



National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

YOUNG WOOL PROFESSIONAL'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2026

FINAL REPORT TO NCWSBA, ACWEP & WPA

The YWPDP was held between 20-23 April 2026 in Adelaide, Melbourne and Geelong. This is an overview and final report of the program.

Objective of this Program

The objective of the program is to encourage, inspire and retain young members in the Australian wool industry. It provides an educational opportunity to learn and see what happens with wool once it leaves the farm gate. It is an inspirational journey promoting excellence in Australian wool across the wool supply chain. It will endeavour to raise the profile and increase their understanding of the important role each participant plays in the wool industry

Aim of the Program:

The program was based on the NCWSBA Young Wool Broker Development Program and included young professionals, age up to 35 years, who were nominated by members of NCWSBA, ACWEP and WPA grower members. The aim of this program will be to choose one delegate from each organisation (NCWSBA, ACWEP and WPA) who will represent Australia as part of the IWTO Young Professionals program at the annual IWTO Congress.

Attendees included:

Tom Simmons AWN

Charles Kidman Nutrien Ag Solutions

Jack Finch Schute Bell

Nicole Carsburg Elders WA

Claudia Roberts Wool Grower – Harrow Vic supported by WPA

Sebastian Eales Tianyu - Exporter / Wool Processor supported by ACWEP

Samantha Harmer from PGGWrightson, NZ

Also in attendance this year – Robert Herrmann (All cities) & Scott Williams (Adelaide)

Program for 2026 – is attached

Highlights of the program

The Young Wool Professionals were nominated by their employer. The program was coordinated by Bianca Heaney.

Highlights included the opportunities to:

- * listen and speak with wool industry representatives across the wool supply chain
- * visit wool processing facilities in Australia
- * visit the “ARC Future Fibres Hub” in Geelong
- * see how wool is tested and sold
- * learn about the International Wool Textiles Organisation (IWTO) and the Australian Member of IWTO - Wool Industries Australia (WIA)
- * and meet other young wool professionals in the various sectors of the Australian wool industry.



National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

Support from industry

The program was supported by Members of NCWSBA, ACWEP and WPA who are expected to pay travel, accommodation and out of pocket expenses for their employee to attend.

Once completed each participant will be expected to provide a report to their employer and coordinator of this program.

The program was also supported by our wool industry bodies including:

WIA – Chairman David Michell

AWTA - Tim Steere

WoolProducers Australia – CEO Jo Hall

AWEX – CEO Charlie McElhone & Andrew Partridge

AWI – CEO Bryan Fry & Industry Relations Officer, Holly Byrne

ACWEP – President Josh Lamb, ED Scott Williams

NCWSBA – ED Robert Herrmann

This support was greatly appreciated as all took time out of their busy schedules to speak to our young wool professionals, explained their role in the industry and shared their knowledge.

Feedback from the attendees & presenters

Silverfleece - Adelaide

Great tour and great to see people from outside the industry investing and growing a business. They had some good point on the role of AWI and what government can do to sur their support domestic manufacturing.

Tom Simmons AWN

I think visiting silver fleece was very insightful and it was great to hear about the pros and cons of spinning wool into yarn and the new things they're doing to keep themselves a part of the wool industry, as well as see exactly how some of their garments are made. Nicole Carsburg Elders WA

Email to Dean & Melanie Flintoff at Silverfleece – 24 April and their response

Hi Dean and Melanie,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to show us your wonderful facility. Our young professionals absolutely loved seeing what you are doing and listening to your future plans. Most of them had not experienced seeing wool being made into amazing wool garments, they were very excited.

Melanie, I am pleased that you were able to join our group at Michell. Wool certainly goes through many processes before it ends up into a beautiful wool garment or other interior textiles.

We also talked about the Australian Wool Traceability Hub - here is a link to their website
<https://awth.com.au/>



National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

Also you maybe interested in the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme -
<https://www.australianwoolsustainability.com.au/>

Melanie - Women in Wool - check out our website here - <https://www.womeninwool.com.au/>

If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to reach out.

Many thanks again.

Best regards,
Bianca Heaney

Response from Melanie Flintoff 24 April 2026

Hi Bianca,

Thank you so much for your kind note, and for bringing such a great group through Silver Fleece. It was a real pleasure to host you all.

I can only imagine how full the day was with three visits, but it's wonderful to hear the group enjoyed seeing the journey from wool to finished garments. That connection is so important.

I also really appreciated the opportunity to join at Michell and continue the conversation there. Thank you for sharing the additional links, I'll take a closer look, particularly Women in Wool.

Please pass on our thanks to the group, and don't hesitate to reach out if we can support anything further.

Warm regards,
Melanie
Melanie Flintoff

CEO Creative Director





National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

Michell scouring & carbonising / wool store

*The talk from David Michell was particularly good and the R&D that has gone into eq wool was super interesting.
Tom Simmons AWN*

Michell was VERY exciting and I couldn't be happier that it was part of the trip, the innovation they have going on with EQWools and the cotton industry as well as getting to see the scouring process was very cool. Nicole Carsburg Elders WA

Email to David, Michelle & Emma at Michell – 24 April and their response

Hi David, Michelle and Emma,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to talk to our young wool professionals and show us your wonderful facility.

They absolutely loved seeing what you are doing and listening to your future plans. Most of them had not experienced seeing wool being processed through a scour, nor through a carbonising facility, they were very excited and no doubt will share this experience with their clients, family and friends. They are still talking about Fibre Trace! And how fascinating it was to see.

Emma, they also enjoyed your talk on how to engage with their clients and in particular noticing the signals / symptoms of mental health and quietly talking about it. This was very important.

Thanks again .If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to reach out.

Many thanks again.

Best regards,
Bianca Heaney

Response from Michelle Dalzell 24 April 2026

Hi Bianca,

Thank you for your kind note — we really appreciate you bringing the group through and for the opportunity to spend time with such an engaged cohort of young professionals.

It's great to hear how much they enjoyed seeing the processing firsthand. Having that visibility from raw fibre through scouring and carbonising is something we're always proud to share, and I'm glad it resonated. The interest in Fibretrace was also fantastic to see — it's an exciting space for the industry and encouraging that it sparked so much discussion.

Emma will be especially pleased to hear your feedback on her session. Supporting people to better engage with their clients, including recognising and responding to wellbeing signals, is something we see as very important.

Thank you again for coordinating the visit and for your thoughtful feedback. We'd be very happy to host future groups or support your program in any way we can. Warm regards, Michelle.



National Council of Wool Selling Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA



Adelaide Old Sale Rooms at Quality Wool

AWTA Raw Wool Testing

*I really enjoyed the visit to AWTA and felt this was seminal for a young grower to see. Thinking about length and strength tests as well as other testing in conjunction with farm practices that are best for sheep is very insightful.
Claudia Roberts Wool Grower Harrow, Vic.*

*First time here. Awesome – Great to see how a small sample goes through so many vigorous steps to gain a test result.
Charlie Kidman - Nutrien*





National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

Wool Selling Centre Tottenham Vic – Presentations from industry peak bodies

The presentation and talk from Bryan Fry was of particular interest to gain his insights into the industry. The other presenter that was of real value was Josh Lamb. Being able to have the extended Q&A and get his honest opinion of many topics was of real value. Tom Simmons AWN

This was particularly fantastic for me from a career perspective. I think the zooming out and looking at the factors that impact farming and selling really struck a chord.

Brian – was great but didn't leave much space for questions, he sort of ripped through the presentation

Holly – loved her passion and appreciated her vulnerability a lot.

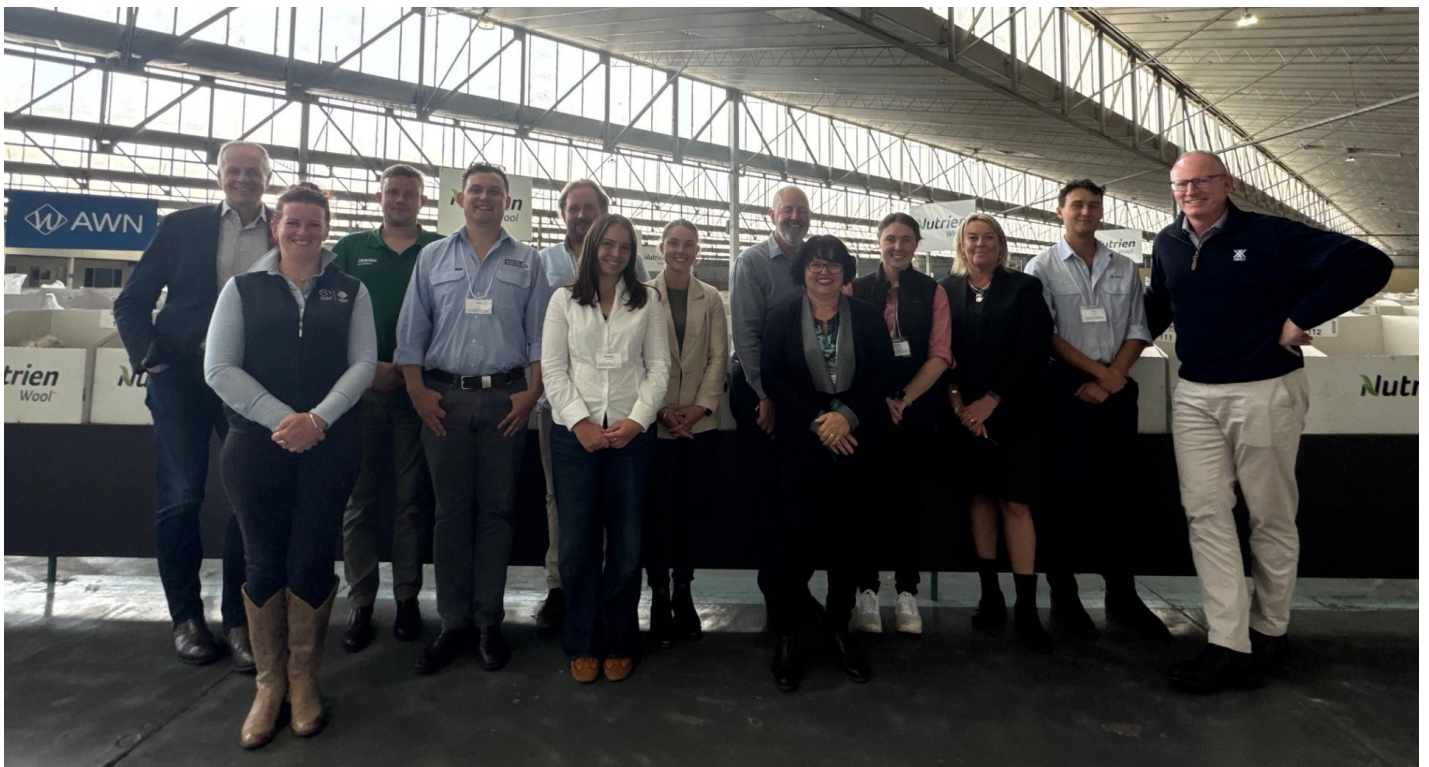
Jo – very insightful and interesting but didn't adhere to time very well!

AWEX – Thought they did a great job, very balanced.

Josh – he was incredibly knowledgeable and spoke very well.

Overall – felt very lucky to be able to meet and listen to people with high positions in the wool industry. It means a lot that they are willing to give their time, and I feel this is also important for a young grower to see. Coupled with Robert's wisdom that you never know who will be willing to help you, this was really a highlight of the trip for me.

Claudia Roberts – Wool Grower Harrow Vic



Overall highlights for me was definitely Michells and the selling centre with all the speakers. Mainly Holly Byrne, AWEX and Josh lamb. Jo Hall was still really good, but she just needed to condense her presentation, but she had some really good points. Nicole Carsburg, Elders WA



National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

LoomTex Geelong

Fascinating business, really encouraging to see a business that has had a large investment made into it. And a strong future. Tom Simmons AWN

Loomtex was great to see how fabrics were made and the different pros and cons with the wool and the new innovative ways the Samantha and the team are using wool and the products they have in the pipeline. Nicole Carsburg, Elders WA

LoomTex was a great part of the trip as we got to see a process of the wool/cotton that we don't ever really see. Very interesting and great part of the program. Charlie Kidman, Nutrien

Fascinating business, really encouraging to see a business that has had a large investment made into it. And a strong future. Tom Simmons AWN





National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

ARC Future Fibres Hub

ARC Hub was also a great part of the trip and very knowledgeable the speaker was. Crazy to know wool is only 1% of all fibres made up and this was highlighted in this part of the program Charlie Kidman, Nutrien.

The Future Fibres Hub was great to see, it was sad that there wasn't a big focus on wool and there was less of a focus on natural fibres and what they can do with them and more focus on nylon and bio plastics. But it was still great to see some of the products coming up and that there is still a focus on bringing new products to the commercial market and another part of the industry to work on.

Nicole Carsburg Elders WA

I would strongly encourage anyone who is a part of the wool industry to tour here. Tom Simmons AWN

Dylan Hegg showing an image of 1 wool fibre under a microscope & a showcase of various fibres.



AFTER LUNCH ROBERT HERRMANN AND I DID A FINAL WRAP UP OF THE PROGRAM, DISCUSSION WITH YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ON WHAT THEY LEARNT OVER THE PAST WEEK AND WHERE TO FROM HERE!

FROM ALL ACCOUNTS THE EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE GAINED AND VISITS TO VARIOUS FACILITIES WAS EXCELLENT.



National Council of
Wool Selling
Brokers of Australia



Australian Council of Wool
Exporters & Processors

WOOLPRODUCERS
AUSTRALIA

General Feedback

Claudia Roberts – Wool grower Harrow Victoria

Hello Bianca!

I just wanted to flick you a quick message to say thank you so much for the YWPD program and including me in it. Whilst my career is in the early stages and I understand that the term 'wool producer' is a looser label for me among many, I have to express that I was so invigorated by the tour. I valued seeing each and every site we went to, and learning from ambitious people all through the supply chain was inspiring.

However, I was equally inspired by spending time with you and Robert! I am so impressed and buoyed by your dedication to nurturing young people involved with wool, and I feel pretty confident saying that the advice you gave me was the most genuine and useful I have ever had - and trust me, I am in the midst of hearing a lot of career advice!

Thank you so much for everything and I hope we meet again soon.

Kind Regards,

Claudia

Charles Kidman - Nutrien

Hi Bianca & Rob

Just wanted to say what a wonderful week I had last week... I learnt so much about wool I didn't know... the experience and connections I have made with the group will be everlasting..

Thank you to you & Rob for driving this Younger Generation of Wool Growers/Exporters/Buyers into believing and innovating ways to keep the industry in a strong position! It certainly has inspired me into looking at the different avenues in the wool industry and where I can best help and myself personally but also others around me.

Thankyou again Bianca & Rob

Sam Harmer - PGGWRIGHTSON NZ

Afternoon Bianca and Robert,

I just wanted to formally thank you both for the opportunity to join the Young Wool Professionals Development Programme this week.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone in the group, as well as all of the speakers and hosts. I truly believe there are lifelong connections to be made among us, and hearing shared challenges and approaches to problem-solving was incredibly inspiring. Thank you both for facilitating such in-depth discussions and thought-provoking conversations that encouraged reflection, growth, and development within both ourselves and our careers. I think we all came away having learned something new about who we are and how we can continue to improve.

I'll leave the remainder of my feedback for your form, but I just wanted to say thank you for taking a chance on the Kiwi girl — it is greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,

Sam Harmer

Wool Representative - Mid/South Canterbury
PGG Wrightson Wool

YOUNG WOOL PROFESSIONAL'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2026 ITINERARY

DATE: 20-23 April 2026

LOCATION: ADELAIDE, MELBOURNE & GEELONG

DATE / LOCATION	TIME (Approx)	ACTIVITY	PRESENTER	CONFIRMED	
20 April 2026	Monday Arrive 6pm	Fly into Adelaide late afternoon / evening Hotel Holiday Inn Express, Blyth St Adelaide Cost \$190/night TBC			
Day 1 – 21 April 2026 Depart Hotel at 8.30 am to Silverfleece Adelaide Depart to airport 5pm latest	9am	SilverFleece 62-68 Drayton St Bowden (Adelaide) SA	Dean Flintoft 0419 800 515	Confirmed	
	11am -11.30am	Michell Head Office, Factory and Wool Store: Adelaide, SA 1506 Main North Road, Salisbury Monday to Friday, 8am – 3.30pm 1300 470 655 Michelle Dalzell 0438 823 161	Michelle Dalzell 0438 823 161 David Michell 0417 800 639	Confirmed	
	Mid / late afternoon?	Quality Wool visit Visit site & Overview of services	Mark Dyson Gen Dyson	Confirmed	
	6.30pm leave Adelaide Arrive 8.20pm	Fly to Melbourne Hotel – Nesuto Docklands Cost: \$160/night			
Day 2 – 22 April 2026 Melbourne AWTA, Melbourne	Arrive 8.30amD Depart 10.30am	AWTA Raw Wool Testing tour 24 Robertson St, Kensington Tour of wool testing facility	Tim Steere	Confirmed	
	11am 11.15am 11.45-12.00 12.00 – 12.30 12.30-1.30pm 1.30pm- 2.30pm 2.30pm-3.30pm 3.30pm-4.30pm	Wool Selling Centre See auctions IWTO Young Professionals – talk LUNCH WoolProducers Australia Update from AWI Talk with AWEX Exporters / Showfloor ACWEP	Tamara Pabst Adam Dawes /Jo Hall Bryan Fry & Holly Byrne Andrew Partidge & Charlie McElhone Josh Lamb	Speakers Confirmed Confirmed Confirmed Confirmed Confirmed	
	Leave 5pm Arrive 6pm Dinner 6.30pm	Travel to Geelong – stay overnight Holiday Inn Geelong, Ryrie St Geelong Group dinner at Holiday Inn	 Brokers – Robert Herrmann	Confirmed	

Day 3 23 April 2026 Geelong					
LoomTex, Geelong	Depart hotel 8.30am Arrive 9am	LoomTex Weaving / Dying etc Boundary Rd, Breakwater VIC 3219 LoomTex is an Australian textile mill + dye house, the fusion of Geelong Dyeing, Geelong Weaving Mill & Geelong Textiles	Samantha van Zyl	Confirmed	
Deakin Uni, Geelong	Depart 10.30am 11am – 1pm	ARC Future Fibres Hub – 2 hour tour of the Hub The ARC Research Hub for Future Fibres utilises the capabilities of Deakin’s Institute for Frontier Materials by connecting with Industry Partners to solve real world problems. It harnesses the unique capabilities of the largest and most advanced fibre research group in the Southern Hemisphere, for research across the whole fibre value chain. Their focus is on sustainability, circular economics and extraordinary functionality. Meeting room available until 3pm for additional discussions.	Matt Boyd	Confirmed	
	1.30pm	Lunch at Deakin Uni			
	2pm – 4.00pm	Discussion on program so far and feedback from attendees.			
		Travel back to Melbourne / home 1 hour approx			
		Drop off any interstate travellers at airport Fly out Tullamarine, Melbourne			