



Registrar's report for NZ Wool Classers Association AGM

09/05/23

As I collect my thoughts to write my second Registrar report for the NZWCA AGM I am conscious of one constant, and it is this: the goodwill and willingness to collaborate within the NZ wool industry that I have found in my first two years on the job is real, and something I am very grateful for.

Bringing it in closer, I once again place on record my appreciation to the members of the NZWCA Board. Our association is fortunate to have such a committed group of people who hail from across the wool sector giving their time and experience. Particular mention to chairman Bill Dowle and Secretary Annette Gamble who are always there for operational matters and always a pleasure to work alongside.

I also salute our Classers, Graders and Associate Members, and our Sponsors, for recognising the value of a wool classer registration system, and putting their money where their mouth is to do so. Administering the NZ Wool Classers Registration system and our advocacy for quality in wool preparation/presentation and wool education simply would not be possible without this support.

Provisional "P" prefix: At last year's AGM a motion was successfully passed to limit the time a classer could stay using the "P" Provisional prefix. The period was set at three years. However, it needs to be stated that anyone struggling to get sheds or for health or other life reasons they can see they may not be going get over the line within the three years, there could be room to move. Communication with NZWCA Registrar, well before your three years is up, is key.

In the past year the process of for shed management inspections was changed for Provisional Classers and Graders. Our system has been based on the assumption that wool broker reps would always have the experience and ability to undertake the inspections as part of visiting sheds at shearing time anyway. However, this is not always the case now so the process has been tweaked. Instead of going directly to the farm's wool broker rep to get the inspection done, classers and graders requesting an inspection now need to do so directly to the NZWCA Registrar, who then allocates an Inspector. We have compiled a list of NZWCA members prepared to be contacted to do inspections if available. It should be noted that using people as Inspectors, other than wool brokers reps who are going to shed anyway, is an extra cost, either to the volunteer inspector or NZWCA. On a personal note, I enjoyed being able to get out and do some shed visits to NZWCA members this past year that Covid restrictions in my first year on the job did not allow. As always being budget conscious I fitted those visits around my own classing commitments to minimise travel costs to the association.

This past year we have also introduced in writing that NZWCA reserve the right to require a merino shed management inspection. Previously only one shed management inspection was required, so someone on P-prefix could just get their shed management inspection done on a crossbred shed. This change recognises the gap between competent running of a crossbred shed and a merino shed.

Wool Clip Grading education – "Q-Course" We can't underestimate the value to us as classers and to the wider wool industry, particularly the strong wool sector, of having experienced wool handlers upskilled and empowered by knowledge. The grading qualification, which is now known as the "Q-Course" (Q being the prefix for the NZWCA Grading stencil and Q for Quality) provides this. Accordingly I have spent a lot of time in the past year attending online meetings, on the phone and by email lobbying for the Grading Q-Course which sits with the Southern Institute of Technology, underneath the Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing.

Due to SIT stating they don't have enough money, the grading courses stopped in October 2020. However NZWCA's persistent advocacy, collaboration with the SIT wool tutors **Laurie Boniface and Richard Gavigan** and **NZ Shearing Contractors Assn** and support from **Wool Impact** has meant the grading course education resumed in November 2022. Mackintosh Shearing hosted a course in the King Country and McConachie Shearing in Southland. Another course is set for late April 2023, hosted by Colin Watson-Paul's shearingnz.co.nz in Hastings. Shearing contractor support providing venue, staff and tucker is key, thanks to those contractors involved so far.

Acknowledgement also to Wool Impact for understanding the value in this wool education targeted at experienced wool handlers. Wool Impact has made some money available to make the courses happen, provided other wool industry groups are also onboard and collaborating. **Ross McIsaac of Wool Impact** is particularly helpful and has made a point of getting a good understanding of the value of this level of wool training. It should be stated that the money from Wool Impact is being administered by Ross, none goes to SIT. Thanks Laurie, Richard, Mark Barrowcliffe and Phil Holden (NZSCA) and Ross.



NZWCA is now an associate member of the National Council of NZ Wool Interests. I believe the fee is money well spent by our association. We don't get any voting rights but we do get a seat at the table. **Rosstan Mazey** is, in my opinion, doing a great job as new chairman of the NCNZWI. He's certainly made the effort to get to know about NZWCA. He has a good grasp on where NZWCA sits in the wool chain and the importance of the integrity of our registration system, especially in the face of increasing demand for traceability and quality assurance through programmes like NZFAP and ZQ. He also really gets how critical it is to support wool training and education. Thanks Rosstan.

Traceability and Quality Assurance programmes and the association of these programmes with the world recognised Responsible Wool Standard "RWS": Worldwide, end users of wool are increasingly looking for quality assurance and that RWS tick gives them that. Producers of wool products and the consumers who buy them are looking for assurance around traceability, origin, environmental sustainability, biosecurity, animal health and welfare and system integrity. Protecting the integrity of the NZWCA registration system is a core role of our association so there is a clear connection here to NZ's wool quality assurance programmes. We have an ongoing concern about invalid NZWCA stencils being applied to bales and invalid registration numbers used in bale specifications. Keeping NZWCA membership current is considered a professional obligation for NZ classers and graders, but at present the onus is on the individual and their honesty. Therefore NZWCA time and resource is being committed to raising awareness and working with the various wool industry sectors on a solution. We consider it is reasonable that, in order to fulfil integrity, origin and traceability assurances within these QA programmes, that any classer or grader registration number associated with any clip is proven to be valid. This is a work in progress but I would point out that NZWCA has already gone to extra expense and trouble with our website to ensure there is a simple search capacity, so ascertaining if a classer or grader's stencil is a valid registration is an easy push of a couple of buttons.

Last October we had the first NZWCA North Island Industry Day since 2019. NZWCA vice chair Sonya Johansen and I ran the day with great support from the PGGW Napier wool store team (the venue), NZWTA (where our attendees did a facility tour), a great range of speakers and the SIT wool tutors. Thanks to all of the above and also to the shearing contractors who sent staff along. Sonya and I worked hard to get the word around about the day and if we had a disappointment it was that more local contractors didn't see the value in having their staff attend. We hope to hold another one in the Hawkes Bay this coming October but that will depend on the ongoing affect of the flood damage in the region.

In March NZWCA made our debut at the Wanaka A&P Show! Thanks to an invitation from the chief wool steward (and his team) and NZWCA member Martin Paterson, we had space in the wool marquee between the fleece judging building and the sheep judging pen. Board member Terence Mulcahy and I manned the stand over the two days of the show and enjoyed talking to a range of people about our association, what we stand for, who we are, what classers do and, of course, wool. We did have three pre-determined aims though and they were to speak to as many wool growers as we could about 1) Associate membership as a way to recognise the value of maintaining NZ's classer registration system 2) The search facility on our website to ascertain validity of a classer or grader's stencil number 3) How Owner Classer registration works.

Through the past year I have taken part in numerous meetings, mostly online, with a range of people and groups but mostly in the wool work force, training, education and funding spaces. I have found there are a lot of initiatives, consultations, reports, talking, and a lot of well-meaning busy people. Regardless of what does or doesn't come out the other end, I do think it is valuable for a representative from an independent industry-good organisation such as NZWCA to be involved.

In June I was invited, as NZWCA Registrar, to a face-to-face all day meeting for **Primary ITO's Industry Partnership Group (IPG) for wool** in Wellington. I requested the flight that was purchased for me by the Wool IPG allow me two days in Wellington instead of one. This gave me the opportunity, with just a one night hotel cost to NZWCA, to join with NZWCA Patron and Board member Allan Frazer, to fly the flag for our association with two visits. We called into **Segard Masurel** and had a good discussion with wool buyers John Robinson and Michael Yan Zhu.

Allan and I then got a very comprehensive insight into the **SGS Wool Testing Services facility** with Jeremy Wear. Jeremy said his message to wool classers was that they were "welcome here". He underlined the absolute importance of uniform wool lines in order for accurate test results to be achieved. Therefore, consistent preparation and classing was vital for wool "all the way to end use" he said. I relate this because it illustrates my experience consistently since taking on the job of Registrar. Everyone in the NZ wool trade sings from the same song sheet; across all wool types, and despite the especially low prices for strong wool, quality is crucial. Therefore what we as classers and graders do, the standard of our work and our vigilance to upholding that quality is key.



In closing, I repeat what I wrote in my report last year; NZWCA is a nimble industry-good organisation which operates on shoestring. I see a balancing act between doing the role of Registrar justice, whilst being mindful of what can be realistically achieved with the limited resources NZWCA has. I am consciously attempting to stick to what I see as core business, to ensure the role of Registrar that I ultimately will pass on to someone else (always the goal) will be one that does not rely on goodwill and voluntary hours to function.

Ngā mihi, nā

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NZWCA Registrar