



NZWCA CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT 2021.

Another year has gone by and we are still in existence as an organisation and an industry, but I feel I have to say as an organisation we have strengthened even more in the last 12 months, despite various obstacles that have come up. 2020 will go down in history as a year we don't want to repeat for reasons we all know but as an organisation we have moved on, our membership is growing, our respect in the wider industry has continued to strengthen and hopefully the light in the wool tunnel isn't a train but a strong glimmer of hope for the future.

Some may wonder why I feel this way. I recently attended a field day where the Chairman of WRONZ made a presentation and I was intrigued by some of the developments that they are funding to the pilot stage, this being one stage of developing a full commercial production. They only go to pilot stage if the process can give growers \$10.00 per kg, not that they will as buyers only pay what they have to, a message also received when visiting exporters with Bruce late last year. It was interesting to hear that their customers could pay more for the raw wool, but they don't have to so they pay as little as they need. However if some new uses can be developed that could use large amounts of fibre that will increase demand and hopefully flow through to prices and once again make the industry sustainable. You may wonder why a classer would be worried about the long term financial viability of growers, it is the financial viability that makes them interested in better preparation of the clip and wanting to have preparation supervised by classers, or graders, that ensures consistent quality of the clip preparation, and less contamination.

This gets back to the progress that Bruce as Executive Officer/Registrar has made with his drive to get the grading course developed and actually happening. It has been a long road and Bruce deserves a medal for his perseverance and drive to get this developed. Maybe the frustrations he had from ensuring the Wool Technology course continued was good training for this but it has been an extremely worthy, and frequently frustrating time for Bruce, and he has been very well supported by Allan Frazer. Numbers doing the Wool Technology course are good, and I understand another course will again begin in mid-year. A call has gone out to shearing contractors to host grading courses. Improving the qualifications of wool handlers can only benefit the industry as a whole. This is probably best illustrated by the reducing amount of contamination in lines of wool particularly in the South Island where most wool handlers experience working under qualified classers who have received the message and passed it on to others.

This reflects the NZWCA vision *Fostering and supporting quality education, harvesting and presentation standards in the wool industry*".

Our improved website has had very good feedback, being able to fund this was helped by the fact we couldn't have field-days during the covid restrictions.

Headway is being made with classer registration numbers in Wool Auction Catalogues, hopefully an announcement can be made soon on this. We had hoped for something on the testing certificate to indicate wool handling had been overseen by a qualified registered person, but this was too much for the wider industry at this stage, we never know what might happen in the future.

After Bruce trying to step back for several years it was great that when he put the pressure on and we really started to look for a replacement for part of his job. We had some good interest in the position and were able to appoint Marg Forde to the Registrars position, Bruce retaining the education (mainly grading and Wool Technology input) so a new era begins.

Marg moving to this position has however created a vacancy on the board. Filling vacancies on the board is always hard but once people get interested and then get involved, they get keener. I remember the reluctance of Marg when she reluctantly stood for the board, she became a very strong member and I'm pleased to say we haven't lost her but I'm sure if she was asked if she would take on the Registrars position then the answer would have been "Stop Dreaming". The personal development that you can get from taking up the challenge is tremendous.

Although we will still have input from Bruce, due to his stepping back I feel we must give him the acknowledgement that he deserves for what he has done to our Association. He has moved us into a much more professional light within the wider industry. We now have a much better ear from others in the wool pipeline. Some may question the value of this but getting recognition of the efforts put into clip preparation in the shed is more likely if we are recognised as a key part of the process.

The help and support of Bruce's wife Pat also must be acknowledged, she has been his sounding board, proof reader and supporter. He shifted to Mosgiel to retire, NZWCA has kept him "tired" he deserves some rest and more time at the bowling green. Although as Executive officer with the education portfolio he will still be vital to us for a while yet.

Marg has moved from vice chair to now Registrar she will take a more prominent role in NZWCA and may even shift the focus in some areas but with her experience in the sheds, as a business woman and journalist I am confident the association will benefit from Marg's greater involvement.

Allan Frazer also deserves acknowledgment as an appointed director, who has never been a classer but came from the background of the Wool Board and then Meat & Wool and being on the CRAIG Committee he was instrumental in forming the Association and has helped guide us as well as having many great contacts around Wellington. He is always a reliable advisor and sounding board.

The other board members have also been involved and helpful throughout the year. This is simpler now with the era of Zoom calls, maybe the only good outcome from Covid 19 being making us take this up, we don't meet face to face very often so have been able to pull in more support to the board from others in the wool industry. Zoom calls are a lot better than conference phone calls.

Annette our ever-steady secretary/treasurer has kept us on track, financially and keeping us in line as well as keeping the website up to date. Now when subs are paid the website is updated so it is a true record of who is a paid financial member so able to use their registration number on a line of wool. This can help if a broker or merchant or anyone else wants to check someone out.

I also need to acknowledge my wife for me being on the phone, or mentally absent from home when dealing with Association meetings and discussions.

There are also many others that have continued to support us in ways they may not imagine, our associate members and sponsors are now a vital part of our structure and success.

Thank you all.



Bill Dowle