



New Zealand Wool Classers Association Inc.

Chairman's Annual Report May 2015

To many members of our Association they will possibly have wondered if we had shut shop and disappeared this last year. This is far from what has happened but the work we have been doing has largely been out of sight. Unfortunately we haven't been able to be as visible as we have been with field-days but we have been very active. This far from what has been going on.

In the spring which is the busy season for many classers, we suffered the resignation of our Registrar Dave Carr (I will go further into Dave's service to the Association later). This was due to reasons that were nothing to do with NZWCA except that he was employed by Tectra who were contracted to supply the Registrar service for us, and he had been offered employment by Primary ITO, this offer being due to his great experience and knowledge of wool handling and the people in the industry.

Following the resignation of Dave, at our November Board meeting we were told by Tectra that they were closing down at the beginning of December so would not be continuing with our administration/Registrar contract. This did tend to throw the proverbial "cat among the pigeons".

This however compelled us to have a close look at ourselves and the board resolved that we were not going to go without a fight and we felt that by taking leadership we could make more classers recognize that there was definitely a role for us and hopefully the wider industry would think the same. With the demise of Tectra and the disappearance of formal classer training Bruce Abbott and I visited the wool brokers and spoke to as wide cross section of the industry that we could contact and from that it was decided to convene a meeting of interested people to discuss Wool Harvesting Training. There was also a group in the North Island that had been having discussions about the lack of training in not only the wool harvesting side but the wider wool industry so they joined us for a meeting in Timaru on 5 February, included in the meeting were Wool Scourers, Wool Brokers, WRONZ, Consultants, Federated Farmers, industry trainers and others, from which a group was formed that became "Wool Industry Education Group", Allan Fraser is convening the group and will give a separate report on where it is at. There is representation from the Wool Industry as a whole and there is concern that there is a lack of ongoing wool education to a higher level and something must be done about it. It may well have happened without us but we are certainly now very involved.

At the same time as this has been going on we needed to do something about our lack of a Registrar. I had been trying to keep things going as well as trying to earn some money to pay some bills. We had managed to put together a job description and were at the point of going out to look for someone when, with some prodding, Bruce Abbott decided he would be keen to take the challenge up. Although it may be said we should have gone out and seen who else was interested it was getting to the point where we needed action fast and delaying for a month or two was likely to create problems, like having to put together an AGM and at that stage we didn't know for sure if NZMerino were going to be having the Fiber Select days. Bruce said he only wanted to do the job for a couple of years and we saw this as a chance to have a fresh look at what we do as an organisation and Bruce having been very involved with the keeping things going since the spring was well in the loop as to where the board was wanting to go.

In the short time he has been in the position Bruce has made some headway and has been around the brokers and others in the industry to get their feelings on many matters involving classing, clip preparation and presentation, training and field-days.

As an association we are at a point where we have to make some changes to appeal to more classers and hopefully wider throughout the industry or we have a bleak future. Without the funding that we used to receive from the Wool Levy via Meat & Wool we have three choices;

- Lift our subs higher.
- Create more desire for people to want to be part of the association.
- All go home and save the time and money.

The feeling of the board was that in reality there was only one choice. Make the association grow or we would eventually go out of business. I hope the members give us the support to grow. Tell us what you want delivered to you as members. Remembering that delivering more costs more so what we deliver has to create appeal or we run out of funds. If there are others who would benefit from what we do, why not involve them so that we get growth.

We must be thank-full to Krystal McNeill and Rebekkah Nelson who created a Facebook page for us. We are also looking at a rebuild of our web page. These things all help with communication. The better we communicate the better we know each other and what the issues are, as long as more people get involved and communicate. We are involved in an interesting industry that has been written off by many people over the years for various reasons but we are all still here because we have a passion for what I describe as the most wonderful fiber there is. By all getting involved and helping we can have a great association to take on any issues that members face and to help improve the job, both in the result that goes into the bale and supporting each other when there are problems or new classers needing a help with a problem or anyone wanting to learn about wool handling at any level. That is part of what we should be about.

I cannot close without formally thanking Dave Carr who has served your association right through its evolvement from the old CRAIG committee to an association as a board member then as Registrar. Dave has the best knowledge of the wool harvesting industry and its people that I know of. The association will forever be indebted to Dave. I think you for your efforts and desperately hope that you continue to be involved with the Association. As well I see your current Primary ITO job as an ambassador for the industry, the high standards you have and hopefully for the association. Thanks must also be extended to Gail, Dave's long suffering wife who has helped him in the background a lot more than most people realise.

Thanks must also be extended to the board for the extra they have been asked to do this year and to the greatest extent thanks must go to Annette. Having got to know her as our administrator in Tectra she has been a key part of the team as we have grappled with the issues we faced this year. Having Annette offer to contract directly with us to continue the role has been a huge relief. Her efficiency and speed of doing things is amazing. She cracks the whip when needed, frequently. It is Annette that gets the newsletters out. The invoices out and keeps the finances added up and all in line. Thank you Annette.

I also thank Ian Kofoed for his service on the board, Ian has decided not to stand for re-election and has never hesitated to put his view up weather it is in agreement or looking from a different angle. We need variation in viewpoints to ensure that we look at issues fully.

In closing it is good to see some nominations for the board. With Ian not standing, plus Bruce having to resign to take up the Registrar role, we would be rather thin without others wanting to help shape the future of the association. We need new blood, not that there is bloodshed in our meetings but new ideas stop the stagnation that is the downfall of many an organization. To me the association is too important to allow it to stagnate and disappear. The more we have involved the more we can do to help each other, and some fun can be had along the way.

Thank you

Bill Dowle
Chairman NZWCA