



## Registrar's report - NZ Wool Classers Association AGM 09.05.24

It's genuinely an honour to be presenting my **fourth Registrar's report to a NZWCA AGM**. Thank you for the solid support this past year and for your trust in me in the role.

Passion for wool, collaboration, showing up with integrity and commitment, putting in the mahi, always learning and being open to seeing things from more than one perspective; these are the things that are my focus. I'm grateful to have recognised the same in people I have come in contact with in the past year in my work for the NZ Wool Classers Association. In my experience there's a lot of goodwill out there in our wool industry and we are all better off for this.

In no particular order here are (I hope) **most of the things that have kept your Registrar busy**, and your Board involved since the 2024 NZWCA AGM.

Dialling back to **May 2024 and our AGM/Industry Professional Development Day in Mosgiel**. It was heartening to have healthy attendance numbers from a wide range of wool industry people and a varied line up of willing speakers. Feedback on the day was very positive. I can assure you these events take a lot of pulling together prior, and also work setting up and on the day, thank you to all. Special mention to Kevin Waldron and Allan Paterson for wool exercise samples and to the shearing contractors who recognise the value in getting their wool harvesting staff to participate, filling their vans up with attendees. It's a given that Classers and Graders take responsibility for keeping themselves engaged and informed by attending such events, but we can't underestimate the value of having wool handlers and pressers grow their knowledge and confidence too.

At the time of writing (mid April), since our last AGM **we've welcomed nine new stencil holders**. Six Provisional Classers, two Owner Classers and one Grader. Four Classers have done what it takes to get off their Provisional prefix status to either M (merino) or H (Mid Micron) and one Classer passed their final clip inspection to upgrade from C (Crossbred and Merino) to A (all breeds). I'm really pleased to see this progression and upskilling. We have the systems in place, but the motivation to do it can only come from the individual Classer/Grader; I do all I can to support this. A reminder to those on a Provisional stencil, there is now a three year time limit on this (as passed at our AGM in 2022), though extensions may be considered on application to the Registrar.

**The Young Farmer of the Year final** was in Hamilton in July 2024 and included wool for the first time for many years. Earlier in the year a Young Farmers Club organising committee member contacted my husband Edsel and I enquiring about using our mobile shearing plant as they wanted to include shearing on the practical module final day. I pushed to include wool and Edsel and I ended up working with them to design a module that incorporated shearing and wool, and we were module hosts and judges on the day. A win for wool – lucky I just happened to have a bunch of merino, mid micron and crossbred wool samples at our North Island home to use! And of course I made sure the NZWCA logo was visible and pushed the quality message on the day.

In March we were once again able to **fly the NZWCA flag at the Wanaka A&P Show**, thanks to the show's wool committee making us welcome and finding us space right beside the door to the building housing the NZ Fine Wool Supreme Fleece Competition. Thank you to Ian Bagley and his wool committee, you do

great work for wool. It was third time at the show representing NZWCA for Terence Mulcahy and I. We agree there is huge value in NZWCA having a presence there. We had two days of many conversations with a wide range of people about what NZWCA stands for, supports and our role in the industry. There were people who came to our stand who didn't know anything about wool (and just wanted to talk about our wool samples and wool as a consumer item) and wise and experienced wool growers, buyers, exporters, and many in between.

At our AGM/Industry PD Day on May 9 we will be announcing the next round of recipients of **scholarships provided by the Wool Research Organisation of NZ**. WRONZ gives \$5000 a year for NZ Certificate of Wool Technology and Classing students (\$1000 per student) and the scholarship is administered by NZWCA. We now have split the scholarships into two time periods as there are two Cert Wool Tech intakes each year, it only seemed fair. The payment of the scholarship is in increments and conditional on a student passing. There is also a requirement that the scholarship student won't get paid their last \$250 increment unless they furnish proof they have acknowledged WRONZ and connected with the organisation. From the outset the successful scholarship recipients are encouraged in their scholarship advice letter to "maximise this scholarship by using it as an opportunity to network and connect with wool industry organisations and people". Thanks to WRONZ for the support of tertiary wool education, and WRONZ manager Tim Lonsdale for his collaboration on this.

Driving our Board objective of **transparent, timely and operable documentation and processes** has continued for me this past year. I have worked with the Board to update the Roles and Responsibilities of Board members document and there is now a requirement for anyone accepting nomination for the Board to confirm they have read and understood this document. The Classer Code of Conduct and Ethics has also been updated, and a link to it included in the registration invoices sent out in February. A Store Classer registration description relevant to current conditions has been created. All these documents are on our website. The creation of a new NZWCA Constitution to ensure compliance with new Government regulations around Incorporated Societies has been a huge piece of work for your Board and myself. The draft is on this year's AGM agenda for consideration and adoption. A work in progress document is a pre-shearing checklist of agreed responsibilities for Classer, Farmer and Shearing Contractor.

**Communicating with members and ensuring NZWCA is positioned visibly** where we need to be, where our input and advocacy is helpful or required, are tasks that require a deceptive amount of time and resource input from me. Online meetings via Teams and Zoom allow affordable participation, I've taken part in many this past year, in a wide range of wool industry related areas. I'd always like to have the time to communicate more with our members, and to network more. On the plus side I was glad to be able to circulate a reminder during pre-lamb 2024, prompted by feedback from two wool reps, around the ongoing importance of protecting the reputation of our industry when making online social media posts. That reminder remains firmly in place! Regarding my time input, as I have previously stated 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.

Definitely an area that's taken up a big portion of time for me in the past year has been **input into wool harvesting training and wool education**. Allan Frazer and I, on behalf of NZWCA, made a comprehensive submission to the new Government's Vocational and Educational Training Reforms. Sonya Johansen and I continued the work begun in 2023 with the wool harvesting microcredential

working group, facilitated by Muka Tangata, the Food and Fibre Workforce Development Council. The new microcredentials were signed off in 2024. The work was done to replace the defunct unit standards, with the aim being to cut through some of the blocks to funding and delivery for wool harvesting training. Time will tell if this will happen. I have ensured a good working relationship with the wool tutors appointed last year by the Southern Institute of Technology, Rebecca Braddick-Tohiariki and Emma O'Sullivan. We have worked together to make sure the 2025 NZWCA AGM/Industry PD Day at Lincoln University on May 9 was timed to allow NZ Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing block course students to fit attendance into their block course week.

One thing I didn't do that I should have was run the intended **North Island Industry PD Day in 2024/first half of 2025**. I had to have surgery in October and this knocked me sideways a lot more, and for longer, than anticipated. My recovery is still a work in progress. While I was able to keep on the job with admin online and by phone, the mobility required to put on an Industry Day was literally a step too far. My apologies, and my thanks to our Board members for their understanding.

**To close, my heartfelt thanks to all the NZWCA Board members and our Secretary** It is a pleasure to work with you all on our shared purpose of ensuring there is a solid platform to enable achieving highest quality standards of wool preparation and presentation. Our association is fortunate to have such a committed group of people who hail from across the wool sector giving their time and experience. Special mention to our new Chair Tracy Paterson, who despite already being a busy woman with multiple farm, family and community leadership balls in the air has caught the NZWCA one and run with it. And as always, Secretary Annette Gamble, who knows I couldn't do what I do without her rock solid efficiency, wisdom, commitment and most importantly humour.

**Acknowledgement and appreciation is also due to 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.

Ngā mihi, nā

*Marg Forde* A1260

NZWCA Registrar

14.04.24