



NZWCA Chairman's Annual Report.

I present this report at the end of what would have to be termed and huge year for the Association. Since Bruce Abbott took over the position of Registrar/Executive Officer there has been very little time for catching breath as he has pushed the organisation to many that probably knew we existed but didn't know anything about us and what we hope to do for our members and the Wool Harvesting industry.

Many of the processes and activities of NZWCA have been updated, or at least looked into. Creating some improved systems and forms etc. sound very minor but helps make things run smoother and get a better result, or at least a faster one. Some have perhaps looked cosmetic, like the letter head but I am sure everyone will agree that the look that Bruce came up with has a much more professional and modern look than the old one. Our website needed an update and looks a lot better and with time will become even more useful and functional.

Our newsletters have continued to appear and are hopefully well read as there is good information in these. Bruce has also managed to get a regular spot in the Shearing Magazine; this can only help our profile and assist with getting our message out to the industry and potential members. I am sure he would welcome ideas for articles in either of these publications as coming up with the idea of what to write about can often be the hardest part.

Introducing embroidered clothing was another great inspiration that has moved from a shirt to a selection available including beanies (Merino wool of course), Polos (Merino Wool & now Poly cotton), caps and dust jackets. All these things can help classers present themselves in a more professional light and help raise our profile. Wear a dust jacket in the shed with our logo on with pride, you have earned the right and use it to generate respect in the industry, be proud of what you have done and what you do.

There has also been a lot of action on the training front, although it may not appear so from the side-line. Much effort has been going into the replacement of the TECTRA courses. We have been lucky to have both Bruce and Dave on the Primary ITO Wool Harvesting IPG (Industry Partnership Group), hopefully trying to steer the training in the right direction, although it has had its moments.

There has also been a huge effort go into WEIG, a group that formed from an initiative we promoted to ensure that training didn't disappear for classers and others involved with Wool harvesting (above Shed hand level) and the wool processing industry.

We knew from the start that it was going to use some of our financial reserves but felt that the importance of ongoing training was worth it and without being involved our organisation was doomed so hopefully by taking a leading role we may gain credibility within the wider industry and ultimately more members. This has started to show with the gaining of Associate members and sponsorship from Contractors, brokers and processors. We owe a huge debt of gratitude for the effort that Alan has put into WEIG for its success; no one else in our organisation has the contacts, mana or skills to have pulled the various factions together and managed to get the ear of Lincoln University to make the progress that has been made. At times it looked like it may have stalled but we will all thank Alan in the long term.

On our "Core activities" this year has seen perhaps more attention to X bred wools, not that they have ever been ignored but we are looking to have more regular field days in the North Island and in our desire to try to grow the organisation, the alternative to shrinking and dying, we are actively encouraging senior wool handlers and others from the industry to join us. By being inclusive of more perhaps we can all benefit by developing a bigger more resilient organisation.

The Wool market has been a bit mixed again this year, although probably as strong as it has been for a long time for the stronger end. The big premiums for extra fine have stayed away but we are still getting the message that quality counts. There is a lot of pride in producing good lines of wool, even more so if the clip is a bit rougher before it gets to the classing table and the classer has done a good job of making it more valuable than it may have been.

Last year welcomed Trudy & Dave to the board, Dave of course having been very involved as Registrar and Trudy being involved at the Broker end has great wool knowledge as well as the contacts from her job.

This year goodbye Rose & Ecky. Rose has served as the North Island representative for a few years now and has always given good input to discussions. Ecky has served the Association for many years, I thought he had been on the inaugural board but he tells me he came on early in the life of the association but not at establishment. Ecky being always able to give a perspective from a background of tremendous experience. Both will be missed from the board table.

I cannot conclude without extending thanks to the long suffering Secretary, Annette. She has again spent the year chasing us up for agendas, notes for the newsletter and reports as well as dealing with much of the day to day stuff behind the scenes. Thank you Annette, what would we do without you.

Bruce has been incredibly busy and has gone more than the extra mile. He has attacked his role with enthusiasm and has consistently been thinking of ways to improve our function and appeal. He has constantly been coming up with ideas for growth, better or new services to widen our appeal. Getting sponsorship and associate members has helped with the growth that we are starting to see.

To the other board members, thank you again. To many outside it may appear that not much happens but the time involved adds up. Conference calls may seem like an easy option but they take up an entire evening which doesn't necessarily help "domestic relationships", but they are a lot cheaper than the board all travelling to a venue just to meet, so thanks must also go to the "other halves" of the board members.

Bill Dowle
Chairman
NZWCA.