



## **An Industry Interwoven at the IWTO Congress**

### **93rd IWTO Congress Opens in Adelaide, Australia, with Launch of New Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme**

Adelaide, Australia – April 16, 2024 – The 93rd Congress of the International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) opened today in Adelaide, South Australia, with Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, delivering the welcome address.

Over 350 delegates from 23 countries are attending the congress, including 24 young professionals participating in the IWTO's Young Professionals Programme. Following the welcome address, attendees heard opening remarks from IWTO President Klaus Steger, Wool Industries Australia (WIA) President David Michell, and Australian Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt (via video message).

The 93<sup>rd</sup> IWTO Congress is hosted by Wool Industries Australia.

### **Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme Launched**

A major highlight of this first day of the Congress was the announcement of a new integrity and sustainability program, the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS), launched by AWEX.

Katyana Armen, AWEX, described the AWSS as a new chapter for wool sustainability certification in Australia. “Credibly caring for the environment must include regenerative practices,” she stated. “If it is truly sustainable, it must mean that it is regenerative.”

The AWSS is a revitalized scheme designed to set a new benchmark for sustainable wool production assurance. This industry-developed program will strengthen Australia's position as a global leader in sustainably and responsibly grown wool.

AWEX CEO Mark Grave emphasized that the AWSS is a fit-for-purpose system that independently verifies sustainability practices across the entire wool supply chain, from farm to fibre, to meet market expectations.

The scheme builds upon existing programs and leverages industry best practices, offering a single accreditation that simplifies meeting market requirements. It aligns with key industry sustainability frameworks and incorporates innovative on-farm practices informed by research and backed by government regulations.

The AWSS replaces the former SustainaWOOL program and offers two accreditation options:

- ResponsiWOOL: Wool produced according to animal health and wellbeing practices for controlling flystrike, including breech modification with appropriate pain relief.
- SustainaWOOL: Wool produced according to animal health and wellbeing practices for controlling flystrike that does not include mulesing.

“The Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme will showcase the responsible stewardship of our natural resources, the health and wellbeing of our sheep, the care we provide for people and communities, and the vitality and resilience of our industry,” said Mr. Grave. “This program critically addresses the needs of brands, providing credible verification of wool inputs, ensuring sustainability and quality, and offering a trusted traceability foundation.”

The new program, with its updated standards and processes, will be implemented on July 1, 2024.

The Congress continues through Thursday, 18 April.

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The [International Wool Textile Organisation](#) is the global authority for standards in the wool textile industry. Since 1930, IWTO has represented the collected interests of the global wool trade.

Each year, the IWTO brings the global wool textile industry together at the Congress. This event highlights the work of local wool industries and opens the stage for knowledge sharing and networking.

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