, development and innovation that will increase the long-term profitability of Australian woolgrowers.

Funding for AWI's activities is provided through a two per cent levy contributed by all wool growers on the gross receipts from the sale of their wool.

AWI initiates, commissions and delivers research and development (R&D) on behalf of Australian woolgrowers. It states its primary aim as 'the adoption of technology – on farm and along the global wool pipeline'.

It also provides trade development and market intelligence services on behalf of Australian woolgrowers.

Australian Wool Services (AWS)

www.wool.com

The role of AWS involves the commercialisation of wool technologies and innovations, technical consulting, business information and commercial testing of wool products. AWS also owns and licenses use of the Woolmark, Woolmark Blend and Wool Blend brands.

Through its ownership of the Woolmark Company Ltd, AWS works with textile processors, designers and retailers in apparel and interior textile markets throughout the world.

Both AWS and AWI resulted from a restructuring of the Woolmark Company Ltd in 2000, which in turn evolved from the Australian Wool Research and Promotion Organisation (AWRAP), which existed from 1993 until 2000, and predecessors of that organisation, the Australian Wool Corporation (AWC) and International Wool Secretariat (IWS).

Australian Wool Industry Secretariat (AWIS)

www.woolindustries.org

The Australian Wool Industries Secretariat Inc (AWIS) comprises the following organisations:

- Australian Council of Wool Exporters Inc ([ACWE](#))
- Australian Wool Processors Council Inc ([AWPC](#))
- Private Treaty Wool Merchants of Australia Inc ([PTWMA](#)).

The staff at AWIS provide administrative support and advisory services to members of the above wool bodies.

The role of AWIS is to:

- keep members informed of developments in the wool industry
- represent members' interests in discussions with relevant government departments and other industry sectors
- participate on industry committees on behalf of members
- liaise and work with other industry sectors for the development and success of the Australian wool industry.

The AWIS also provides administrative and advisory support to the Federation of Australian Wool Organisations ([FAWO](#)), formerly the Australian National Committee of the International Wool Textile Organisation, and to the Australian Superfine Wool Growers Association Inc ([ASWGA](#)). Secretarial support is also provided to the National Council of Wool Selling Brokers of Australia Ltd (NCWSBA).

National Council of Wool Selling Brokers (NCWSBA)

The NCWSBA represents the interests of around 12 private broking companies including Elders and Landmark, which are the two largest broking organisations. This membership covers more than 85% of wool sold in Australia. Administrative services are provided by AWIS.

Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX)

www.awex.com.au

In December 1993, the Australian Parliament passed legislation requiring the existing statutory wool marketing authority, the Australian Wool Corporation, to divest itself of the responsibility for administering wool marketing arrangements in the Australian wool industry.

In response, commercial interests representing the wool buyers and sellers in Australia established the Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX) as a public company limited by guarantee to manage wool marketing arrangements in the Australian wool industry. The Australian Wool Exchange commenced operations in February 1994.

Today, the Australian wool industry, through AWEX, manages its own affairs in a de-regulated marketing environment, free of government intrusion. The successful management of industry self-regulation is based on the direction, membership and organisational structure of AWEX.

The membership of AWEX represents the majority of first-hand wool traded in Australia each year and includes wool brokers, exporters, private treaty merchants, processor, wool producers and associates. The AWEX board represents each of these classes of membership and is responsible for policy setting in relation to the implementation of functions.

AWEX provides services and functions for the effective and efficient trading of wool in Australia. Some of these services and functions include:

- providing and maintaining physical and electronic trading facilities in Australia
- managing wool industry self-regulation through the provision of a framework of business rules governing the trade of wool between buyer and seller members of AWEX
- supplying electronic data communication systems for wool trading
- maintaining recognised quality assurance standards
- providing pre- and post-sale market information.

Australian Wool Testing Authority Ltd (AWTA)

www.awta.com.au

AWTA Ltd is the world's largest wool testing organisation. It was established in 1957 by the Commonwealth Government in response to requests from the Australian wool industry. Royal Assent was given to the enabling legislation to create the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA) as a statutory authority reporting to the Minister for Primary Industry on 12 September 1957.

Following the formation of the Australian Wool Board in 1962, AWTA was established as a separate division within that organisation on 1 July 1963. AWTA subsequently retained the same status within the Australian Wool Corporation when it was formed by the amalgamation of the Australian Wool Board and the Australian Wool Commission on 1 January 1973.

AWTA Ltd was established as a company limited by guarantee on 14 May 1982 to enable the functions of the statutory AWTA to be transferred to the private sector.

The new company commenced operation on 1 July 1982. The new structure ensured that the industry retained an independent and impartial test house, dedicated to providing the service and accuracy required, but at a minimum cost.

AWTA's history has been synchronous with the transformation of wool production, marketing, valuing and processing from a reliance on subjective appraisal to objective systems of assessment.

Traditionally, the hand and the eye were the major tools used to determine the value and processing attributes of wool. Subjective judgement of individual bales was used to assess Yield, Vegetable Matter, Fibre Diameter and potential processing performance. This necessitated large show floor areas and storage spaces, and time-consuming and costly handling and inspection by brokers and buyers.

Research by the CSIRO, the University of New South Wales, the University of Leeds and the Gordon Institute found that a stronger correlation existed between measured results for Fibre Diameter, Yield, Vegetable Matter, Staple Length, Staple Strength (key determinants of sale prices) and the predictability of the processing performance of mill consignments than subjectively assessed estimates of the characteristics.

AWTA Ltd has played a major role in providing a bridge between research and the commercial application of testing technology by facilitating further research and development, sponsoring and participating in practical trials, and developing and implementing relevant national and international standards, procedures, methods and technology, and in doing so has provided major benefits to all segments of the wool industry in Australia and overseas.

As a result:

- virtually all Australian wool is now measured prior to sale
- wool is prepared for sale according to objective, rather than subjective, clip preparation standards, with some growers preparing classed lines on the basis of individual fleece measurements
- wool is generally displayed for sale in sample boxes rather through the old showfloor technique
- wool is valued and bought with the aid of actual measurements for Fibre Diameter, Yield, Vegetable Matter Content, Length, Strength and sometimes Colour, with Coefficient of Variation of Fibre Diameter also available.

Measurement has also facilitated computerisation and the expansion of electronic data processing and market reporting, and the establishment of auction and individual clip databases, which provide unparalleled and exhaustive information to all segments of the industry, with each having equal access to that information on a commercial basis. Today, wool processors can confidently expect that wool purchased to their price and processing specifications, with the benefit of AWTA Ltd certification, will perform to their requirements, and growers are assured of being paid according to the objective specification of their wool.

CSIRO Textile and Fabric Technology Division

www.csiro.tft.com.au

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), is Australia's national science agency and one of the largest and most diverse research agencies in the world.

CSIRO's work in the agribusiness sector is delivered through the Divisions of Entomology, Livestock Industries, Plant Industry, and Textile and Fibre Technology.

The CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology Division is Australia's pre-eminent textile, fibre and leather research centre, with a long history of innovation in textiles and leather. It is involved with the invention, development and commercialisation of technologies for new and improved products and processes, quality control and environmental safety at every stage of the [wool](#), [cotton](#), textile and [leather](#) processing pipelines.

International Fibre Centre (IFC)

www.ifc.net.au

The IFC was established to support and fund education, training and technology for the fibre and textile industries.

IFC activities are funded through grants from the Victorian State Government, reflecting Victoria's role as the centre of textile and apparel manufacturing in Australia, together with financial commitments from industry project partners.

While IFC is not specifically focused on wool (its activities extend across all areas of fibres and textiles), it has invested millions of dollars in projects to benefit the wool production and wool textile processing sectors, such as woolclasser training, On-Farm Fibre Measurement and wool processor training courses in collaboration with CSIRO and in-plant wool industry training.

IFC was also instrumental in developing and funding the Australian Wool Textile Training Centre concept at CSIRO.

