



## *Trade Mark of Excellence*

### **Goulburn-Yass Regional Report 2009-2010**

#### **Regional Involvement *in a Box***

- Henty Machinery Field Days- Fashion Parade (Henty, 23-24<sup>th</sup> September)
- Goulburn-Yass Wool Feature (Yass, 25<sup>th</sup> October)
- Briefing to DAFF staff responsible for wool industry policy (Canberra, 16<sup>th</sup> November)
- AWI Annual General Meeting (Sydney, 27<sup>th</sup> November)
- A Fine Yarn exhibition (National Museum of Australia, July to November)
- Mongolian parliamentary delegation (*Talaheni*, 3<sup>rd</sup> December)
- Great Southern Supreme Merino Show & Sale (Canberra, 23-25<sup>th</sup> January)
- Meeting with Minister for Primary Industries Steven Whan (Queanbeyan, 27<sup>th</sup> January)
- Wool Producers- Kondinin Group *The story of Wool in Australia* book launch (Old Parliament House, 23<sup>rd</sup> March)
- Indian MP Mr. Manicka Tagore visit (*Wayo Station*, 24<sup>th</sup> March)
- Meeting with Minister Simon Corbell (Canberra, 1<sup>st</sup> April,)
- Royal Easter Show (Sydney, 8-9<sup>th</sup> April)
- AWI Strategic Plan grower workshop (Sydney, 19<sup>th</sup> May)
- North Tuppall Re-enactment (Finley, 5<sup>th</sup> June)

The Goulburn-Yass region has enjoyed a reasonable although patchy season over the past twelve months with a return to near normal rainfall patterns. Although the long below average period and reduced fertilizer use has taken a toll on pastures with reduced and inferior pasture production. Wool clips are expected to be slightly heavier and broader with less dust but more vegetable fault.

In November last year the five-month exhibition at National Museum of Australia featuring Australia wool and its history under the catch cry *A Fine Yarn* which commemorated the United Nations International Year for Natural Fibres (UN-IYNF) ended with the NMA Client Services Manager assessment saying, "*Visitors to the A Fine Yarn Exhibition found the exhibition to be very interesting*". The Chairman was presented with a personalised framed version of the Australia Post pre-stamped envelope akin to those presented by Min Tony Burke to the United Nations representatives earlier in the year which was created to also commemorate UN-IYNF.

Members continue to do well in the judging ring. Michael Corkhill (Grassy Creek) gained the reserve grand champion fleece at Sydney Royal Easter Show and along with Robert Peden (Bullamalita) was awarded ribbons at both the Royal Easter (Sydney), Great Southern Supreme Merino (Canberra) and Australian Sheep and Wool Shows (Bendigo). The region provided an

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active presence at these events as well as at the Henty Machinery Field Days with involvement in the fashion parade which had a special natural fibres section commemorating UN-IYNF. At all venues copies of the ASWGA Annual were made available to prospective members. These venues provided an opportunity to catch up with current and past members.

Notable amongst resignations during the year was Gary & Kay Wilson who have sold up their Highlander operation after a long successful period of producing award-winning world's finest bale over a number of years as recognized by Loro Piana World Challenge Cup. The Region welcomes the new owners of the Highlander operation, Matthew and Susan Triplett who have been accepted as ASWGA members, along with Broni Jekyll who is well known to show circuit participants having served as steward at Canberra shows and Royal Easter over many years.

The Region hosted a visit by a Mongolian parliamentary delegation following an earlier visit, backgrounding the Australian wool industry- the current objective for the Mongolian industry is to achieve a ten-fold increase in the price received by wool producers- while this might sound extraordinarily ambitious the current price averages about 20 cents per kilo to the grower. The Region was also asked to host a visit by a visiting Indian member of parliament (Mr. Manicka Tagore), although short notice and other obligations prevented an in-person meeting, copies of the *ASWGA Annual* were provided and a visit to NSW Farmers wool representative Alix Turner, Wayo Station was organized.

The Region hosted a half-day seminar with guest speakers focusing upon issues vital to today's wool growers. Ms Brenda McGahan covered AWI wool marketing strategy and the proposal for grower's levies as a precursor to growers voting in WoolPoll. The proposal included a revamped 70:30 split between marketing and research and development, the later component being split 50:50 between on and off farm activities.

National delegates, Helen Cathles and John Ive represented the region at the launch of *The story of Wool in Australia*, a joint publication by Australian Wool Producers and Kondinin Group. The book was launched by Region's Senator Ursula Stephens representing the Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forests. The book is intended for distribution through secondary education; however it is a worthy publication for promoting the virtues of wool to a much wider and older audience. The delegates also represented the region at AWI growers' consultative workshop where the latest strategic plan was promoted.

The historic re-enactment of shearing at North Tuppal attracted a number of members who journeyed to Finley along with up to 20 000 other visitors to witness the shearing by a team which changed throughout the day between machine and blade shearing in the 72 stand shed. Visitor numbers far exceeded the organiser's wildest dreams but a fine and sunny day, meeting up with long forgotten colleagues and a common interest made time in the waiting queues an enjoyable experience. Copies of the *ASWGA Annual* were quickly picked up from the AWI Woolmark stand and an exit survey of people taking the Annual showed a high incidence of teachers and previous members- unfortunately potentially new members were rare.

During the year meetings with government ministers at Federal, State and Territory levels provide opportunity to cover issues relating to the Region; copies of the *ASWGA Annual* were provided on all occasions. One such issue relating to NSW has borne a good outcome as a result of discussions with Minister Whan. Recent regulations required undertaking a training course costing several hundred dollars to allow the continued use of 1080 for fox baiting which resulted in a marked drop of in regional baiting programs, particularly by non-sheep producers in the landscape with resulting increase in fox attracts even on properties still baiting because of low coverage across

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the region. As a result an alternative registration scheme has been put in place which can be completed in three hours and gives five years coverage for a cost of only \$22. Other issues covered included lice reporting, dog attacks- domestic and feral, noxious weeds, shedding breeds and transport and coordination of production and natural resource management activities.

There are three things that are certain in life: death, taxes and change. You cannot avoid change, it's mandatory, progress however is optional.

Bill R Good Jr.



**Photo 1:** Crowd of nearly 20,000 people attended the North Tuppal "Shearing of the Rams" Re-enactment



**Photo 2:** One of the shearers at the "Shearing of the Rams" re-enactment at North Tuppal



**Photo 3:** Members do well at the Judging ring



**Photo 4:** John Ive with Minister Whan

## **Helen Cathles, President, Australian Superfine Wool Growers Association – Barry Walker OAM, Goulburn Yass Region**

Australia in 2010 has for the first time a female Governor-General, a female Prime Minister and, to join the ranks, a first female President of the Australian Superfine Wool Growers Association, Helen Cathles. Helen's appointment brings a time of change, opportunity and a different point of view. She is a dedicated and persistent voice of advocacy on rural matters, experienced in communication, sincere, thoughtful, forceful and receptive to the needs and rights of others as well as those whom she represents. She is also a good team player.

Helen brings to the role of President wide experience in the wool industry matters including being a grazier in a family partnership with her husband Ian, running superfine merinos and angora (mohair) goats on 9,000 acres at Wee Jasper in New South Wales.

Helen has been a member of the ASWGA Executive since 2001. She was a member of the Wool Poll panel in 2003, 2006 and 2009, and was part of the Project Advisory panel and Shearer & Wool Handling Training Project with Australian Wool Innovation. Helen has had numerous roles in the wool industry including as a member of The Woolmark Company's Women in Wool Consultative group and continues today as part of the Industry Advisory Group with AWI. She is also the current Chair of the Invasive Animal Co-Operative Research Centre.

In serving the agricultural sector, Helen has liaised with Australian State and Federal Governments and people at all levels, from graziers to politicians, successfully lobbying for support on various issues affecting land holders. Helen also has a history of representation and membership in the New South Wales Rural Land Protection Board State Council and the New South Wales Animal Council.

Helen is a strong advocate for all sectors of the wool industry to operate as a united global business and to solve the shared problems of lack of financial returns for our quality wool product at each stage of the pipeline.

Helen brings a wealth of attributes and experience to the role of President of ASWGA and we wish her well in her tenancy as President.



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*Photo attached-left to right; Ms Chen Lifan, Sunshine Group; Wei Xiao-ya, AWI; Helen Cathles, ASWGA; Jimmy Jackson, AWI; and Madam Ding Cai Ling, Shandong Ruyi Group at the AWI & Austrade Shanghai Wool Expo Day in July, putting wool back in the frontline of the textile industry in China.*

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