



Fostering and supporting quality education, harvesting and presentation standards in the wool industry



Fully participating in Movement Educator Laura Hancock's spiky massage ball workshop at the recent NZWCA Industry Day were, right to left - Allan Frazer (NZWCA patron), Peter and Elsie Lyon, Cassie Johnston (new NZWCA vice-chair) and Tracy Paterson (NZWCA chair)

JUNE 2026 NEWSLETTER

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NORTH ISLAND CROSSBRED WOOL GETTING CLASSER ATTENTION

Wendy Brown P2261 is NZWCA's newest classer but that wasn't her intention when she returned home to New Zealand after 17 years classing fine wool in Australia.

What was supposed to be retirement to her home at beautiful Pakiri Beach in Northland is now turning into a one-woman crusade with New Zealand's crossbred wool in her sights. "I've found myself really enjoying working with the crossbred wool, the second shear, and I don't mind being called a trail blazer," says Wendy, who has just begun proudly putting her new NZWCA classer registration number on crossbred wool bales in the King Country and Central North Island, something that hasn't been commonly done for many years.

"I'm trying to do my bit to lift the standard of (wool preparation in) our industry," explains Wendy, who applied for her provisional classer registration in NZ after noting the rise in interest in, and prices for, crossbred wool recently. At the same time, she's hoping to "educate" farmers that their wool is worth taking care of and encourage her fellow wool handlers.

After having a hip replacement, Wendy began wool handling in NZ crossbred sheds recently

"to help out my family". Her niece Jessie Tahere, with husband Willie had taken over King Country Shearing Ltd's run when they asked Wendy if she could give them a hand.

Wendy says she is really enjoying working with the King Country Shearing team, alongside ganger Turu Barrett. "I'm not one to say much, I just get on and work. But it's got to be good for my niece's business to offer the farmers to have a classer stencil on their bales."

Farmer Paul Casey of Omaru Downs (pictured with son Joe and Wendy) is supportive of Wendy putting her classer registration number on his bales of second shear wool. "It's not something that's been done here before, but it's got to be beneficial to the wool in the bale and so to our farming business," he says. "It has to add value to our product and tells the story of our wool."

NZ Council of Wool Exporters president Nathan Watt says the quality assurance that comes from a classer or grader overseeing any wool preparation "can only be good for New Zealand wool Inc". Nathan praises Wendy's initiative with crossbred wool. He says he believes NZ "still has the best wool handlers and classers in the

world", but equally, as the prices for crossbred wool dropped, so too had the quality of preparation.

"It gives buyers confidence knowing a stencil is there on lines of wool," he says. "It shows everyone involved – grower, contractor, all staff – are proud of what they are doing and care about wool quality.

Wendy Brown and King Country farmers Paul and Joe Casey admiring the novelty of a classer stencil on their crossbred wool bales



Newest NZWCA classer Wendy Brown, now proudly putting her registration number on crossbred wool bales



Attention to crossbred wool preparation to ensure maximising the rising prices includes thorough blending, as captured here with Wendy Brown on the quality control job.



By Professor Jon Hickford:

“The fate of wool in the market is still strongly driven by what ends up in any given bale on any given day.

“While it may seem like an additional cost, contracting a wool classer to 'run your shed' is money well spent.”

Recent talk of the wool market being over-heated are perhaps premature when you consider the lift in price is demand driven. However, that does not mean anyone should be resting on their laurels. As the market settles, and buyers have more time to think about what they are purchasing, high quality wool will still achieve a premium price. That starts on farm, and the fate of wool in the market is still strongly driven by what ends up in any given bale on any given day.

For sheep farmers, the emphasis must remain on producing the best possible wool you can, with the best possible 'story' behind as it journeys to market. Nothing, can or should be done badly and this probably smarts when even at current prices wool barely pays shearing costs, let alone any other animal health and management costs, along with cartage, brokerage and whatever else is used to clip the ticket. I am not trying to be negative, but everyone has to further lift their game if they are serious about earning top dollar and paying the bills.

Wool starts with ram choice, and sadly the obsession with wool weight in genetic evaluations has in many cases led to micron blowout, and associated faults like excessive medullation. It gets worse, because without wool being included in culling regimes, black fibre proliferates, especially given the infusion of new genetics from breeds that are not renowned for their wool quality. We also have to remember that typically there is as much variation within breeds as between, so just because you have a wool breed, doesn't mean your wool is good. With micron (fibre diameter) still a key determinant of price, it is very worrying to see considerable variation in mean fibre diameter MFD within a flock, and huge fibre diameter standard deviations (an indicator of fibre diameter variation between and along individual fibres) in a single fleece. All this before the shearers and shed hands get anywhere near your wool.

Farmers who are serious about wool, need to 'own' their shearing shed and actively manage each day that shearing occurs. If you are not confident in doing that yourself, then call in an expert. While it may seem like an additional cost, contracting a wool classer to 'run your shed' is money well spent. They will not only ensure that only good wool ends up in the bale, but because of their experience they have expertise in directing or managing the whole operation efficiently and effectively. The better ones have hundreds if not thousands of days of shed experience, when the average farmer might only shear once or twice a year for their working life (probably less than 100 days in total).

To become an outstanding wool producer does not happen overnight, but with a bit of wind in the industries sails again, I hope that all serious farmers take this opportunity to step up and improve their wool. When you get that first forward contract at \$20/kg for your strong wool, you will understand exactly what I mean!

- *Professor Jon Hickford, a stalwart of wool and sheep farming, recently retired from a long career with Lincoln University's Department of Agricultural Sciences.
He is an NZWCA associate member*



Chairperson's Year in Review – 2026 AGM

It is my privilege to present the Chairperson's Report for the New Zealand Wool Classers Association (NZWCA) for the 2025 year. A year marked by renewed momentum, strengthened professional standards, and a growing recognition of the critical role classers play in the future of New Zealand's wool industry.

Across 2025 and into 2026, the wool sector has continued to navigate a complex global environment. Despite ongoing pressure on strong wool prices, several developments signal a positive shift which include the Government's decision requiring all government departments to use wool carpet from July 2025 – a move that has been widely welcomed. A boost for strong wool demand and signalling renewed confidence in natural fibres.

Fine wool markets have remained resilient, supported by evolving consumer preferences for natural, traceable, and ethically sourced fibres. Industry leaders have reiterated that New Zealand wool's future lies in differentiation, quality, and meeting end-user specifications. The opportunity for New Zealand lies squarely in the delivery of well-presented and expertly classed wool. Associate Agriculture Minister Mark Patterson has highlighted concerns about declining wool quality affecting manufacturers and exporters which reinforces the need for renewed focus on breeding, shed preparation, and classing standards.

These insights reaffirm the central role of NZWCA: safeguarding quality, supporting professional development, and ensuring the integrity of the New Zealand stencil.

A strong and valuable presence was once again demonstrated by NZWCA at the Wanaka Show, where we engaged with classers, graders, farmers, shearers, students, and the wider public.

This was made possible through the dedication of Marg and Terrence, whose organisation, hospitality, and on-the-ground leadership ensured the Association was well represented. Their contribution strengthened our visibility and helped promote the value of skilled classing to a broad audience.

NZWCA continues to champion high-quality wool education. The Association maintains New Zealand's only register of qualified classers and graders, ensuring system integrity and professional accountability.

This year, we also celebrate the achievements of classers who have completed their training and successfully advanced their stencils. Their commitment to excellence strengthens the professional standards our industry relies on, and we congratulate each of them for their hard work and perseverance.

We also acknowledge and congratulate the WRONZ scholarship recipients. Their success reflects both individual dedication and the strong future potential within our sector. These scholarships play a vital role in supporting emerging talent and ensuring the continued development of technical expertise across the wool pipeline.

A large part of what NZWCA does is in the advocacy space. We act as a conduit for information between manufacturers and exporters to our members so that high standards of wool preparation are emphasised. Bale contamination issues are addressed – an issue that continues despite significant investment into education.

The Association's voice is increasingly sought in national conversations about wool's future, reflecting the respect held for our members' expertise.

My sincere thanks go to our sponsors, including WoolWorks, the Wool Exporters Council, Zentera (formerly NZ Merino Company), Bremworth, PGG Wrightson Wool, Wools of New Zealand, Bremworth & WoolFirst (Federation of NZ Wool Merchants), Peter Lyon Shearing, and the NZ Wool Testing Authority

The New Zealand Wool Industry Charitable Trust and WRONZ for ongoing scholarship support

Chairs report continued....

Our committee, it is important to acknowledge that all members volunteer their time and energy to ensuring the association delivers. A very big thank you to our Registrar Marg Forde and our secretary Annette Gamble – your significant contribution that goes well above what is required is very much appreciated.

Our members, your commitment to excellence, education, and professional integrity continues to strengthen the wool sector

The coming year presents both challenge and opportunity. Our focus will remain on:

- Strengthening professional development
- Supporting new entrants
- Enhancing quality assurance
- Advocating for the value of skilled classing in every shed

Together, we will continue to uphold the standards that define New Zealand wool and ensure our industry is positioned for the resurgence many now believe is within reach.

AGM & Professional Development Day

The Association successfully delivered its 2025 AGM and Industry Professional Development Day on 9 May 2025 held at Lincoln University, with strong attendance and valuable technical workshops.

The 2026 AGM and Industry Professional Development Day is scheduled for Friday 15 May 2026 at Peter Lyon Shearing in Alexandra. We look forward to seeing you there.

Regards



Tracy Paterson M2154
Chairperson
New Zealand Wool Classers Association



NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson and her husband Andrew giving it a go in Laura Hancock's spiky massage ball workshop last month at the NZWCA Industry Day at Alexandra

Extremely dangerous wool bale contamination discovered at WoolWorks Awatoto site.

WoolWorks, via the National Council of NZ Wool Interests, has requested their “critical safety alert” is circulated throughout the wool industry.

Here is a summary of the alert, including *wording from the alert*, pasted below:

“During processing on Monday 19th through to Tuesday 20th, our team discovered live ammunition in the drop tray of an infeed hopper. Discovering live ammunition that has come in from farm bales is deeply shocking and completely unacceptable.”



Bullets found in wool at North Island wool scour

NZWCA joins with WoolWorks in expressing deep concern about this type of dangerous bale contamination, whilst also taking the opportunity to remind our members how important it is to always remain vigilant to avoid anything other than wool going into our bales.

It is understood that unfortunately the property the wool bale(s) containing the bullets can't be traced because the bullets weren't found in the hopper until further along the processing chain, when wool from multiple North Island farms was combined.

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Private Bag 6014, Napier 4142
+64 6 834 1421
andrew@woolworks.co.nz



29 May 2026

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Re: Ammunition

We are writing to issue a critical safety alert regarding a highly dangerous incident at Wool Works Awatoto. During processing on Monday 19th through to Tuesday 20th, our team discovered live ammunition in the drop tray of an infeed hopper.

Discovering live ammunition that has come in from farm bales is deeply shocking and completely unacceptable.

Our staff expect a safe working environment. Finding live ammunition puts innocent lives at risk without warning.

The combination of our opening equipment and scouring process and live ammunition is a recipe for disaster:

We operate a zero-tolerance policy for hazardous foreign objects. Daily we have contamination from bales delivered and we continue reward our staff for the find but none of this cost is borne by the supplier of the wool.

We ask/request you share this find with your members and ask to pass on to all involved in the wider industry.

All the ammunition we found was in the brattice tray from infeed hopper 102.

The shotgun cartridge was found at 1630 on Tuesday May 19th.

The rifle ammunition was found at 0330 on Wednesday May 20th.



CLASSER PROFILE

EMARINA WATSON A2076



*Emarina Watson and
her dog Poppy*

Kia ora koutou katoa
Ko Putauaki taku maunga
Ko Rangitaiki taku awa
Ko Maataatua taku waka
Ko Ngati Awa taku iwi
Ko Emarina Watson taku ingoa A2076

I first entered the shearing industry in the 1980s at 15 years old, working for my whanau Ratima Shearing in Taihape. In 1989 I moved south and worked for Ken Haldane, Taitapu area for a short time before settling in the Rangiora North Canterbury area, working for Don Toshach where I have worked in this area ever since, this shearing run is where I learnt a lot.

I credit the NZ Wool Board/ Tectra Training for fast tracking my skill base with Blade/machine shearing/wool handling/pressing and grading and offered me a scholarship for a Certificate in Wool Technology. Tectra also gave me the opportunity to become a wool trainer it was a great learning experience.

The person I credit for my career as a classer is a well-respected wool classer, Roger Corby our gang classer in the 90s. I began grading and classing wools in 2000.

In 2008 Tectra gathered 5 NZ registered Wool Classers for a trans-Tasman agreement with Tafe in Dubbo New South Wales Australia to help further our education to become Trans-Tasman Australian Wool Classers, it was a great experience, and we all achieved with honours. My stencil is 955210 AW. Australia is a vast, unique and beautiful country and have a far greater variety of V.M problems they contend with in their wools. I realized New Zealand is a great place also and the V.M is not that bad compared with Australia so decided I wanted to Class NZ styles.

My time in the wool industry has not been without its challenges which I have certainly battled hard to overcome. Huia Whyte-Puna with vast experience as a wool classer gave me great advice work harder and smarter.

To see some amazing wools, I travel to the Awatere Valley, Hakataramea Valley and the Mackenzie Country from August to October. From May to July, I'm working in North Canterbury.

I was involved with the Canterbury A&P Assn Shearing Committee helping out with Classing and organising workers for many years. Through the NZWCA I recently volunteered to do an introduction to Wool Classing for The Young Farmers Club skills day in Kirwee. It was very rewarding and fun to interact with these young people.

Wool is such a unique and amazing natural fibre, I am a member of the Christchurch Weavers and Spinners Guild enjoying the company of like-minded wool lovers learning the 101 ways to wool heaven. There are farmers in our group with a passion for growing beautiful fibre for us to enjoy in our handmade projects. I have learnt four shaft loom weaving, worsted spinning and long draw spinning accommodating short and tender wools.

It's fair to say me and wool are mates, I will probably be buried in a woollen coffin.

We should all when possible, support the wool industry, by using and wearing wool. Wool Away Classing.

A graphic with the text "Thank you!" in a large, white, cursive font. Below it, the words "TO OUR SPONSORS" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, set against a horizontal brushstroke background in shades of brown and gold.

SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS KEEP US OPERATING

The NZ Wool Classers Association is a lean, independent organisation funded only by membership fees and these generous 2026 sponsors: NZ Council of Wool Exporters; Woolworks; Federation of NZ Wool Merchants (Wool First); Zentera Wool; Peter Lyon Shearing; BJ Mahony Shearing; Wools Of New Zealand; PGG Wrightson Wool; NZ Wool Testing Authority (NZWTA); Bremworth; Segard Masurel. Thank you very much.

A special thank you to Peter and Elsie Lyon who, in addition to regular sponsorship this year provided both venue and catering for our AGM/Industry Professional Development Day in May.

Our operation also relies on countless voluntary hours and resources donated by a great bunch of people who are passionate about wool and the Association's stated purpose: "Fostering and supporting quality education, harvesting and presentation standards in the wool industry. A home for all involved in wool growing, handling, grading and classing."

You are all appreciated.

- Marg Forde, Registrar



No change in NZWCA membership fees: NEW CATEGORY FOR RETIRED CLASSERS

The desire for wool classers who were no longer actively classing to stay involved and support the work of the NZ Wool Classers Assn was discussed at the most recent Board meeting. Aiming to harness the knowledge and backing of classers who had retired or gone onto other work, it was decided to add a "Retired Classer" category to the NZWCA membership options. The new category will commence at the beginning of the next financial year at billing time.

This is the motion passed:

***Motion:** The Board supports introducing a new membership category, **Retired Classers**, from the 2027 year. This category is intended to encourage former classers to remain involved in and support the Association after they cease classing. Members in this category will no longer be permitted to use their stencil for classing activities. Fee was agreed at \$60.00 p.a.*

If this type of membership fits you either as someone who is finishing classing, or already has, please get in touch with NZWCA Secretary Annette Gamble secretary@woolclassers.org.nz or Registrar Marg Forde reg@woolclassers.org.nz

At the same meeting it was resolved NZWCA membership fees for the 2026/27 financial year will remain the same as this year: Shed Classer \$150; Q-stencil (Grader) \$80; Associate member \$120; Wool Harvester \$40 - all prices are including GST.

Kaylee wins BREMWORTH wool rug and a WRONZ scholarship for her wool studies

Whichever way you look at it Kaylee Hood had an excellent day out at the NZWCA 2026 AGM/Industry Day at Alexandra!

In the morning Kaylee was one of three first year NZ Certificate of Wool Technology and Classing students announced as recipients of the Wool Research Organisation of NZ (WRONZ) scholarships, valued at \$1000 per student.

Then late in the afternoon Kaylee was the lucky winner of the beautiful **Bremworth Wool Carpets + Rugs** rug draw (rrp \$995), for which all pre-registered attendees were eligible. Kaylee was the second name drawn. The first person whose name was drawn had already left and the rules stated winners had to be present to claim the prize.

Kaylee is pictured here with her Bremworth voucher (and an understandably big smile) presented by NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson after the draw was made by Elsie Lyon.

Bremworth
WOOLCARPETS-RUGS



Wool Classers invited to become involved in Animal Welfare and Calm Sheep Handling initiative



Noel Handley and Dion Morrell of Elite Wool Industry Training attended our 2026 AGM/Industry Professional Development Day last month to explain to attendees about the free courses being offered, and why.

Prior, Tom Wilson of Elite wrote: “We recognise the important role wool classers play in the wool harvesting process—particularly within the fine wool sector—and believe that involvement from your members would help set a strong example across the wider industry.”

This is the NZWCA Commitment to Animal Welfare, which is stated on our website: *Good animal welfare practices are critical for our industry.*

In addition to potential prosecution, any breach of the animal welfare regulations and the expectations of our markets and consumers puts our industry and all the people that work within it at-risk. Accordingly, NZWCA maintains a zero tolerance position to any mistreatment of animals by any person. We all have a responsibility to ensure the welfare of animals and people. The NZWCA encourages members to report any mistreatment of animals and people if it occurs.

Below are full details on the fully funded courses, from an article published by the Wool Impact organisation:

By Ross McIsaac
March 2026

Ensuring good animal welfare is critical to protecting New Zealand’s wool industry. It underpins wool’s acceptance by global consumers and preserves market access. Everyone involved with producing and harvesting wool has a responsibility to understand and uphold good animal welfare practices for the wellbeing of our animals and people and the prosperity of our sector.

The New Zealand government and industry are collectively funding in-person and online training to improve animal health and welfare outcomes in New Zealand’s wool harvesting industry.

Elite Wool Industry Training has been selected to deliver animal welfare training that has been developed with input from across the wool sector, government and animal welfare experts and refined through delivery in New Zealand and Australia.

What you’ll learn:

- What animal welfare means today and the science behind it.
- Why it matters for animals, people, and productivity.
- How the law applies to you – practical responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.
- Best practices in calm sheep handling, reducing stress for both animals and handlers.
- How to support better outcomes in your work or study through welfare-focused handling techniques
- Wound Protocol: the differences between minor and major wounds.

The benefits to you are:

- A clear understanding of your responsibilities.
- Having the knowledge and skills to ensure the welfare of animals and improve productivity.
- Better employment opportunities.

This training is being funded for one-year initially with the potential for this to be extended if it is well attended. **We encourage you to work with Elite to access the fully funded training that is being made available.**

<https://www.elitewoolindustrytraining.com>

Practical course

One-day practical courses will be scheduled with contractors across the country in the lead up to the main shearing periods in 2026. If your work involves handling animals in and around the woolshed, you'll gain the knowledge and confidence to handle sheep with care and comply with welfare standards.

Speak with Elite to organise this for your team or to find out where existing courses are being delivered.

Online course

An online course is available and can be completed at no cost for a limited period. This course includes five online modules and a self-assessment so that you can learn at your own pace.

Follow the link below to access the course:

<https://book.elitewoolindustrytraining.com/AWCSHOC>

Certificates of completion will be provided to demonstrate that you have undertaken the training.

Contact:

Noel Handley, Operations
Manager, Elite Wool Industry
Training

E: noel@ewit.co.nz

T: 021 528 401

*Noel Handley (at right) and
Dion Morrell of Elite Wool Training
speaking to NZWCA attendees
about the Animal Welfare course
options available*



RECENT NZWCA CLASSER AND GRADER REGISTRATIONS AND UPGRADES CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING:

Provisional classer stencil applications approved:

Opal Tahana P2257

Ryan Cosgrove P2258

Craig Smith P2259

Libby Pannett-Miller P2260

Wendy Brown P2261

Professional classer stencil prefix upgrades:

Tegan Caves D to A 2177

Opal Tahana P to H2257

Kate Campbell P to M2239

Wool Harvester membership approved:

Laura Hancock

Explanation of registration prefixes here:

<https://woolclassers.org.nz/members-area/registration-prefixes/>

Message from Movement Educator and Rural Athletes® Founder Laura Hancock

Laura closed out our 2026 AGM/Industry Day in Alexandra by running a spiky massage ball session with practical tools for everyday use in a physically demanding industry such as wool harvesting.

A big thank you to Segard Masurel NZ for sponsoring me to run a Spiky Massage Ball workshop for everyone who attended the Wool Classers Industry Day in May.

I had a wonderful time sharing the spiky massage balls with you all as a simple tool to help add 'Movement Snacks' into your everyday life as Rural Athletes®. Movement Snacks are bite-sized amounts of movement or self-treatment, performed throughout the working day. They are short, simple exercises that can mostly be done anywhere, helping the nervous system become more efficient in movement patterns.

Little and often can be one of the most effective ways to create quick and lasting change. We can change and improve movement far quicker than many people realise, and it was fantastic to see so many of you feeling those positive changes during the workshop.

Thank you also for throwing some great questions at me, especially those specific to your role as wool classers. These questions really got me thinking, and by the time I arrived home I already had plenty of ideas and exercises that could form the basis of a wool classer-specific workshop.

Up until now I have offered wool harvesting team workshops, as well as shearer-specific workshops. However, after spending time with you all at the Industry Day, I can see real value in formalising these ideas into a workshop specifically designed for wool classers.

If there would be any interest in a wool classer-specific half-day movement workshop, I would be very happy to hold one near Christchurch, or we could look at travel logistics if another location suited people better.

If you attended the workshop and would like me to email you a Spiky Massage Ball PDF manual, please send me an email at: laura@ruralworks.co.nz

Thank you again for your enthusiasm, your questions, and for being so willing to have a go.



Laura Hancock

Consultant / Presenter / Wool Enthusiast

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Why and How the N.Z.W.C.A Began

Address to AGM/Industry Day by Martin Paterson

As a founding director, I would like to thank all those who over the years, have been involved in the administration of this Association - giving their time and expertise - and who have made it to what it is today - a very successful organisation. While not naming all those people, I would like to make special mention of the registrars and secretaries who over the years, did the work behind the scenes, to make the organisation run efficiently.

Annette Gamble as secretary, has done 27 years dedicated service to this organization, and to recognize that; I would like to recommend to the Board, that she be made a life member.

My brief: is why and how this Organisation began.

During the 1980's there was much dissatisfaction by farmers in the N Z Wool Board; the wool prices were low and woolgrowers thought they were not getting value for their levies. By the end of the 1980's the Wool Board's in Australia and N Z were supporting the prices paid for wool. In 1991 the Australian Wool Board, stopped supporting the wool prices, and wool prices collapsed in both countries. The dissatisfaction with the N Z Wool Board grew even stronger, and the N Z Merino and Mid-Micron wool-growers formed their own organizations; Merino Inc and Mid-Micron Inc. This to influence the Board's strategy regarding the promotion and marketing by the Wool Board, and research by WRONZ of those wools; to my knowledge there was no similar organisation for strong wool.

By year 2000, the pressure for reform of the N Z Wool Board brought about the engagement of McKinseys; an international consultancy firm. At the end of 2001 McKinseys recommended the Wool Board be - disestablished; and its roles being taken over by commercial companies or entities; yet to be formed.

I was one of those chosen from the Minister of Agriculture's Wool Group; to a group of 12 Wool Industry Representatives; that peer reviewed the McKinseys Report. McKinseys recommendations went to a farmer vote in September 2002, with a 96% **Yes** vote to McKinseys recommendations. Then in July 2003, the Wool Board went out of existence after 59 years, with the formation of Meat & Wool, which later became Beef & Lamb.

McKinseys recommendations; brought about formation of the N Z Merino Company, with their wool suppliers being shareholders. Also: the formation of the Mid-micron Task Force. Also: the attempt by Romney wool farmers to form a Strong Wool Company – which did not succeed.

Before the formation of N.Z.W.C.A: I was Chair of Mid-Micron Wool Growers Group; Then represented N Z Wool Industry on study tour of the U.S.A. Cotton Industry; Then alone a tour of N Z Brand partners in England and Europe; Then became founding Chair of M-Micron Inc; Then appointed by the Wool Board a member of the Minister's Wool Group; Then appointed by the Ministers Wool Group as an industry representative to oversee the McKinsey Report.

Why and How the N.Z.W.C.A Began, contd....

Resulting from the McKinseys Report; who said there is no future in Mid-Micron wool; the Mid-Micron Task Force was established to find a way forward. This involved the employment of the with the accountancy firm of Deloitte, and employed Pat Murray a marketing consultant ex of South Africa, Pat and I and did tour of brand partners in Europe and England; to see if there was a viable commercial company for Mid-micron woolgrowers using E.P.E.A; a European environmental group based in Germany; with such wool using clients as; Gabriel, Rhoner, Ford, Volvo, Ikea and others, with sustainable policies. Upon our return we consulted Deloitte and M-Micron Inc. Then Pat and I reported to the Wool Board; that there was no commercially viable wool marketing company for Mid-Micron wool producers; and Pat's contact was terminated.

The consequences of that **Yes** vote, had much greater ramifications than most farmers ever thought about; being the skills training of shearers, wool-classers, wool-handlers, and pressers; previously paid for by the farmer's wool levies.

Wool Pro; was the wool harvesting division of the Wool Board, and had been responsible for their training programs. Wool Pro's role of shearing, wool handling and wool pressing training, eventually went to the new commercial business of - TECTRA.

Wool Pro; also maintained the registration of woolclassers, and Q Stencil holders, and the maintenance of the N Z standards for wool-classing. This role was vested by Wool Pro to the newly constituted N.Z.W.C.A Inc.

It was clearly understood at that time the powers vested by Wool Pro; gave the power to N.Z.W.C.A Inc. (1) To maintain the Wool Classers Registry, and maintain the industry standards required of wool classers. (2) The holding of refresher courses to maintain those standards, and deregister any wool classers not maintaining those standards. (3) For it to be self-funding by subscription membership or by sponsorship. At the time it was thought that there should be independent scrutiny of wool-classing training and standards, with wool industry participation. Richard Gardner CEO of Wool-Pro attended our first meetings.

The inaugural committee members of N.Z.W.C.A were; Richard Gardner Wool Pro, Allan Frazer M&W, Graeme Bell, Barbra Newton, David Carr, Alan Gallagher M-M manager and myself - Martin Paterson. We met at the Sudima Hotel near the Christchurch Airport; to form a legal entity to take over Wool-Pro's role. I had been involved in the establishment of Mid-Micron Inc, and so Alan Frazer, Allan Gallagher and I worked on the Mid Micron Constitution to make it suitable for N Z Wool Classers Inc. - which was adopted. Graeme Bell was elected the first chairman of N.Z.W.C.A.

At that time, wool classing courses at Lincoln College had ceased in 1997 and Massey in 1998, then they were funded by Meat & Wool and delivered by Wool Pro until 2006, then taken over by TECTRA until it ceased in 2018. Then the Association worked with Lincoln College to continue their courses, which were delivered by their Telford campus. Subsequently Telford was sold to the southern the Southern Institute of Technology, who continued to provide the courses, with the delivery of the programs by Laurie Boniface and Richard Gavigan, until they retired in 2024.

Why and How the N.Z.W.C.A Began, contd....

It is with some concern, that after all these years, there are still wool exporting Companies running Q A and Farm Assurance programs that are not using qualified accredited wool classers stencils in their criteria, either in, or as part their traceable delivery of wool. The stencil number on each bale, shows that the wool was classed by an independent qualified classer, who proudly puts their stencil number on each bale, which is also required by the farmer.

For this not to happen, tells me more about the integrity of their Q A programs, than it does about this organisation and the classer's stencil. Often the Q A's are just "tick box" questioners, often on subjects that are more remotely related from the woolen product itself; e.g. environment, farm management and animal welfare, which are important, but mostly relying on the honesty of the answerer. It is well past time for those Q A program managers - to get their act together.

To those classers and wool business that think it is not necessary to be a financial member – it is not a union – I see it as an organisation that supports your registration - by giving credibility to your role - with its maintaining of the wool industry standards and regulations – the sub is a small price to pay. There is an old saying; you only get out what you put in.

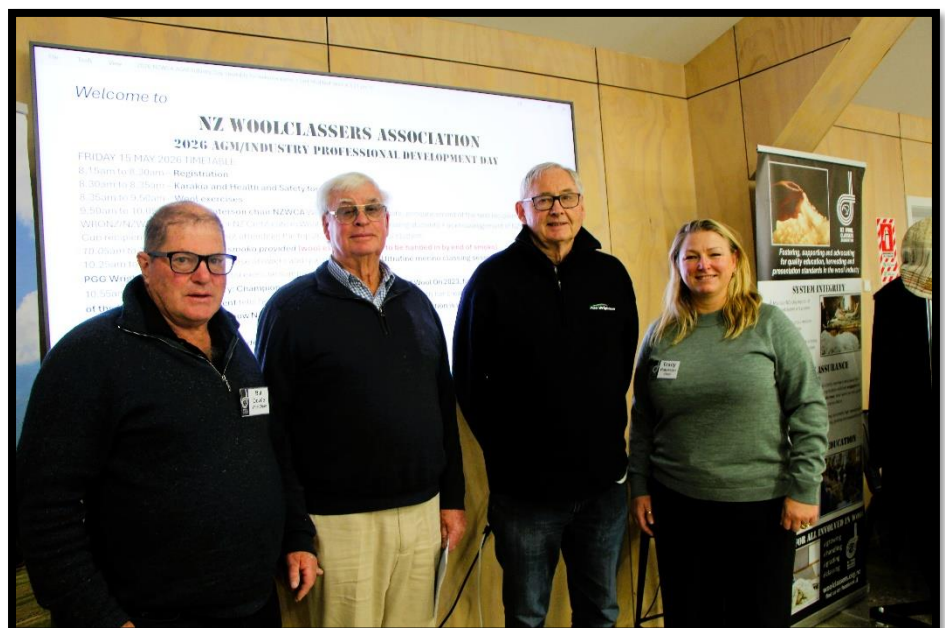
I understand - that unfortunately all the records of NZ Wool Classers Assn prior to the Christchurch earthquake were munted in mud, and that Annette Gamble and her son did rescued some of them, but not all. I have with me, all my minutes of the meetings and correspondence during my 3 years chairmanship of 2010-11-12, being the 3 years prior to the Quake. If anyone has any minutes of the other missing years, I am sure Annette would be pleased to receive copies.

During my research; many memories came flooding back, most good, some bad, many in frustration of what could and should have been achieved. I noted in the minutes of my last meeting; that the reason for my resigning from Chair of N.Z.W.C.A; was my lack of computer skills, since remedied, and my late wife's battle with cancer.

Chair: This may well be my last meeting, but I wish to remain a full sub paying –affiliated member - so I wish this organisation well for its future.

Martin M Paterson. 15-5-2026.

Photo: All past and present NZWCA chairs L to R – Bill Dowle D1076, Martin Paterson FD1772, Graeme Bell A223, Tracy Paterson M2133 at AGM 15.06.26



NURTURING THAT VITAL PRESSER —

CLASSER RELATIONSHIP: TIPS FROM A TOP WOOL PRESSER



Ko Tainui ooku waka

Ko Waikato ooku iwi

Ko Ngaati Hauaa ooku hapuu

Ko Hanatoria ooku marae

Ko Pukemoremore ooku maunga

Ko Tarapipipi Te Waharoa te tangata

Waikato Taniwharau

He piko he Taniwharau

Ko Vorne Wheki ahau



The term ‘Master Presser’ settles legitimately on Vorne Wheki’s shoulders. The highly respected presser has been on the job for almost 40 years; hard working, humble and very skilled in his work, Vorne has twice given his time to NZWCA to be a speaker at our Industry Days, the most recent being in May at our AGM/Industry Day event at held at Peter Lyon Shearing, Alexandra.

Now Gore-based, Vorne grew up on his family’s farm near Hamilton ([see pepeha above](#)), completed a butcher apprenticeship in Auckland and worked at Rosebery Meats in Tokoroa. His first trip south was during the Christmas break 1987, with his cousin who worked for shearing contractor John Lawton.

“When work started I went along for a ride,” Vorne told attendees at our Industry Day in May. “If you know the sheds you know there is no such thing as ‘just going for a ride’.” There he met top presser George Barret and as the old saying goes, the rest is history.

George taught Vorne the basics over a three day period. “But he also showed and told me things to make the job easier. Like, keep your work area tidy; set up a work station near the press; pace yourself; and there is never nothing to do in the sheds. All things I still do today.”

Tips from a Top Wool Presser contd.....

George advised Vorne, if he was talking to John Lawton about a job, to “tell him you’re experienced”. Laughed Vorne: “My introduction was a 3-stand shed, long pens behind the catching pens, big fat stubborn full wool Romney ewes, a centre pole press, a needle and string. I think I lost half my body weight in sweat over those four days but I grew to love my job because here I am, almost 40 years later and still on holiday.” Vorne pressed 11 months of the year for nine years for Lawtons. It was mainly crossbred wool but some of those bigger sheds were classed, along with Lawton’s big mid micron wool sheds. Places with names like Glenaray, Argyle and Glen Lapa.

In 1996 Vorne began working as a boner at the Mataura Meat Works in Southland. “As luck would have it” he said, the off-season coincided with pre-lamb shearing season in Central Otago which was the beginning of an enduring relationship of mutual respect between Vorne and Peter and Elsie Lyon. With the exception of a break from pressing for a few years when the Mataura works shifted to all year processing, Vorne has been returning for Lyon Shearing’s pre-lamb every season “like the prodigal son” and has for many years pressed on the run which includes Earnscleugh and Orlig Stations, close to Alexandra.

“Because of this experience with mid micron wool and working with a classer (in Southland) I feel I was luckier than most pressers working with fine wool for the first time. I was able to get my head around merinos, the many different lines, the many oddments, the 2-3 hour final press-ups etc quite quickly.”



Vorne Wheki speaking at the NZWCA Industry Professional Development Day

At our Industry Day last month, Vorne laid out some tips and thoughts on productive presser-classer relationships, always coming back to the primary goal being to maximise farmer returns. Here is an edited version of Vorne’s presentation, thanks Vorne, you’re truly a taonga!

VORNE WHEKI: “I was invited here today to give my whakaro, my thoughts, on what a classer can do to make a presser’s job easier and vice versa. So here goes:

“There are several that come to mind but I believe communication is very important with clear and precise instructions. With the shortage of experienced fine wool pressers and now more younger inexperienced pressers who have not worked with merino or a classer, much clear communication is very important. Because of the high volume of wool, the number of oddments, wool and mob changes etc an inexperienced presser may be overwhelmed panic and make mistakes.

“Talking to the presser reassuring and letting them know that if they are unsure or if a mistake is made to talk to the classer and let them know asap. Better to find the mistake in the shed and not the store.

Tips from a Top Wool Presser contd.....

“Explain to them what the wool and oddment lines are, what the line numbers and descriptions are, when and if a wool or mob change will be and what’s required, if bales are to be pressed according to sheep numbers and why. I believe a better understanding of what is expected will help avoid frustration and mistakes being made.

“A classer may have worked with a presser before whom they trust or someone new and less experienced. Either way regardless of their experience clear instructions are essential to the smooth running of a shed.

“While most classers may hold the book to avoid mistakes it may hinder an experienced presser from keeping up when they can see bins of wool and oddments filling up and needing pressing but are having to wait. Because of my experience most classers will allow me to press at my own pace, often seeing me working through breaks to keep ahead to avoid a build-up of fleece or oddments. They will also allow me to hold and fill out the bale book for that reason. This shows a degree of trust between a presser and a classer but ultimately allows both to do their respective jobs a lot more efficiently.

“No matter what, checks still have to be made regularly. I press a shed that has a large number of both fleece and oddment lines each with their own line number and description with all needing pressed often. Several wool and mob changes according to their micron group and always in the middle of a run.

“There have been times when I have not been there for a particular shearing. Experienced pressers who were sent there in my absence would often be overwhelmed by the amount of fadges or oddments around plus wool left in the bins and the overall amount of work needed to keep up.

“With the classer Rebecca Braddick-Tohiariki consistently talking to them major mistakes were avoided. I guess what I am saying is that if an experienced presser can feel overwhelmed in a big shed like that a less experienced presser could feel the same at a smaller less busy shed, so therefore it is crucial that good communication is established by both parties.

“It is also very important that we pressers consistently communicate with the classer. Ask about line numbers and descriptions used. For example some classers may call LOX ‘AM PCS’ or 1ST PCS ‘3AM PCS’ but some pressers will know them as simply Lox or 1ST Pcs.

“We should always be aware when bales need to be pressed, avoiding wool from a bin on the floor and possibly contamination ensuing. Ensuring oddment fadges and bins are tramped or changed regularly for the same reason. But if there is an assistant presser or sheepo then they should have that covered.

“We need to be aware of any wool changes and mob changes coming up so we can be better prepared and hopefully keeping any down time to the minimum.

“If a classer allows the presser to fill out the book it is very important that we let the classer know if at any time we are unsure of anything or a mistake has been made, keeping the book tidy.

Tips from a Top Wool Presser contd.....

“Never be afraid to ask questions. If we pressers did these things and more then the classer would not need to worry unnecessarily about our job and be better able to concentrate on classing, ensuring a better return for the client.

“At the shed I mentioned earlier, Rebecca has put labels on both the front and back of bins, with both line numbers and descriptions, which I am able to clearly see avoiding confusion and mistakes. While that may not be always possible, assigning numbers to those bins and informing the presser of line numbers of descriptions assigned to that particular bin will help a lot.



Master presser Vorne Wheki at work at Earnsclough Station

“Another option which I often use is to draw up a plan of the bins with the corresponding line numbers and descriptions, which I keep at my work station. I have worked in many sheds that are built without adequate thought to the pressing area with that particular area being cramped, dark and limited space.

“During shearing we may have to move heavy bales, fadges and full wool bins. If these can’t be reached during the run many pressers will press them up in their own time often missing smoko or lunch. So, what I am asking is that consideration when setting up be given to the presser and whether they are able to carry out their jobs unencumbered through the run.

“Remember we are all members of a team and we are there to do the best we can to ensure the best return to the farmer: Kotahi te kohao o te ngira, e kuhuna ai to miro maa, te miro pango me te miro whero - There is but one eye of a needle through which the white, the black and the red threads must pass

“I have often been asked why I am still pressing. Well, the answer is simple. The answer is right here in this whare, it is all of you. The contractors I have worked for, the pressers I have worked with, the farmers who appreciate the mahi I do and the many shearers and shedhands I have sweated next to.

“Pressing has seen me working with many people of various backgrounds. World champions, international champions, national champions, local champions, local tally holders, legends, masters and NZ representatives. I have worked with university students, shed hands who have gone on to become teachers, doctors and lawyers. People who have gone on to be successful business people and many who went on to start families. I have also worked with many beautiful souls from throughout ‘te ao katoa’, from throughout the world – the only job where I believe this is possible.

“Before closing I would like to pay tribute to those classers I have had the honour and privilege and pleasure to have worked with over the years. Classers that challenged me to think outside the box so to say(including the late) Gina Nathan, Dick McArthur, Joanne Kumeroa, Anaru Te Horo, Stewart Botting, Peggy Giles and Trixie Howes. Moe mai Rangatira maa, moe mai raa.

WORKING WITH WOOL AT THE FASHION END OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Attendees of the recent NZWCA 2026 AGM/Industry Professional Development Day near Alexandra were treated to a high-end wool fashion experience.

Earnsclough local Jane Avery, champion of wool fashion, supreme winner of WoolOn 2023, furrier, <https://lapin.nz/>, designer, and now producer of the big annual WoolOn event in Alexandra shared her personal story and journey to fashion, wool and natural fibres and gave a hands on experience with her creations.



Jane brought along the trio of wool garments that won her the WoolOn supreme award in 2023, and a selection of her favourites from the WoolOn museum, weaving a story around each garment and inviting attendees to try them on, as the pictures show.

The WoolOn event is held every August (in 2026 the date is 29 August), described by Jane in her presentation on our NZWCA Industry Day, and on the non-profit organisation's website as "a celebration of wool, creativity and community."

Here is how WoolOn is described on the organisation's website:

Held in the heart of Central Otago's sheep country, WoolOn is where fashion meets fibre, tradition meets innovation, and creativity takes centre stage. Over one incredible weekend, Alexandra comes alive with dazzling



runway shows, a buzzing trade event, and amazing New Zealand design talent - from rising stars to industry leaders.

In 2026, New Zealand's iconic wool fashion event will celebrate 22 years of bold design, innovation, and celebration. With nine dynamic design categories, special awards, and the coveted Supreme Winner title drawing national attention, designers from across New Zealand will come together to compete, connect, and create fashion history.



In making the connection between fibre, art and glamour, all garments entered must consist at least 75% wool. As a celebration of the incredible resource that is wool, the event recognises traditional creative arts such as knitting, crochet and felting, as well showcasing future focussed design techniques. The myriad of awards recognise the brilliance of experienced creators and emerging design talent both.



WoolOn is a volunteer organisation supported in it's mission with grants, sponsorship and generous donations.

As the only solely wool focussed creative event in New Zealand,

WoolOn takes seriously and joyously the role of serving a community passionate about the beauty, versatility and environmental friendliness of wool.



<https://lapin.nz/>



Emarina Watson A2076 represented NZWCA at YFC event - here is her summary:

**This is a brief reflection of Young Farmers Club Skills Day at
Courtenay A&P Showgrounds, Kirwee on 9th May.**



*Emarina Watson (at right) running the wool station at the
Young Farmers Club Skills Day at Kirwee*

Twelve farm related activity stations where small groups of three to four young teenage to early 20 year old members rotated the circuit every 30 minutes. The introduction to classing was station 10 and next to me was Elite Shearing, which was great.

I gave the young members a brief but comprehensive overview of Wool Classing and a Classers role. I had five stations of wool samples and activities.

The young groups of people had limited to zero knowledge of wool as most were Cropping and Dairy Farming. Despite this we all engaged happily, the interaction was great, a lot of humour which helps people relax. It was very fast paced with a group finishing a session, another group waiting.

My helper was Awhina Te Wehi she is a Senior Wool handler I work with who is keen to learn. After watching and listening to me for three lessons she presented two sections on wool preparation, wool faults/contamination and non-wool faults/contamination. This has given her the encouragement to work towards attaining her Q Grading registration by taking part in that course when it becomes available.

It was a great day.

Nga mihi

Emarina Watson A2076

***Thanks Emarina for your time and sharing your
passion for wool***

TOP SCORERS IN THE WOOL EXERCISES AT NZWCA AGM/INDUSTRY DAY 15.05.26

There were three wool exercises for attendees to test themselves with at our recent Industry Professional Development Day. Oddment identification, Micron and Yield estimate, Merino Hogget Classing. Each of the three exercises had two categories of entrants 1) Student/wool handler/farm staff and 2) Classer or wool trade professional.

Eight of the nine top scorers are pictured here:

Back row, left to right: Julia Waldron A2181 (Merino hogget classing); Robynne Murray A1716 (Micron and Yield); Cassie Johnston D2182 (Oddments); Ashley Clarke, student (Oddments).

Front row, left to right: Kate Campbell M2239 (Merino hogget classing); Scarlett Hopcroft, student (Merino hogget classing); Sarah Graham D2230 (Merino hogget classing); Lloyd Kirtlan, farm staff (Micron and Yield)

Not in photo: Katrise Saunders D2232 (Micron and Yield)



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know you don't have to be a registered wool classer to be a member of NZ Wool Classers Association?

Associate membership is a category that covers farmers, sponsors, shearing contractors, or anyone who wishes to support NZWCA and our roles and objectives. Associate members pay an annual fee and are entitled to attend all activities and events run by NZWCA and may attend our AGMs or special meetings. Associate members receive our newsletters and other communications and as with other members have the choice of opting in or out of being visible as members on our website.

If you are a registered classer or grader we encourage you to have a chat to your farmer clients about joining NZWCA as an associate member. To do so supports the organisation that has undeniably kept classer registration capacity valid, and guarded the integrity of your stencil since the Wool Board was disestablished.

Here is the link to join: <https://woolclassers.org.nz/join/>

2025/26 Season NZWCA CLASSER AWARDS

MERINO MERIT AWARD proudly sponsored by Zentera Wool

WINNER A1212 Peter Philpott for One Tree Hill and Cheddar Valley

Citation: Peter classed the Te Mania Livestock Merino hogget wool comprising of 5500 wether lambs bought from several properties across the South Island. The wool was very well presented for sale with clear distinctions for micron, staple strength and style grade being achieved. The wool sold very well in the C17 October auction last year.

Peter had to cope with classing fine Merino hogget wool on two differing farms and several different bloodlines of Merino hoggets bought from various farms. He did an excellent job of combining wools where possible between the two properties to maximize line size and reduce costs to the owner.



Peter Philpott, winner of the Zentera Wool Merino Classer Merit Award with NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson

COMMENDATIONS

- M1465 Anne-Marie Parcell for Branches
- D2232 Katrise Saunders for Guide Hill
- M2140 Cedric Aramoana for Mt Florence
- A1579 Vanessa McAlister for Waikora and Te Aka
- A1565 Rose Barnett for Buscot and Otematata



Anne Marie Parcell (at right) and Katrise Saunders, recipients of commendation awards in the Merino Classer category, with NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson

Thank you
ZENTERA™

CROSSBRED CLASSER OR GRADER MERIT AWARD

proudly sponsored by WoolWorks

WINNER FA1202 Ken Gillespie for Glen Eden

Citation: Ken has a set standard “if a job is worth doing do it well”. With that approach Ken has never lowered the standard of wool preparation for a crossbred clip “his expectations have always required a top job” even when buyers were not paying for crossbred wool well prepared. Ken has established a very sound and reliable reputation with his clients which is based on the support and confidence from wool exporters bidding on those brands in the sale room or within wool contracts.



Ken Gillespie, winner of the WoolWorks Crossbred Classer Merit Award with NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson

Thank you



PROVISIONAL CLASSER OR GRADER MERIT AWARD

proudly sponsored by Peter Lyon Shearing

WINNER

P2245 Morgan Brewster for Blue Mountain

Citation: Two contracts, 109 bales accepted out of a total clip of 260 bales.

Good distinction between lines, good visual results removing colour.

Skirting levels good.

Good shed management. Specs, good explanation of traditional descriptions

Thank you



OWNER CLASSER MERIT AWARD
proudly sponsored by PGG Wrightson Wools

WINNER

FA887 Juliet Jones for Matarae

**Juliet Jones, winner of the
PGG Wrightson Owner
Classer Merit Award, with
NZWCA chair Tracy
Paterson**



Citation submission written by Andrew

McNeill, wool rep: Juliet has been classing wool her entire working life. While I am not certain of her exact age, she would be in her 70s and is still working full days in the woolshed. She regularly completes nine-hour days on the Table and continues to work through cold winter conditions without complaint.

Juliet classes super fine and ultra-fine wools to an exceptionally high standard. She is also highly skilled at classing into style for VBC, Renewable, Nikke and Reda contracts and consistently ensures the wool meets contract requirements. Because of her knowledge and attention to detail, the wool is reliably put into contract. Her bales are always prepared and marked correctly. The written numbers are done right every time, and her shed standards are excellent. She keeps a close eye on inexperienced or careless hands, maintaining quality without creating conflict.

In addition to her own work, Juliet is currently teaching her daughter-in-law to class wool. She does this patiently and respectfully, passing on her knowledge without being rude or dismissive—something that speaks strongly to her character and professionalism.

Juliet would have to be one of the oldest classers still actively working, and her dedication, skill, and work ethic are truly outstanding. She is an exceptional example of commitment to the wool industry and deserves recognition for a lifetime of service.

COMMENDATIONS

FM2247 Susan Simpson for Two Thumb

FM2106 Julie Thomson for Mangaiti



**Susan Simpson, recipient
of a commendation award
in the Owner Classer
category, with NZWCA
chair Tracy Paterson**

Thank you



MID MICRON MERIT AWARD
proudly sponsored by Wools of New Zealand

WINNER D2232 Katrise Saunders for Ivybridge

Citation: Shed kept clean and tidy throughout shearing. Katrise has 1st class rapport with shed hands and farmer. Lines even and well pronounced. Closed board with limited wool room. Katrise was also nominated for her merino classing this season



Katrise Saunders, winner of the Wools of New Zealand Mid-Micron Classer Merit Award with NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson

COMMENDATIONS

- A2076 Emarina Watson for Gleann Sonas
- M2189 Tania Tisdall for Ribbonwood
- H2182 Cassie Johnston for Stalker and Maungatiro



Cassie Johnston, recipient of a commendation award in the Mid-Micron Classer category, with NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson. At a NZWCA Board meeting following the AGM Cassie was voted vice-chair, replacing Bill Dowle who has stepped down after many years as chair and vice -chair

Thank you



NORTH ISLAND MERIT AWARD
proudly sponsored by Brendan Mahony Shearing

WINNER FM2106 Julie Thompson for Mangaiti

Citation: As this is a North Island merino property, there are significant challenges including the climate.

Rural Shearing provide 3 shearers and 5 woolhandlers. The wool handlers in particular have limited training in Merino so Julie spends a lot of time with on job training to ensure a very high standard is maintained.

Both Merino and Strong Wool sheep are run on this North Island property where wool prep is excellent

Excellent definition between the Merino lines for micron, colour and length and strength.

Electronic specs are very good with good use of traditional descriptions.

Lines accepted for three contracts.

Julie is always looking for feedback.

Thank you

**Brendan Mahony
Shearing**



Julie and Kerry Thompson at home in their wool shed near Whanganui

**MESSAGE FROM JULIE THOMPSON
FM2106 WHO WAS UNABLE TO PICK UP
HER CLASSER AWARDS IN PERSON**

Thank you so much for my two Certificates, and their accompanying prizes, which were delivered here on Friday.

A lovely, and very welcome, surprise.

I came late to classing (43yrs) – to farming, full stop (38yrs) – so the learning curve was steep.

Learned the trade from my father-in-law, Brian, who – quite rightly – insisted we class our strong wool with the same care as our Merino wool. That stood us in very good stead, even when prices were abysmally low, but more especially now, with strong wool making a recovery.

Laurie Boniface was an excellent tutor at TECTRA, NZWCA Classer Days have been hugely instructive and a great way to meet others in the industry, NZM Fibre Select Days - ditto; our long-time (30+years) Shearing Contractor, Mike Johnston (Whanganui), and his shearers and wool handling team have done a great job for us in the shed, and Blair Davies (Zentera) has provided excellent support and advice to Kerry and me.

It takes a community....



LATEST WRONZ SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED AT RECENT NZWCA INDUSTRY DAY IN ALEXANDRA

Congratulations to the following NZ Certificate of Wool Technology and Classing (NZCWTC) students who are the most recent recipients of WRONZ Scholarships:

**Kaylee Hood of Cromwell, Ashley Clarke of
Roxburgh and Lora Werner of Oturehua.**

All these students were in their first semester of NZCWTC study at the time of announcement at the NZWCA 2026 AGM/Industry Professional Development Day near Alexandra in May.

NZ Wool Classers Assn administers the Wool Research Organisation of New Zealand (WRONZ) scholarship which is valued at \$1000 per recipient.

This is paid in four instalments as the recipient passes stages in their course. But it represents more than cash to help with study and living costs for the two-year distance learning course. NZWCA suggests to recipients that they can maximise the scholarship by using it as an opportunity to network and connect with wool industry organisations and people. The presentation letter to the three recipients announced at the NZWCA Industry

Day read: “One way you can do this is by communicating with WRONZ and NZWCA giving progress reports on your study, things



you have enjoyed learning or aspects of the wool industry that particularly interest you. Additionally, you can share information about how you are using the money, and how it is helping you.”

There are typically two intakes each year for the Cert Wool Tech, with the Semester 1 intake being the largest. We announced three recipients at Alexandra and in the November 2026 NZWCA newsletter we will announce up to two remaining recipients, chosen from applicants who commenced in both Semester 1 and Semester 2 2026.

“Wool Porn Central” – the fleece competition at the annual Wanaka Show

The NZ Fine Wool Supreme Fleece competition at the Wanaka A & P Show each March is the only fleece competition in New Zealand which recognises the part wool classers play in selecting and preparing entries for shows.



Congratulations to former NZWCA Board member Ratapu Moore D2188, this year’s winner of the Martin Paterson Classer Award with a Mt Gladstone Station (Jeremy & Hayley Pitts, Marlborough) taking out the Grand Champion Flock Fleece. The 19.5 micron fleece scored a phenomenal 99.5 points, giving Ratapu the position as registered classer of the highest scoring flock fleece.

Ratapu won a year’s NZWCA registration cost, her name on the cup, a champion ribbon and a cash prize.

The overall Supreme Champion Fleece at the 2026 show was won by a 21.7 micron merino ram entry from Malvern Downs (Robbie Gibson) which also scored 99.5.

Marlborough wool growers Jeremy and Hayley Pitts of Mt Gladstone at the Wanaka Show with their Grand Champion Flock Fleece. Their wool classer Ratapu Moore D2188 was this year’s winner of the Martin Paterson Classer Award at the show

NZWCA Board member Terence Mulcahy manning our Wanaka Show stand



Annual Wanaka Show contd.....

Thank you to the show's Wool Committee for giving NZWCA a space in their stewards marquee, allowing us to have a presence at the show, right next to the fleece competition building.

Below is a message from the competition's Wool Convenor, Ian Bagley:

Hi to all the Supreme Fine Wool Fleece Competition exhibitors,

Firstly a huge thanks to you all for supporting our Competition.

It was an outstanding display of Fine Wool, and while entries overall were down slightly, it was great to see so many commercial growers entering in the Flock sections. The quality of the Fleeces entered was on a par with last year, although the Testing showed up tenderness this year, which was a symptom of the season, but the top fleeces again were in the very high 90's.

The Supreme Award went to Malvern Downs Stud with a Ram fleece at 99.5, while the Flock Fleece Supreme award went to Mt Gladstone with the same score.

The Judges, Dave Burridge of Pgg Wrightson & Mark Grenall of WONZ, were certainly very impressed by the wool entered, especially so in the Flock fleeces.

The wool, from the Ultra Fine Merino through to the Polwarth / Corriedale / Halfbreds shows the amazing range that you all so passionately grow for the different end markets, and the high standard of the competition is a credit to all exhibitors.

Thank you to those of you who donated Fleeces to the Show...we certainly appreciate that generosity and it goes some way to defray some of the expenses in running such a competition.

The A & P Office noted that some entries were received without the accompanying \$5 entry fee, which makes their reconciling difficult, so if any grower is aware it may be their position, could you please contact Fe Howie. entries@wanakashow.co.nz

If any Exhibitor has trouble with the online Entry Form, the Office Staff are there to help, and if any of you think we could develop an easier system, then please put forward your suggestions,

The Wool Committee at Wanaka wish you all a great season, good growing conditions, a kind winter and buoyant prices through the next year, and we look forward to seeing you all again next year at the Show.

Cheers, Ian Bagley - Wool Convenor



Shearing contractors Peter and Elsie Lyon shared thoughts on the Contractor - Wool Classer working relationship

As well as generously hosting the recent NZWCA 2026 AGM/Industry Professional Development Day near Alexandra, Peter and Elsie Lyon delivered an insightful presentation into their business, the way they chose to run it, including some emphasis on the importance of a good classer/contractor relationship.

The three slides shown in the photos summarise some of what was covered, with the strong and sensible warning around social media use by all in the shearing industry included.

Elsie rounded out the presentation with a reminder of the value of classers and leading shed hands communicating well. An example she gave was a situation that they had come up against more than once around how a shed was set up - the placement of fadges, bins, tables, press.

Sometimes, she said, classers have thought they were helping by setting up the shed, whereas in most cases this was best left to the leading wool handler and their team who were working the set up.

Peter & Elsie Lyon contd.....



If a classer felt they were able to pass on any previous knowledge on set up, especially if the classer had worked in the shed before but the wool handlers hadn't, there was room for this. However, she believed it was always very important to leave the set-up open for review by the wool handlers after a run or two, given they were the people actually working in the space.

Thank you Peter and Elsie for your massive ongoing support as NZWCA Classer Award category sponsors, as NZWCA associate members and for providing the venue and catering for our 2026 AGM event. Your excellence in running such an enduring business and your willingness to contribute to the industry is really appreciated.





NEW NZWCA BOARD MEMBERS:

Thank you Pip and Janet for getting on board the Board!

Pip McConway A1864

I am a farmer of a sheep and beef farm in the Awatere Valley, Marlborough. I have been a registered wool classer for the past 28 years and involved in the sheep and wool industry most of my life.

I enjoy working with the growers, shearers, shedhands, brokers and understanding the challenges and opportunities facing wool producers today.

I am proud to serve on the board and am committed to supporting our members and promoting the value of wool classing throughout New Zealand.



Janet Smith A1477



My interest in wool started at a relatively young age growing up on a merino/half bred property in the Ida Valley in Central Otago.

I started working as a wool handler as a way to help pay my way through University, and it soon become addictive! I couldn't wait to get home and back into the shearing shed. I enjoyed the hard physical work as well as the fun that we had.

After finishing a degree in Social Work and working as a Residential Social Worker for a few years, I had the opportunity to start farming with my stepfather, but before going home I went to Lincoln and did the Wool Cert Course. Over the next few years I went classing throughout Central Otago over the pre-lamb season. I was determined to get an "A" stencil, which I achieved.

I was introduced to judging of wool handling at the NZ Merino Shears in Alexandra and over the years have enjoyed judging throughout New Zealand and was privileged to be allowed to judge overseas with the New Zealand team. I am now working on my family farm with my husband and grown-up son, as well as working part time as a wool representative for Hayden and Rachael Hickey at W S Hickey and Son in Omakau. I feel incredibly lucky to live and work in an area that grows incredible Crossbred wool through to the finest of Merino wool.

BREAKING NEWS! Willy McSkimming has just been appointed by the NZ Shearing Contractors Association to be Ratapu Moore's replacement for NZSCA on the NZWCA Board.

Thanks Willy, we look forward to working with you.

WISE WORDS FROM OUR PATRON

Allan Frazer's Patron address to NZWCA AGM 2026



Photo: Allan with former chair Martin Paterson at the 2026 AGM

I congratulate all of attending here today. Those of you who are actively classing are contributing significantly to the productivity of our industry and being here today indicates your commitment to keep on learning. You are true professionals. Thank you.

It is my hope that all people involved in classing become members of our association. While membership is voluntary, I firmly believe that the role your organisation plays is to the benefit of all classers. When the opportunity arises, I urge you to try and convince nonmember colleagues to join as members. We are a democratic organisation that fosters and supports quality education, harvesting and presentation standards in the wool industry. If nonmembers are not satisfied with the way we go about promoting their interests we need them to let us know.

It is 21 years since your Association was formed and it has been well served over those years by good leadership and the commitment of a great deal of voluntary time from your elected members. I have been proud to have worked with such a team of dedicated people, and we have all benefited from the commitment of those among you who have been willing to put their names forward for election as members of your board.

The support from individuals and associated organisations involved in the value chain is invaluable both in terms of nominating people to serve on our board as well as providing great input to reviews of our wool classer training programmes, assisting with professional development days such as this, and in providing sponsorship. Also we greatly appreciate being invited to participate and contribute, on your behalf, in wider wool industry considerations.

While working for Meat and Wool NZ back in 2005 I was asked to help set up your Wool Classers Association and at its formation I was invited to become a director and have been ever since. I think I have attended every AGM and Professional Development Day since then. In earlier days I grew up on a farm running Corriedales, I shored a few sheep and did lots of wool handling. Also, I undertook an introduction to wool classing at Lincoln University, admittedly more than 60 years ago, so I have seen a few changes since then. We have also had some very capable people serve as Registrar over that time who have delivered way more than their remuneration suggests as well as our long-term Secretary Annette.

I continue to admire the passion and skills of the people from many diverse backgrounds who work in this industry. Also, as mentioned in my opening words I respect the desire of so many to keep on learning and stay at the top of your profession.

NZWCA Patrons address contd.....

It is an honour to be your Patron I will continue to work to support you and the Association in:

- Keeping abreast of your needs as members.
- In undertaking initiatives to encourage new people to enter the profession
- To ensure that best practice training, professional development and education is available for members
- To maintain good relationships with others in the wool value chain and to seek their input as appropriate
- And above all to ensure relevant quality standards are maintained

Thank you – Allan Frazer 15.05.26

WOOL EDUCATION PROGRESS IN NZ

The three key wool educational products reviewed last year by a wool industry advisory group (including NZWCA Registrar Marg Forde and Board member Sonya Johansen) for the NZ Wool Qualifications Authority last year have now been approved and are now showing on the NZQA site at : [NZQA](#)

1. NZ Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing (Level 5) Ref: [5637] Agriculture Environmental and Related Studies / Agriculture / Wool and Fibre Harvesting

This will replace the current Level 4 course with the same name. The Level 4 last date of entry is Dec 2026, and the last date of assessment is Dec 2027. After that, the Level 4 version will be listed as discontinued on the NZQA site. The Level 5 version is current now for delivery.

The advisory group's intent, as listed by NZQA under "General Conditions" for the programme was to provide content guidance and expectations and suggest the inclusion of an extra practical block course and the use of the new skill standard Wool Preparation in a Wool Harvesting Operation REF: [41134] (see number 3. below) within the Cert Wool Tech block course.

2. Micro credential: Manage Wool Preparation in a Wool Harvesting Operation (Level 4) Ref:[5565]

3. Skill Standard : Manage wool preparation in a wool harvesting operation (Level 4) Ref:[41134] This SS replaces the previous Unit standard (US) 31978 and is available for delivery now.

If delivery of either number 2. or 3. was going to be made, NZWCA would consider making completion of this qualification a prerequisite for application for the NZWCA Grading "Q" prefix registration. Currently there is no Wool Clip Grading qualification course being delivered. Especially with the price of wool rising, NZWCA Board considers it important for there to be an option for experienced wool handlers to do such a course, to gain knowledge and be able to offer to put a "Q" stencil on Crossbred wool bales.

Wool Alliance Highlights the Power of Collective Action

Ross McIsaac from Wool Impact attended the recent NZ Shearing Conference to speak about the role of the Wool Alliance, which is a partnership between Campaign for Wool NZ, Wool Impact, Wool Research Organisation NZ and Beef + Lamb NZ to support the future of the wool sector.

The core message was that there is more value there for wool and collective and individual work is required to realise that. The work of the Wool Alliance is focused on identifying what collective needs to be done, how that work should be delivered, and how the sector can build the support required to make it happen.

It is helping to build the case for a more coordinated wool sector, including the work that needs to be carried out collectively on behalf of growers, industry, and the wider supply chain. There is also an expectation that over time this will lead to a reduction in the number of organisations working in this space, with a clearer and more focused model for the sector.

A strong theme throughout the presentation was the importance of the work done in the woolshed. Wool harvesting, handling, grading, and classing are critical parts of the value chain. Training in these areas remains essential if we are to build and retain the capability needed to maximise the value of New Zealand wool. The training is there and there is a need to increase the availability and accessibility of this.

Ross acknowledged the positive momentum currently being seen across the industry. Strong wool prices are improving after a long period of challenge, and there are encouraging signs of renewed demand and opportunity. New contracts and premiums are being paid, new users and new uses for wool are emerging, and wool is continuing to find its place in markets around the world, and even around the moon.

There are also positive changes happening within the supply chain, along with genuine collaboration between organisations and companies. Government support through policy, funding, and investment is another important part of this progress. In particular, the role of MPI as a funder of commercially focused wool projects, including wool harvesting training, was acknowledged.



Ross McIsaac, Wool Impact and Wool Alliance

Wool Alliance Highlights contd.....

The message from Wool Alliance was one of cautious optimism. Good things are happening across the wool sector, but the momentum needs to continue. To build demand and value for wool, the sector will need to do more, both collectively and individually.

Encouragingly, support from growers and industry is increasing. The next step is to put forward a strong and compelling case for the work that needs to be done, and to secure the backing required to deliver it.

For wool classers and everyone involved in the woolshed, this is a timely reminder that their role remains central to the future of wool. As the sector looks to build value, improve demand, and strengthen its position, the work done in the shed will continue to be a critical foundation.

NOTE: Article submitted by Wool Impact. Ross also spoke at the NZWCA AGM/Industry Day in Alexandra (see photo page 36)

If you've paid your 2026/27 NZWCA membership, thank you. If you haven't, please read this:

Invoices for NZ Wool Classers Association annual membership for the 2026/27 year were emailed out in February. If you have not received yours yet please contact our secretary Annette Gamble secretary@woolclassers.org.nz

Thank you to those who have paid already and if you haven't, here is a reminder of the importance of keeping your registration valid.

"As I have long said, the work done by the NZWCA is critical to the ongoing success of the sector, and I am very proud to be able to represent the group as a member as well." - Ryan Cosgrove P2258, chair of Campaign for Wool NZ and Head of Sourcing and Materials for Mons Royale

Wool quality assurance programmes that are linked to the internationally recognised RWS (Responsible Wool Standard) have high expectations when it comes to documentation integrity and validity, and to traceability. Classers and graders and their valued stencils are part of that assurance chain. It has come to our notice recently that some NZ wool exporters filling contracts, in line with requirements from specific companies, are taking a hard line to ensure stencils used on bales and in bale spec documents are current and valid. There is a search facility on the NZWCA website; only valid registration/stencil numbers and associated names will show up in a search. Be aware this search facility is being used more than ever by buyers and exporters!

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with our secretary Annette, in confidence, if you have any questions or you wish to discuss organising a payment plan - keeping your registration valid is important to you, to the credibility of the NZWCA registration system, and therefore for the acceptance of NZ's wonderful wool as a sustainable, valued product manufacturers want to use and consumers want to buy.



Thank you to the wool companies that supported our recent NZWCA Industry Day by providing members for the brokers panel, and to the wool reps who took part. L to R: Andrew Pope (Wools of New Zealand); Jared Manihera (WoolWorks Grower Direct); Sam Harmer (PGG Wrightson); Blair Davies (Zentera Wool); Hayden Hickey (WS Hickey and Son)



The food supplied by Peter and Elsie Lyon at our recent AGM/Industry Day was delicious. Leading the catering effort was Taiwha Nelson, a leadership force in the kitchen and in the wool sheds, and always with a smile. Thank you to all the Lyon crew who went above and beyond to welcome us.



Hayden Hickey of WS Hickey and Son and Shane Sanders of Little Valley Station giving the wool exercises a go at the NZWCA AGM/Industry Day near Alexandra in May



Registrar's Report Supporting Our Members and Industry

This is my fifth annual report to NZWCA. I am truly grateful for the support and trust in me in the Registrar role from NZWCA members, wool industry members and especially from those in the NZWCA Board waka. Couldn't do it without you, and it's one of the great and unexpected pleasures of my later working life that, despite never aspiring to this role, I find myself alongside so many passionate wool people.



NZWCA Registrar Marg Forde introducing Peter and Elsie Lyon for their speaking slot at the recent NZWCA Industry Day. Marg began her NZ fine wool journey in 1987 when she began working as a pre-lamb wool handler for the Lyons.

Photo: Robynne Murray

Before getting onto the year in summary, I feel it is necessary to make this personal note: The above-mentioned support and trust in me as your Registrar took on another level of meaning the week after our AGM/Industry Day last May as I gained a new role, caring for my grandson 2-3 full days a week when his mum's 6 month maternity leave ended. Very quickly into the older-Gran gig I came to realise that while there is great joy in being such a hands-on part of our first grandchild's life, there had to be a reality check for myself in what I can achieve each day, each week. For NZWCA this has meant my job description as "part-time" has had to be taken more literally in the past year than previously. My report on the past year reflects 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 2025 NZWCA AGM.

Our 2025 AGM/Industry Day at Lincoln University in May

last year was an ambitious undertaking, especially given it involved a virtual take-over of the ground floor of an older building on the campus. This required big doses of flexibility and goodwill from the university, the caterers (you rock Rhonda, Liz and Lynn), NZWCA Board members who helped before during and after, speakers and attendees. Thank you to everyone and especially to the man who made it all possible, Lincoln Uni's Professor Jon Hickford.

The number and range of attendees was gratifying, including Cert Wool Tech students and staff sent by shearing contractors. 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.

For the first time, we paid to have some of the speakers filmed and we uploaded this to our new YouTube channel. Thanks to Board member Allan Fraser for persisting with the idea of filming speakers at our Industry PD Day. This and setting up a You Tube channel for online viewing of content was all new territory for me, and therefore time-consuming. Pleasingly, the most viewed video has been the one of the two Ministry for Primary Industries speakers, who came to inform around animal welfare and legal implications for classers and others in the shearing shed.

NZWCA 2026 AGM/Industry Professional Development Day

This has been set for Friday 15 May, the venue is the impressive cookshop complex at Peter Lyon Shearing in Alexandra. This is in keeping with our belief it is important to move the event around the South Island.

I am very grateful to Peter and Elsie Lyon for their positive response when I approached them for venue and catering support. Not surprised though, they are strong and longtime supporters of NZWCA and the wider wool industry.

Annual NZWCA Classer Awards

I'm really happy with the establishment of the online nomination process via our website, and the increased transparency and documentation of the eligibility and judging process for our annual NZWCA classer awards. The awards couldn't happen without the input of our wool broking community for nominations, and the sponsors who are all back, seemingly without hesitation, again this year. Thank you to both groups for this and for sharing NZWCA's desire to celebrate and highlight excellence in wool preparation and presentation.

Support and sponsorship

It's a fact that NZWCA's ability to function would be limited with just financial membership input. There are a number of companies and organisations that support NZWCA with financial and in-kind contributions and this can never be acknowledged enough. All are listed at the bottom of the home page of our website. In the past 12 months I can say that at least one organisation set sponsorship money aside in their budget before I, on behalf of NZWCA, even got round to asking! I know I seem to say this every year, but the goodwill that I have found exists within our industry is something that I never cease to notice and appreciate and that can only be a good thing for the industry as a whole.

Review of the NZ Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing qualification for NZQA and creation of a new grading qualification

I am really pleased to report the Cert Wool Tech review, which began early in 2025 and was completed and submitted in December 2025 to the NZ Qualifications Authority has been approved. The key people involved ended up well satisfied with changes recommended, including a boost from Level 4 to a Level 5 qual and the return of some subject matter that had been dropped through the years, once the qual left Lincoln and Massey Uni delivery. A bonus was the addition of and attention to what was the Level 4 Wool Clip Grading qualification, which SIT had ceased delivering three years ago. It has been reframed as a qual for leadership wool handlers, with the option of using a pass to allow application to NZWCA for Provisional Grading registration. This could potentially be delivered as a stand alone, or incorporated into a Cert Wool Tech block course, giving an opportunity for economic delivery, whilst still attracting funding.

We received confirmation early in April this year that NZQA had approved the two qualifications submitted.

- **Micro credential: Manage Wool Preparation in a Wool Harvesting Operation (Level 4) Ref:[5565]** which we hope will be usable for delivery for Grading registration.
- **NZ Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing (Level 5) Ref:[5637]** which once implemented will be an academic prerequisite for NZWCA Provisional Classer registration

This review was facilitated by Muka Tangata, the Food and Fibre Workforce Council, on behalf of NZQA. The review was a scheduled 5 year one and required wool industry input. Board member Sonya Johansen and I were part of the review working group which met regularly online. Some of the people

involved from Muka Tangata were the same as those Sonya and I worked alongside to create the new wool handling microcredentials in 2023/24 so it was helpful to have that established relationship with the people setting this review up. For the review, from a bigger group a core working group settled with excellent input including Prof Jon Hickford from Lincoln University, former SIT (now PrimaryITO) tutor Richard Gavigan, Campaign for Wool NZ chair Ryan Cosgrove, recent Cert Wool Tech graduate and Christchurch wool store senior classer Kylie Finn, and for some sessions, 2025 SIT wool tutors Becks Braddick and Emma O'Sullivan and SIT course manager Iain Winslade. In addition Sarah Vallance was a particularly valuable Muka Tangata staffer in the group as she is a former classer, farms with her husband and has worked in agricultural education for many years.

Communication from the above wool qualification review group to the Wool Alliance

Our Cert Wool Tech review group penned a letter to the newly formed Wool Alliance, aiming to reinforce the importance of wool training and education to ensure quality NZ wool preparation and presentation. The letter included this sentence:

“We believe strong advocacy for these qualifications will be required to ensure provider uptake and delivery and suggest the new Wool Alliance is well-positioned to lead in this respect.”

This need to improve wool harvesting training and wool education is something I feel very important for NZWCA to continue to push for.

Store classer registration

Thanks to store classer sub-committee members Don Urquhart, Kevin Waldron, Sonya Johansen, Terence Mulcahy and myself, updating and re-establishing the NZ store classer stencil process has been completed. In 2024 we established the need for this and decided on guidelines. This past year, with an application for store classer registration received, we had to drill down into the logistics and create a store classer store management and classing inspection document (to parallel the shed management and classing inspection for a shed classer). We had to think through a store classer inspection process step by step and I thank the sub committee members for their time and input. It was decided the best way was to make it a two step process, with potentially two different inspectors, one for store classer management and one for actual store classing (which is where the valuers and buyers come into the equation) with inspection of lines prepared for sale in sale boxes and associated test results.

I spent some time at the Christchurch wool store on my drive home from 2025 prelamb, going over the proposed new store classer registration process and particularly the store management and classing inspection framework, which the two potential applicants and their bosses had raised questions about. It was decided that it needed to be added that lines put up for inspection could be group lots if no Bin room was available, and that the existing portion of the application form (which required the applicant and their supervisor to vouch for the lines being inspected being wholly the work of the applicant) would cover off any concerns.

We now have buy-in from valuers and buyers (thank you) and the details and forms are uploaded to our website.

Classer prefix upgrades

Continuing on from pre-lamb 2025 I'm happy to report there are a healthy number of classers, particularly Provisional, engaging with the NZWCA process to upgrade their prefixes. I have had numerous submissions of test results and clip summaries. It's a learning curve for some classers, to

be able to provide me with an adequate clip summary and their test results, and from my end it's an area I have found challenging timewise this year in particular, but we get there in the end. Apologies to those classers who have had to wait.

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.

WRONZ Scholarship

At our AGM/Industry PD Day on May 15 this year 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. The scholarships are decided twice a year as there are typically two Cert Wool Tech intakes each year. 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 until 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.

MPI/PETA

I was a member of the MPI facilitated group People and Culture Workstream, one of the groups formed in response to the PETA animal welfare videos released New Year 2025. I've attended some online meetings, however NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson leads another of the groups and there is quite a bit of crossover. In the interests of prioritising my time I've just kept abreast of things and contributed only when really needed. Tracy has been fully engaged with the NZ Shearing Contractors Assn on responses in their group.

Our Board last year voted to adopt the following related policy, which is now on the NZWCA website:
NZWCA Commitment to Animal Welfare:

Good animal welfare practices are critical for our industry.

In addition to potential prosecution, any breach of the animal welfare regulations and the expectations of our markets and consumers puts our industry and all the people that work within it at-risk. Accordingly, NZWCA maintains a zero tolerance position to any mistreatment of animals by any person.

We all have a responsibility to ensure the welfare of animals and people. The NZWCA encourages members to report any mistreatment of animals and people if it occurs.

National Council of NZ Wool Interests Inc

I support NZWCA maintaining associate membership of this body.

Because of the pre-lamb timing of the organisation's 2025 AGM I wasn't able to attend the online meeting this year however I made contribution prior via its chair Rosstan Mazey, including giving a written update on progress of the NZ Cert Wool Tech review.

I also was part of a small group that the National Council convened to work quickly on reworking the constitution to ensure it complied with the new rules for incorporated societies. I volunteered for this on the basis of my experience working on the NZWCA constitution for the same reason. I believe that experience plus my contribution from the NZWCA/associate member perspective was appreciated.

Wanaka A&P Show

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 the fourth 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.

Young Farmers Club

NZWCA had a North Island presence in the latter part of 2025. I devised three wool exercises as part of the shearing/wool module at the Waikato/Bay of Plenty YFC regional Young Farmer of the Year event early in November, which was co-hosted by myself representing NZWCA and my husband Edsel representing shearing and our business The Lifestyle Block Bloke. There were 29 contestants, so it was a full-on day. I made sure NZWCA logos were visible and the participants, who almost all had extremely limited wool knowledge, went away somewhat upskilled.

Newsletters

Looking back on our newsletters since I took on the Registrar role, I realise the content has almost entirely been from me. I'm keen to remedy that so I'm putting it out there that anyone who has content – in writing or photos – please get in touch with me on it. Our main newsletters go out in June and November.

Nga mihi nui

Acknowledgement and appreciation is always due to our Classers, Graders and Associate Members, for recognising the value of a wool classer registration system and committing financially and otherwise to support this. 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.

As always, I express my deep appreciation to NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson and all the NZWCA Board members for your commitment to the work and function of NZWCA. It's a pleasure to work with you. In particular this year I acknowledge Sonya Johansen and Ratapu Moore who are retiring from the Board.

Sonya and I have worked closely ever since I became Registrar across many areas, including wool education and North and South Island Industry Days. I really appreciate your wisdom and work ethic Sonya, and value the great friendship that has evolved from our NZWCA connection.

Ratapupu has advised that due to family and business commitments she has made the difficult decision to step down from the Board and her role as NZ Shearing Contractors Assn rep on our Board.

Sonya and Ratapupu, your passion for the industry and for classing is obvious. Thank you for your valuable contribution to NZWCA at Board level, and thank you for your commitment to continue to support the work of NZWCA as a member. Don't doubt I will be taking you up on that!

Saved the best for last: My sincere and ongoing gratitude to Annette Gamble. Her efficiency and continuity for NZWCA goes far beyond her title "secretary". Particularly this past year as I have

adjusted to juggling the Gran ball as well as other commitments, Annette's patience and steady steer has been personally invaluable. Thank you.

To close

I wouldn't ever leave NZWCA high and dry, but I wish to flag my retirement sometime in the next few years, once a suitable replacement emerges. Meantime I will continue to try to ensure all processes are well documented so whoever takes over from me has a smooth transition and what NZWCA exists for and stands for remains constant. If you think you have something to offer the Registrar role I am happy to talk you through what it involves. I would suggest a first step would be to become a NZWCA Board member, to give you a full insight into the organisation.

Marg Forde A1260
NZWCA Registrar



Some of the award and prize items at the NZWCA 2026 AGM/Industry Professional Development Day last month



Secretary/Treasurer – New Zealand Wool Classers Association

The New Zealand Wool Classers Association is seeking an organised and reliable person to take on the role of Secretary/Treasurer in 2027.

This is a part-time, flexible position that plays an important role in supporting the Association and its members.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Attend and record Board meetings – via zoom and one face to face a year**
- **Prepare and distribute meeting minutes and financial reports.**
- **Assist Registrar with preparation for Classer Professional Days this includes preparing paperwork, certificates and registrations.**
- **Maintain the Classer registration and membership database.**
- **Process invoices, payments, banking, and GST return through Xero.**
- **File GST returns with IRD.**
- **Respond to member enquiries.**
- **Maintain and update the Association website.**
- **Design electronic newsletters for distribution**

Skills and Experience:

- **Good organisational and administration skills.**
- **Accurate record-keeping and attention to detail.**
- **Basic financial and bookkeeping experience.**

This role would suit someone with strong administrative skills who enjoys working with people and contributing to the future of the wool industry.

For further information or to express your interest, please email

secretary@woolclassers.org.nz

