



Australian
Wool
Sustainability
Scheme



2025 in Review

From the Sustainability & Integrity Manager Certification – Supporting Australia's Wool Story

The 30th UN Climate Conference (COP30) recently took place in Brazil, with global discussions once again turning to sustainable agriculture and land management.

Alongside increasing regulation coming out of jurisdictions like the EU, these conversations are shaping expectations across global agricultural supply chains – including the markets our wool is sold into.

Many of the priorities discussed at COP30, such as methane emissions from ruminant livestock, soil health, land restoration and deforestation, are not new to Australian producers. But what is often missing from these global conversations is the recognition that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to sustainability. Many assumptions are built around global production systems that look very different to Australian wool growing.

In many cases, Australian producers are already meeting, or exceeding, the principles being discussed on the global stage.

Agricultural emissions in Australia have remained relatively stable since 2004–05, while our land sector has shifted from being a net source of emissions to a net sink, driven by reduced land clearing and increased forest cover. More than 80% of Australian producers already use soil health and land restoration practices such as no-till farming. These are not responses to global pledges – they are simply how Australian farmers operate.

The risk for our industry is not the increasing global sustainability commitments and requirements; it's not providing our customers with confidence in our high standards of production.

Wool-producing countries are using certification to position themselves as sustainability leaders and access markets demanding certified fibre. Many higher value markets are demanding sustainability credentials above and beyond the world leading quality and technical specs of Australian wool.

This is where being able to verify our production practices matters. Not just for compliance, but as a tool to accurately and credibly tell our story.

By being Certified with AWSS you are already leading the way to demonstrate the high standards of animal welfare, environmental stewardship, and integrity that underpins Australian wool, and positioning your wool for markets that are increasingly demanding certification.

The impact of this story grows when more of our industry get involved. Australian wool has always been well-respected for its consistency and quality, but we also need to tell the story of our high standards of production.

Many Australian wool growers are already meeting the requirements of AWSS certification, and I encourage you to have a chat about certification with these growers so that together we can strengthen the voice of Australian wool and protect our industry's position in global markets.

Brydie Creagh

Brydie Creagh
Sustainability & Integrity Manager



The Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme is proudly ISO 9001 certified.

Global backing
builds for AWSS.



Global Confidence in AWSS Continues to Grow

Support for the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS) continues to grow across the supply chain, with key domestic and international industry partners endorsing the AWSS certification framework for Australian wool as a credible, practical and comprehensive solution to meet changing customer, brand and supply chain needs.

This comes on the back of the united message from industry leaders across global markets: certified Australian wool is increasingly essential to meeting customer expectations and rising global standards for sustainability, transparency and traceability.

Wool Industries Australia (WIA) formally endorsed AWSS as the preferred certification framework for Australian greasy wool, with WIA President, David Michell, recognising that *"Certification is no longer a niche demand – it's rapidly becoming a market expectation."*



Mr Michell said that *"By backing AWSS, we're ensuring Australian wool growers are recognised for their sustainability practices, while strengthening demand and keeping Australian wool at the forefront of customer expectations."* and emphasised that AWSS is *"the right framework to deliver more certified wool to market while reducing costs and avoiding duplication for industry."*

With this endorsement, WIA has committed to working collaboratively across the supply chain to champion AWSS to create better efficiencies for the Australian wool industry.

This commitment includes working with the Nanjing Wool Market (NWM) which represents the Chinese wool textile industry who collectively purchase over 80% of Australia's wool, and who released a joint statement of support for AWSS with WIA.

Madam Yang, Chairperson of the NWM China–Australia Joint Working Group, said *"It is so important that Australia can ensure its wool meets current international demand in terms of environmental contribution, quality consistency and animal treatment ethics. The Chinese industry is very pleased to provide its full support to AWSS."*

WIA President David Michell welcomed this endorsement, reaffirming that the *"Australian wool industry is committed to working with the Chinese wool textile industry... Our objective is to build the volumes of certified Australian wool by making it cheaper, easier and more efficient for growers to get involved – and AWSS will be important to delivering this outcome."*

AWSS has also been fully endorsed by The Italian Wool Textile Association (IWTA) which represents the entire Italian and International wool textile value chain.

With sustainability, transparency and animal welfare becoming essential priorities for consumers, brands, and supply chains, IWTA President, Claudio Lacchio *"welcomes AWSS as a credible, practical, and forward-looking framework that meets these expectations while strengthening the global reputation of Australian wool."*

IWTA highlighted three key strengths that set AWSS apart from other Certifications:

- Industry ownership and alignment with Australian production realities
- Integration of wool classing quality systems – unique among global schemes
- Next-generation digital traceability, including the eBale QR system enabling blockchain-based tracking

President Lacchio emphasised *"these features make AWSS a critical platform for scaling the availability of certified Australian wool that meets the highest expectations of brands and consumers in terms of sustainability, provenance, and product excellence."*

In addition to the IWTA endorsement, eight of Italy's leading wool textile companies including Reda, Zegna, Vitale Barberis Canonico, Lanecardate, Schneider, Zignone, E. Thomas and Pettinatura Lane di Romagnano Sesia issued letters expressing their support for AWSS.

These companies, renowned for using Australian wool to produce high-quality wool tops, yarns and fabrics used by global luxury brands, stressed that *"in recent years, sustainability, transparency and animal welfare have become essential values for our customers, brands and the textile supply chain as a whole."*

They welcomed AWSS as a framework that:

- ✓ Sets clear and measurable sustainability standards
- ✓ Provides independent on-farm verification
- ✓ Enables digital traceability of certified bales
- ✓ Strengthens trust and integrity throughout the supply chain.

The companies all expressed that they *"look forward to collaborating with AWEX and other stakeholders in the ongoing development and recognition of AWSS"* and collectively *"encouraged Australian growers to participate actively in the program"* to help meet increasing global demand for certified wool.

The message to Australian wool growers and the industry from both domestic and global markets is therefore unmistakable: buyers want more certified wool from Australia, and AWSS provides growers and industry with a practical and efficient way to demonstrate their credentials and retain access to these markets.



Growers interested in getting involved are encouraged to contact their selling agent or the AWEX team to learn more about AWSS Certification and how they can participate.

Click on the image to learn more about the "Caring for our Environment" pillar in the AWSS Grower Standard, and why it's critical for wool certification.



Pillar Showcase – Caring for our Environment

Learn more about the "Caring for our Environment" pillar in the AWSS Grower Standard, and why it's critical for wool certification.



Caring for our
environment



Caring for
our sheep



Caring for our people,
our customers and
our community



Caring for
our industry



Clip preparation
and integrity

SUSTAINABILITY

QUALITY





Incredible Domestic & Global Support

The AWSS Partner Directory has officially launched, allowing you to explore all industry and strategic partners that are supporting the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme.

australianwoolsustainability.com.au/Partners/PartnerDirectory/

PARTNERS



STRATEGIC PARTNERS

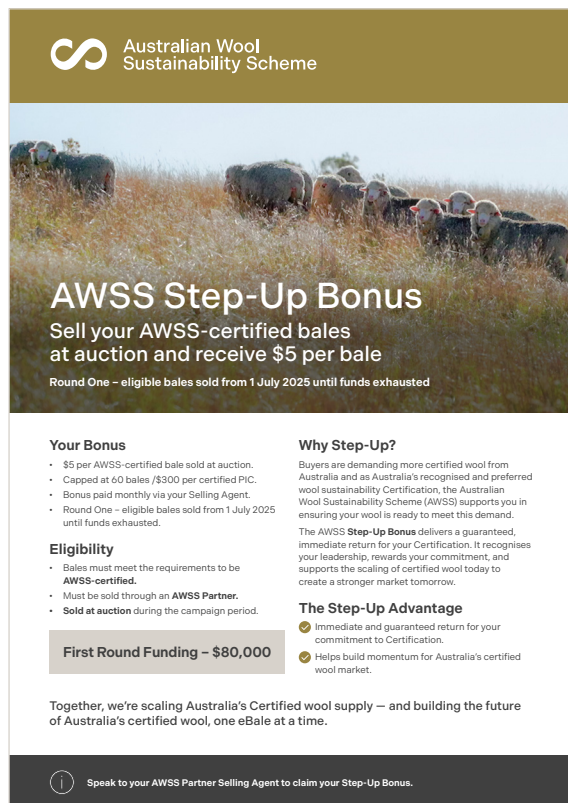


WOOL INDUSTRIES AUSTRALIA PARTNERS



AWSS Step-Up Bonus Building Momentum

Since launching the AWSS Step-Up Bonus earlier this year, we've been pleased to see strong engagement from growers and brokers who are stepping forward to support the scaling of Certified Australian wool.



Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme

AWSS Step-Up Bonus
Sell your AWSS-certified bales at auction and receive \$5 per bale
Round One – eligible bales sold from 1 July 2025 until funds exhausted

Your Bonus

- \$5 per AWSS-certified bale sold at auction.
- Capped at 60 bales / \$300 per certified PIC.
- Bonus paid monthly via your Selling Agent.
- Round One – eligible bales sold from 1 July 2025 until funds exhausted.

Eligibility

- Bales must meet the requirements to be **AWSS-certified**.
- Must be sold through an **AWSS Partner**.
- **Sold at auction** during the campaign period.

First Round Funding – \$80,000

Why Step-Up?

Buyers are demanding more certified wool from Australia and as Australia's recognised and preferred wool sustainability Certification, the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS) supports you in ensuring your wool is ready to meet this demand.

The AWSS **Step-Up Bonus** delivers a guaranteed, immediate return for your Certification. It recognises your leadership, rewards your commitment, and supports the scaling of certified wool today to create a stronger market tomorrow.

The Step-Up Advantage

- ✓ Immediate and guaranteed return for your commitment to Certification.
- ✓ Helps build momentum for Australia's certified wool market.

Together, we're scaling Australia's Certified wool supply – and building the future of Australia's certified wool, one eBale at a time.

1 Speak to your AWSS Partner Selling Agent to claim your Step-Up Bonus.

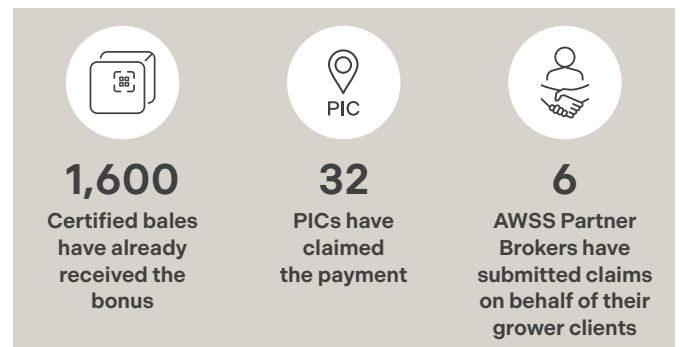
The Step-Up Bonus was introduced as a direct investment by AWEX to support growers who choose to certify with the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS).

AWEX CEO Charlie McElhone said the initiative addresses a clear industry priority: to increase the volume of certified Australian wool available to buyers.

"Our international customers are asking for more certified wool. Through the Step-Up Bonus we are directly supporting growers who are certified with AWSS, helping the Australian industry meet this demand with an efficient, made-for-Australia certification," Mr McElhone said.

Strong early results

This strong early participation demonstrates both the value of the initiative and the appetite from growers and brokers to scale Certified wool sold in Australia.



What is the Step-Up Bonus?

- \$5 per AWSS-certified bale capped at 60 bales/\$300 per certified PIC.
- Bonus paid monthly via your AWSS Partner Selling Agent.
- Round One – eligible bales that meet all AWSS certification requirements sold from 1 July 2025 until funds exhausted.


Interested in claiming your Step-Up Bonus?

If you are an AWSS Certified grower and believe you may be eligible for the Step-Up Bonus, please contact your selling agent to discuss your eligibility and apply.

If you're not yet Certified, now is an ideal time to explore becoming AWSS Certified so you can access the Bonus and position your wool for growing market demand.

Selling Agents: want to access the Step-Up Bonus for your clients?

To submit Step-Up Bonus claims on behalf of growers, selling agents must be an **AWSS Partner**. If your organisation is not yet a Partner and you would like to provide this benefit to your grower clients, we encourage you to get in touch with AWEX to learn more about the AWSS Partner Program.



Audit ready – and proving it.

AWSS on-farm audits

Following the launch of the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme in July 2024 and the AWSS program's ISO 9001 accreditation, certification is now verified through 3rd party on-farm auditing. **AUS-MEAT** was engaged in 2025 as an independent provider to conduct AWSS on-farm audits. Previously, farm inspections were conducted by in-house inspectors.



How does AWSS verification work?

AWSS participants are required to complete a declaration of management practices at registration as well as an annual desk-top audit (registration renewal). A selection of certified growers are then identified to undertake an on-farm audit to verify their declared practices. This method of verification is in-line with ISO 9001 standards and demonstrates integrity and robustness of the AWSS standards to the supply chain.

AUS-MEAT recently completed 18 on-farm audits with a compliance rate of over 94%. The on-farm audits verify practices across all five pillars of the AWSS standards, with an emphasis on Pillars 1 – *Caring for our Environment*, 2 – *Caring for our Sheep* and 3 – *Caring for our People, Our Customers, Our Community*. Corrective Action Requests (CAR's) were issued for minor administrative issues, including absence of a shearing cuts register, expired first aid certificate, and lack of a documented biosecurity and/or fire management plan. Growers have 90 days from audit to close out CAR's.



How do I prepare for an AWSS on-farm audit?

AWEX has developed resources to assist growers prepare for audit and ensure the audit process is as seamless as possible.

AWEX offered optional information webinars in October to further prepare growers who were selected for audit. The webinars offered an opportunity for growers to ask questions and share ideas. AWEX provided examples and templates to assist growers to meet their evidence requirements.

Brad Sandlant, Wool Grower from Lexton, Victoria attended an AWEX pre-audit webinar in October and stated that the webinar was 'definitely helpful and a good starting point. We used the support material, and the audit preparation guide. Some of the templates were also useful.

The on-farm audit was fine, being prepared with all the correct documentation and information pre-audit, was the key to a relative stress-free process.

The AWSS audit was similar to other audits. It was rewarding to go through the audit process and to receive compliance. To get a positive result backs up all of the work that we do.'

More on-farm AWSS audits will take place in 2026. Growers who are identified for audit can access resources and other support materials from AWEX.

AWSS in action –
from farm to finished product.



AWSS Wool Processing Pilots

In partnership with AWI / The Woolmark Company, and the Australian Wool Traceability Hub (AWTH), AWEX has initiated two wool processing pilots in China and Italy, designed to demonstrate how AWSS can deliver practical, scalable and efficient certification pathways for Australian wool across diverse wool supply chains.

Serving as practical proofs of concept, these pilots will demonstrate how AWSS certification can be adopted at scale to deliver measurable value and strengthen trust from farm through to finish product, keeping Australian wool at the forefront of meeting evolving customer needs.


A dedicated working group, bringing together AWEX, Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), The Woolmark Company, Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA), and selected processing partners, is testing how AWSS can integrate with existing commercial workflows, mill operations and digital traceability systems.

Central to this work is the use of Australian wool industry owned technologies, including the Australian Wool Traceability Hub (AWTH) and eBale ID-driven traceability, to enable secure, verifiable data flow along each step of the supply chain.

By trialling AWSS certification in high-volume Chinese processing environments and Italy's specialised, vertically integrated supply chain, the pilots aim to demonstrate that AWSS can deliver efficiency, integrity, and value from farm through to first-stage processing and into finished products, regardless of geography, supply chain architecture or commercial configuration.

Beyond operational insights, the pilots are expected to generate strong market pull-through. They will produce evidence-based recommendations on how AWSS can be used globally in a credible, practical, and cost-efficient way, while offering industry-facing insights that help build awareness and demonstrate commercially viable models for scalable integrity and certification.





Untapped potential for
Australian certified wool.

Certification & Premium Data Analysis

Certified Wool: Growing Demand, Limited Supply – and What the Premiums Really Mean

Certification has been at the forefront of conversations across the global wool industry, with messaging coming out of key international events like IWTO that our customers are increasingly seeking certified wool as it becomes a baseline requirement for access to some markets.

Recent analysis of Australian wool auction data shows that while demand and premiums for certified wool are real and growing, the volume of certified Australian wool available to the market remains limited.

While it would be logical to assume this demand and supply gap would translate into strong premiums for certified wool, the way wool is sold, and the complexity of buyer decision-making for our very technically varied fibre means these premiums are not always straightforward to interpret.

Certification Uptake Remains Low

Between **October 2024 and October 2025**, only **8% of the total Australian wool clip** sold at auction carried **any Certified Integrity Scheme (CIS)**, despite:

- **22%** of the clip being declared **non-mulesed or ceased-mulesed**, with only **7.37%** carrying certification.
- **40%** declared **anaesthetic/analgesic (AA)**, with only **3.32%** of AA wool carrying certification.

This gap between animal-welfare practice and certification highlights a clear opportunity for growers to better align with market demand.

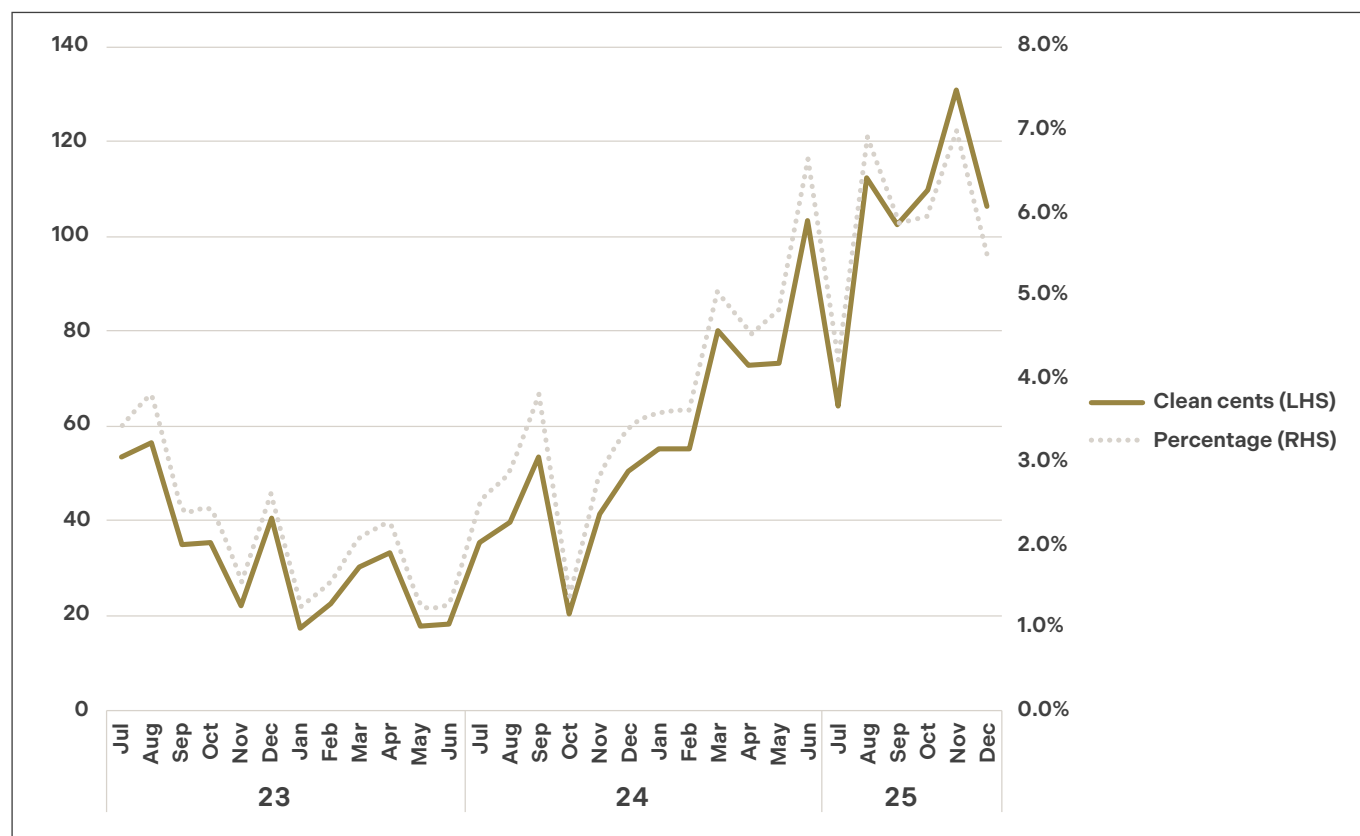
Certified Wool Achieves Premiums – But They Are Complex

Premium analysis (Table 1) from the **2025 season** shows that:

- **All certified wool** achieved premiums above non-certified wool of the same mulesing status and micron.
- **Certified non-mulesed wool** realised premiums of up to **150 c/kg clean** above non-certified non-mulesed wool.
- Premiums for certified wool increased as market prices strengthened, rising from around **1% in Seasons 23–24** to **almost 8% by November 2025** (Graph 1).

Clean cents/kg	Season	16	17	18	19	20	21
SW Green (NM/CM)	24	41	67	62	53	22	6
	25	78	78	46	144	40	138
RWS	24	102	92	83	82	95	89
	25	132	121	12	141	146	128
Others NM/CM	24	36	15	12	4	6	6
	25	53	11	13	2	4	21
ResponsiWOOL & SW Blue	24	44	16	28	8	3	4
	25	55	35	33	26	-1	
Others (AA/PR)	24	2	0	0	3	4	4
	25	19	1	5	5	5	3

Table 1: Price differentials between certified and non-certified wool by mulesing status and micron for season 24 and 25 (Year-To-Date) in cents per clean kg. Source: AWEX Market Reporting



Graph 1: Average premiums for all 18- & 19-micron wool sold with Certified Integrity Schemes of SW, RE & RWS as clean cents and percentage relative to EMI for Seasons 23 – 25 (YTD). Source: AWEX Market Reporting

However, certification premiums need to be understood in the context of how wool is bought and sold.

Wool pricing remains fundamentally driven by quality characteristics – micron, strength, length, VM and style – because buyers must ensure the wool they purchase will perform for its intended end-product. Focusing on consistent premiums for certification alone can miss this bigger picture. In practice, price outcomes are shaped by a combination of the technical specifications of orders being filled on a given auction day and buyer confidence in the quality and preparation of the clip, both of which drive competition on the auction floor.

In addition, auction data does not include pricing from wool traded through private sales. These transactions can often be for high-value, certified wool, meaning the premium curves in the available auction data are not a true reflection on the premiums realised for certified wool from Australia.

Finally, many customers now view certification as a minimum requirement to meet regulatory and brand obligations (including EU sustainability reporting), rather than a discretionary value-add. In practice, this means buyers may not “pay a premium” for certification alone but instead will be unable to bid at all on wool that is not certified. In these cases, certification protects market access and competition rather than appearing as a visible premium.

What This Means for Growers and Selling Agents

Certification is increasingly a ticket to play in higher value markets. Growers whose wool meets customer quality needs *and* carries certification may be positioned to attract more buyers and stronger competition. Without certification, growers risk missing out on higher-value markets altogether and receiving a discount on what their wool could otherwise achieve.

AWSS offers a practical, Australian-designed certification pathway that aligns sustainability assurance with Australia’s world-class wool quality systems.

For growers, AWSS helps safeguard access to premium markets.

For selling agents, it provides a strong commercial selling point – ensuring clients’ wool remains eligible, competitive and aligned with customer expectations.

The message from the market is clear: certification underpins demand – and AWSS is an efficient and increasingly demanded pathway to delivering it.





Get Certified

More information



Learn More – AWSS Podcast

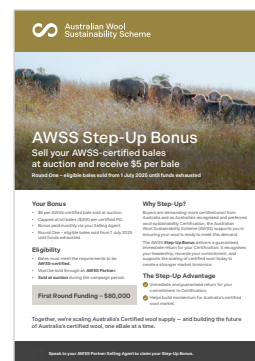
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About AWSS Brochure

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About the Step-Up Bonus

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In the News

- **WIA support article** – <https://www.sheepcentral.com/wool-industries-australia-backs-awss-for-a-sustainable-future/>
- **IWTA support article** – <https://woolnews.net/2025/11/27/italian-wool-textile-association-endorses-australian-wool-sustainability-scheme/>