

final report

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Prepared by: Anne Collins
AC Ag Consulting
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It's Ewe Time Event Coordination

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Executive summary

Twenty-three *It's ewe time!* forums, funded jointly by MLA and AWI and run under the Making More from Sheep banner, were held across all mainland states of Australia between August 2017 and April 2019. The series of forums were successful in reaching a total of 1113 sheep producers and service providers. The average level of satisfaction score nationally was 8.7 out of 10. 60% of attendees indicated that they intended to make a change to their business as a result of attending the forum and 68% indicated that they would seek further information on subjects raised at the forums.

The forums were organised as a way of engaging, challenging and motivating sheep producers to attain productive, profitable and sustainable sheep businesses by creating awareness of key productivity and profitability drivers and practices in sheep businesses, challenging producers with latest R&D outcomes ready for adoption and creating overt pathways to MLA and AWI's adoption programs.

A total of 48 different speakers were engaged across the forum series. Program content was informed by community consultation and the content delivery needs of MLA and AWI. Common themes that were included in virtually all programs were optimising ewe and weaner management and flock health.

The *It's ewe time!* National Coordinator was responsible for community consultation and engagement, program development and format, speaker engagement and quality control, event partner engagement and venue, catering and all logistics management.

Forums run in 2017 included both a full-day format and half-day forums. However, after extensive industry consultation, a half-day format was adopted for all 2018 and 2019 forums, and generally included a format of three forums in three days at smaller regional centres.

These forums were promoted by MLA and AWI as 'awareness building' events, but in reality they are much more than that, with a significant percentage of attendees indicating that they planned to make changes to aspects of their business as a result of attending the forum and/or to seek further information or training.

These events are highly valued by the sheep industry and there is every indication that they lead to on farm practice change and stimulate desire for further learning. Participants appreciate MLA and AWI working together for the betterment of their industries and they are seen as good networking opportunities. Attendees liked the half-day format and those in smaller communities also appreciated that such a quality event was brought to their area.

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1 Background

The original purpose of this project was to support MLA and AWI in the coordination, planning, delivery and evaluation of 17 *It's ewe time!* forums during August 2017 and winter 2018.

It's ewe time! forums are a proven method for engaging, challenging and motivating sheep producers to attain productive, profitable and sustainable sheep businesses. *It's ewe time!* forums create awareness of key productivity and profitability drivers and practices in sheep businesses, challenge producers with latest R&D outcomes ready for adoption and create overt pathways to MLA and AWI's adoption programs. The previous *It's ewe time!* series was run in 2010-11.

The forums are highly organised, professional, educational events with a focus on communicating quality key messages delivered by experts. Three delivery models were to be used:

- Large scale, highly organised forums (target: 200+ attendees)
- Large scale, highly organised forums delivered in conjunction with a State department partner (target: 100+ attendees)
- Smaller scale, half-day forums, short program (target: 70+ attendees).

Events and speaker sessions aimed to leave producers with take home messages and actions that are immediately implementable and provide opportunity for producers to sign up to next steps capability building activities, such as Profitable Grazing Systems and Producer Demonstration Sites as well as targeted workshops such as Business Edge, Bred Well Fed Well, Winning with Weaners and Life Time Ewe Management.

On completion of the 2017 forums, the planning committee decided to split the 2018 forum series across the winter of 2018 and autumn of 2019, focusing on a series of smaller, half day forums. Ultimately a total of 23 forums were delivered, with the final one happening in April 2019.

2 Project objectives

By December 2019, the event coordinator will have participated as a key member of an MLA/AWI project team and successfully led and coordinated the planning and delivery of up to 17 *It's ewe time!* forums.

3 Methodology

3.1 Planning the events

A management committee of funding partner representatives and the *It's ewe time!* National Coordinator oversaw the development and implementation of the program of forums. Potential locations and approximate dates for forums were agreed by this group and weekly phone meetings coordinated by the National Coordinator commenced approximately three months prior to the events.

3.2 Tasks completed by National Coordinator

3.2.1 Community consultation and engagement

Relevant stakeholders were engaged for each location, promoting the forums and gaining insight into local issues, recent events and upcoming events and activities that needed to be considered in the planning. Key service providers were contacted including stock agents, private consultants, State government employees, producer groups and individual producers. Discussions were held around timing, locations, venues, content and format of forums. More than 140 individuals were engaged in this capacity over the course of the project. In addition, numerous websites were accessed seeking information on possible conflicting or competing activities.

3.2.2 Program format and content

In 2017, four full-day forums with eight speakers on the program were held with varying success, as per reported results. Two of these forums were held in Western Australian and were organised in partnership with WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. In addition, a format of three half-day forums in three days, with four speakers on the program, was trialled on Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, with good success.

Early in 2018, the National Coordinator undertook significant consultation within the communities that it was planned to take forums to that year. One of the main purposes was to consult on the preferred format of the forums. 100% of those consulted agreed that the preferred format was a 'half-day' forum, that started reasonably early in the morning and was finished by early afternoon. This was the format adopted for all forums held in 2018 and 2019. This meant that more individual forums, at smaller communities, were able to be held than were originally planned.

The content of the forums at each location were informed by combining the results of the community consultation with the content delivery needs of both MLA and AWI.

The program content was similar at many forums but adjustments were made to suit local conditions. Common themes that were included in just about all programs were; optimising ewe and weaner management, and flock health (See Appendix 1 for a full listing of all topics included at all forums).

In scheduling the program, consideration was given to linking presentations together and having a 'natural' flow of content.

3.2.3 Speaker engagement

A total of 48 different speakers were engaged over the course of the 23 events. Efforts were made to engage speakers from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, including a balance of youth and gender where possible. Care was also taken to include a balance of some speakers that attendees would be familiar with and would be comfortable in knowing that they understand "how things are done around here", along with some new and possibly unfamiliar faces who could bring a fresh perspective.

A desired key messages document was developed for all presentations at all forums and supplied to speakers. This document was designed to guide speakers as to expectations for their content and also provide insight into the potential content of other speakers' presentations.

3.2.4 Event partner engagement

For each location, attempts were made to engage local service provider groups or farming systems groups as event supporters or partners. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement, as it gave the organisers access to local intelligence in relation to event planning plus assistance with event promotion, and it gave the local group the opportunity to influence and have their name associated with a quality industry event. In addition, AWI producer networks in all states were actively engaged with planning and promotion.

For the 2017 forum series, attempts were made to engage with the livestock agency sector, as had been successfully done with prior forum series, but this was less than successful on this occasion.

In 2019, a number of commercial supporters were taken on. They were able to provide a maximum of one insert for the forum satchels and display a banner at the forums, in return for promoting the forums to their networks.

3.2.5 Venue, catering, logistics, accommodation, on-the-day event management

Suitable venues and catering options were sourced for each forum, according to a pre-established set of criteria. Accommodation bookings were coordinated for all speakers and others associated with the forum delivery. Coordination and advice were provided where required on speakers and others travel logistics.

A dinner was organised the night before each forum, to provide an opportunity for speakers to meet and mingle with each other and to meet the organisers, including the audio visual providers. At most locations it was also possible to include some local producers and/or service providers which provided a great opportunity for speakers to gain current intelligence on local industries and current seasonal conditions.

On-the-day event management included liaison with venue and catering managers, organising AV access, registration desk management, chairperson management, media liaison and general problem solving.

3.2.6 Quality control of speaker presentations

Where appropriate, guidance was provided to speakers on the desired content of their presentation, ensuring synergy with other presenters. Drafts of all PowerPoint presentations were reviewed and feedback given on any quality issues with slides, ensuring key messages were clearly communicated. This included correct use of the supplied template, avoiding conflicting messages and/or duplication of content with other speakers including minimal repetition of charts and graphs. Advice was provided on the amount of content and number of slides, ensuring there was not too much content for the time available. Care was also taken to minimise the use of jargon and unfamiliar acronyms and to keep graphs simple and easy to interpret. Recommendations were given on improved layout,

with the intent of keeping slides uncluttered and supporting the oral presentation rather than distracting from it.

The National Coordinator also ensured that all speakers were fully briefed on the current local seasonal conditions and any other relevant issues that had been highlighted during discussions with locals.

3.2.7 Promotional material

For the 2017 and 2018 events, Ag Communicators were engaged to provide all promotion and communications. By decision of the funding partners, Ag Communicators were not engaged for the 2019 series. This work was completed in house by MLA and AWI in 2019, with MLA managing media communications and AWI managing graphic design and artwork. Each funding partner was also responsible for the promotion of events through their various channels.

An example of the flyers developed to advertise the forums is included in Appendix 2. The National Coordinator was responsible for creating all of the content for these flyers.

Content was developed for the forum booklets that attendees received on the day. This included take home messages, best practice indicators and valuable resources for further reading or training and development, for each presentation.

3.2.8 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation questionnaires were developed for each forum in consultation with both corporations. Refer to Appendix 3 for an example questionnaire.

3.2.9 Other

Professional audio visual service providers were engaged for all forums. The National Coordinator sourced suitable providers, obtained quotes and liaised with providers throughout the series.

Registrations for all forums were managed by AWI through an Eventbrite facility. A flat rate of \$35 per person was charged for forum attendance for the 2017 full day forums and for all 2018 and 2019 forums, while attendance at the 2017 half day (four speakers) forums cost \$25 per person. Ideally all attendees pre-registered on line, although walk-up registrations on the day were possible.

MLA provided all contracting services including invoice payment. Take home satchels were provided to all attendees. These contained resources provided by MLA and AWI along with a maximum of one item from each supporting partner and commercial partner. These were provided to participants at the end of the day following return of a completed monitoring and evaluation form.

4 Results

A total of 23 *It's ewe time!* forums were held nationally, in all mainland states, over the period August 2017 to April 2019. Table 1 shows the location of all forums and the numbers attending each event. Appendix 1 gives a full listing of presenters used and topics discussed at all 23 forums.

Table 1: Location and attendance numbers – It's ewe time forums 2017-2019

Date	Location	Type of forum	Number of attendees
2 August 2017	Ceduna, SA	Half day – 4 speakers	26
3 August 2017	Kimba, SA	Half day – 4 speakers	28
4 August 2017	Cummins, SA	Half day – 4 speakers	53
15 August 2017	Wagga Wagga, NSW	Full day – 8 speakers	58
22 August 2017	Esperance, WA	Full day – 8 speakers	29
24 August 2017	Northam, WA	Full day – 8 speakers	54
31 August 2017	Hamilton, Vic	Full day – 8 speakers	100
24 July 2018	Cooma, NSW	Half day – 5 speakers	39
25 July 2018	Gunning, NSW	Half day – 5 speakers	34
26 July 2018	Cowra, NSW	Half day – 5 speakers	61
14 August 2018	Dubbo, NSW	Half day – 5 speakers	39
15 August 2018	Walgett, NSW	Half day – 5 speakers	34
16 August 2018	Dirranbandi, QLD	Half day – 5 speakers	44
21 August 2018	Longreach, QLD	Half day – 4 speakers	45
22 August 2018	Tambo, QLD	Half day – 4 speakers	26
23 August 2018	Mitchell, QLD	Half day – 4 speakers	16
26 February 2019	Birchip, Vic	Half day – 5 speakers	33
27 February 2019	Deniliquin, NSW	Half day – 5 speakers	62
28 February 2019	Benalla, Vic	Half day – 5 speakers	50
26 March 2019	Jamestown, SA	Half day – 5 speakers	93
27 March 2019	Karoonda, SA	Half day – 5 speakers	42
28 March 2019	Naracoorte, SA	Half day – 5 speakers	74
2 April 2019	Armidale, NSW	Half day – 6 speakers	73

The change to a half-day road trip format for all forums held in 2018 and 2019, allowed the forums to travel to a number of different venues which were not necessarily included in the original planning. MLA and AWI were able to increase the number of forums run, and take them to smaller centres, which do not normally attract such events.

The final number attending a venue on the day was influenced by a number of factors. The first series of three forums (Ceduna – Kimba – Cummins in August 2017) had a very short planning lead time and so the ability to promote effectively was compromised. This was evidenced with the lower attendances at the first two forums. By the Cummins forum, word of mouth had spread as to the quality of the day plus rain set in on the day of the forum, which encouraged a number of on-the-day registrations.

Attendance at the full day forum at Wagga in 2017 was disappointing, but again could likely be attributed to a short lead time which compromised promotional opportunities.

A couple of standout successes included Dirranbandi which attracted a higher number of attendees than expected, and included a diverse audience of experienced sheep producers and new industry members. Likewise, the attendance numbers at Jamestown were higher than anticipated, boosted by the attendance of members of the Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG), from outside of the immediate area, who hired a bus for a day trip to the forum. This was a great initiative by this group, was a great success for them, and increased numbers at the Jamestown forum by about 23. Both the venues in these instances were barely able to cope with the numbers attending.

Full details of attendees' scores for event satisfaction, increase in understanding or skills and confidence to improve their sheep enterprise as a result of attending the forum are reported in detail in the appended report (Appendix 5). The Naracoorte forum was the highest ranked for satisfaction, with an attendance of over 70 people giving an average satisfaction score of 9.2 out of 10. At least 12 other forums had satisfaction scores of 8.8 or better.

The forum that rated the highest for increase in understanding was Dirranbandi with an average score of 8.4 out of 10, which was possibly a reflection of the audience makeup, with some attendees new to the industry, although the next highest was Naracoorte averaging 8.3. In all, 9 forums scored 8.0 or better out of 10.

Dirranbandi was again the highest scoring forum for how confident and motivated participants felt to improve their sheep enterprise as a result of attending the forum. A total of 18 forums scored an average of 8.0 or higher for this criteria.

A number of farming systems groups were engaged as official event supporters for the 2019 forum series including Birchip Cropping Group, Upper North Farming Systems, Mallee Sustainable Farming, Mackillop Farm Management Group and the SA Livestock Consultants. Formal agreements were signed with these groups which gave them limited branding rights and acknowledgement in exchange for assistance with planning and promotion.

In the 2019 series only, agreements were also entered into with a number of commercial supporters.

AWI producer networks in all states provided support in the planning stages as well as with promotion including Sheep Connect NSW, Sheep Connect SA, Best Wool Best Lamb Vic, The Sheep's Back WA and Leading Sheep QLD.

5 Discussion

The *It's ewe time!* forums were overwhelmingly a success with all having very positive feedback. 22 of the 23 forums had satisfaction ratings of more than 8 out of 10, with three averaging 9 or better (For more detail see the full report, Appendix 5).

However, some forums were more successful than others in terms of the number of participants that were attracted. Particularly with the early forums in 2017, the planning lead time and timing of events were major influences on the attendance rates. Past *It's ewe time!* forum series have traditionally been run in the July–August period. This was again the case with this series in 2017 and 2018. For the 2019 series a change was made to February–March. This change seemed to work well with good numbers in attendance at all 2019 forums.

Many regions that the forums went to over the series had been experiencing drought conditions for some time and this possibly had an impact on attendances in some locations.

In total, four forums were held in Queensland, despite sheep numbers in some regions of the State at all-time lows. With the installation of significant amounts of exclusion fencing to control wild dog predation and the buoyant sheep and wool markets, it was seen as important to include these

regions where there is significant interest in flock rebuilding or re-entry to the industry. The Dirranbandi forum was a particular success. There was a particularly positive feel in the room, with 44 in attendance including a number of new industry entrants. Longreach also attracted reasonable numbers at 45, while Tambo and Mitchell were smaller forums, as was expected, with only 26 and 16 respectively.

5.1 Format

The half-day format adopted for many of the forums proved popular with attendees, with much feedback along the lines of *'Concise presentations meant I could stay focused and also doesn't take up a whole day'* (Deniliquin), *'I liked that it was a half day - each person didn't bang on for too long-didn't fall asleep'* (Jamestown), *'Best forum I have been to for concise info delivered quickly'* (Naracoorte), *'I liked that it didn't take up the whole day'* (Naracoorte), *'Half-day format with great content - really pumped it out but also enough time for questions'* (Dubbo), *'I liked that it was a half day'* (Longreach). A handful of participants at the half-day forums suggested that they would have preferred a longer format, but they were clearly in the minority.

Despite this, there was very little negative feedback from attendees of the full day forums in 2017, and a lot of positive feedback such as; *'Format was excellent, well done to all'* (Wagga Wagga), *'Excellent speakers, good variety, best forum for years'* (Northam).

One advantage of the three forums in three days' road trip format is that the speakers get an opportunity to spend extended time together, enhancing the networking opportunity. This format also allows the forums to be taken to smaller centres, where this would be less likely to happen with the larger, full day forum. Participants appreciate that you have come to their location, rather than staying with the major centres. It is also an opportunity to inject a much needed economic boost into some smaller regional economies.

Speakers become practiced and polished and link their presentations together better after presenting three times in three days. If this format is used again in the future, it would be prudent to plan for the largest forum to be last in the series.

These forums are classified by MLA and AWI as 'awareness building' events, but in reality they are much more than that, with a significant percentage of attendees indicating that they planned to make changes to aspects of their business as a result of attending the forum. Of particular note was Cummins where 81% of attendees indicated that they intended to make a change. More details are included in the detailed report at Appendix 5, and a story published in MLA's Friday Feedback (Appendix 4) gives a good example of potential improvements in management practice as a result of attending the forum. One attendee at Armidale was keen to implement some improvements and indicated that they planned to: *'order more feed; review reproductive performance of current ewes; review mineral supplements; spread out my AI ewes; add more privacy in paddocks; ask broker about non-mulsed wool and contracts'*. For more details on the type of changes that attendees were planning to implement see Section 8: Intent to make change, in the attached detailed report (Appendix 5).

A few attendees, particularly at Esperance and Wagga Wagga, suggested that the use of at least one leading producer as a presenter would possibly improve the program. *'Be good to have a producer present a section on how to implement "best practice", lessons they've learnt'* (Wagga Wagga).

5.2 Presenter management

The majority of speakers were a pleasure to work with but many struggled to be able to supply a draft of their presentation for review in a timely manner. More emphasis perhaps needs to be made in making speakers aware of this requirement at the time they are engaged. It has been discussed elsewhere the value in doing such reviews *'clear slides, easy to follow presentation'* (Armidale) and the perfect illustration arose with the SA forum series where one presenter did not supply his presentation for review prior to the forum and presented a lot of content that doubled up on content already presented. The review of draft PowerPoints was left almost exclusively the task of the National Coordinator. In future, it would be appropriate for area experts from within the MLA and AWI to commit time to this process.

One of the key challenges, with some presenters in particular, was in encouraging them to deliver the right amount of content for the allocated time. Attendees time and again commented *'liked the short, sharp presentations'* (Armidale); *'best forum I have been to for concise info delivered quickly'* (Naracoorte) on the punchy, to the point presentations that delivered good information in a concise format. When a speaker tries to incorporate too much content for the time available, they end up rushing toward the end of their presentation and skipping over slides and inevitably the audience feedback is along the lines of *'could have used more time'*, whereas when the speakers amount of content is commensurate to the amount of time available the audience is happy and don't think that they have missed out on something and that the speaker should have had more time. This is a key training and development opportunity for some speakers, who gain from practice at delivering content within a non-negotiable time frame.

5.3 Partner engagement

In 2017, significant emphasis was still placed on trying to engage with and reach the target audience through the livestock agency sector, which was the model that had been used successfully in 2010-11. Sufficient connection with the agency sector to successfully engage at senior management level (from the top down) was not achieved and it was left to the National Coordinator to engage at the local branch level, which was very time consuming and quite hit and miss. On some occasions there was no cut through achieved at all and on other occasions tremendous on the ground support was provided by local stock agents.

The strategy in 2018-19 was slightly different with more focus on engaging with local producer groups, plus early direct engagement with local stock agents. This strategy was much more successful. A number of producer groups were happy to provide advice and support and this extended to formal agreements with four separate groups in 2019. The level of support was a little variable and dependant on being able to engage with an enthusiastic individual within the group. There was only one group who, when approached, declined to have any involvement. Of particular note was the involvement and commitment of the local Elders' representative in northern NSW and also Elders commitment to making the three western QLD forums a success.

There was clear value in being able to identify at least one individual, preferably two, who could effectively act as a local champion for the event. This could be a leading local producer, service provider or stock agent.

5.4 Suitability of venues

The majority of the venues selected were appropriate for the task, although there were a couple that were not ideal. The Dirranbandi venue worked well but was a very snug fit for the number in attendance, which exceeded expectations. The catering here was not particularly good and feedback was given to the venue that in future they should serve more food and charge more for it. The Tambo venue was the only option in town but, on one of their coldest winter mornings, was incredibly cold and if it was used again at that time of year would require some heating to be brought in. The Deniliquin venue was adequate, but for the final number of participants that we had, we would have been better in a different room with a higher ceiling. The venue at Benalla unfortunately had a very noisy airconditioner, but it was too warm a summer's day not to have it running. At Jamestown attendee numbers exceeded expectations, with 40 registrations in the last four days. Unfortunately, the venue was absolutely full to capacity which made it a challenge for those at the back of the room to see, but the major issue was that there was only one toilet for over 100 people.

5.5 Other

Radio and newspaper promotion does not appear to have been an effective way of engaging with potential attendees. It should only be used in the future if it provides free coverage/editorial. Various media outlets sent journalists along to the days, including regional papers, rural print media, rural radio and television. Of particular note was the ABC at Cooma, where the journalist interviewed every speaker on the day. WIN News filmed at Benalla and provided coverage on the local news that evening.

Slides from all presentations from the 2017 series are available to download on the Making More From Sheep website. In 2018 and 2019 audio recordings of speakers synchronised to the slides were created making a fantastic resource and are also available to download.

From the 2018 series it was decided to leave on-line registrations open until after the forum had actually started. This saved a lot of last minute phone calls to the organisers and reduced the number of people wanting to walk up and pay a registration on the day.

6 Conclusions/recommendations

The 23 *It's ewe time!* forums held across Australia were successful at engaging a significant number of sheep producers and their service providers and increasing their awareness of the fundamental principles and capabilities that drive highly profitable and productive sheep enterprises. Although the forums were billed as an awareness raising activity, there was clear indication from a large percentage of attendees of intention to change practices as a result of attending a forum. The forums are a successful tool in driving productivity improvement in Australian sheep enterprises.

6.1 Critical success factors

Factors that contributed to the success of this forum series include:

1. National Coordinator with oversight of most aspects of delivery and with key prior experience in the successful delivery of similar events.
2. MLA & AWI working together to deliver the events. Industry values the two corporations working together.
3. Thorough engagement with local networks, seeking input into planning and delivery including intelligence on what was likely to be topical content, possible local venues, past local events as well as planned activities.
4. Thorough date searching at the outset, to avoid clashes with other events, but also to ascertain what other activities have happened or are coming up in a region.
5. Where possible the engagement of event partners such as farming systems groups. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement as it gave the organisers access to local intelligence in relation to event planning plus assistance with event promotion and it gave the local group the opportunity to have their name associated with a quality industry event.
6. Engagement of quality speakers, from diverse backgrounds and including a balance of familiar and new faces.
7. A coordinated and linked program that flowed logically, and included locally relevant topics.
8. Focussed presentations, with only a few 'take home and implement' key messages, that motivated and challenged producers to attain highly productive, profitable and sustainable enterprises.
9. Focus solely on the sheep and wool industries.
10. Content and messaging targeted to the current seasonal conditions locally.
11. Quality control of presentations through review by the organising committee, ensuring all content was appropriate, messaging was consistent, presentations complemented each other without undue overlap, slides were kept simple and easy to understand with minimal use of jargon and acronyms and the amount of content was appropriate for the time available.
12. Engagement of quality, professional audio visual service providers - the audience notice and appreciate this.
13. Half day format (where applicable) – many attendees noted that they appreciated the length of the event.
14. The road show format of three half-day forums in three days enabled forums to be taken to smaller regional centres and also gave speakers the opportunity to practice and polish and link their presentations over three forums. Taking this into consideration, it would make sense, if this format is used in the future, to try and ensure that the largest forum is the last in the series.
15. A non-negotiable requirement for the chairman to ensure that the program ran on time.
16. Including dedicated time after each presentation for questions and audience discussion, along with ensuring that all presenters were available for one-on-one discussion during breaks.
17. Careful selection of quality venues and catering services.
18. Events were not positioned as trade exhibits, corporate 'flag waving' or update events. The focus was purely on the content delivered by the speakers.
19. The take home booklet listed many resources for further reading and training opportunities.
20. The majority of presentations were audio recorded and, along with the PowerPoint slides, posted on the onto Making More From Sheep website and the audience was made aware of this, so they did not need to be distracted by writing copious notes on the day.

6.2 Areas for improvement

- The venues used at Benalla, Jamestown, Tambo and Deniliquin all had issues associated with them. Ideally venues should be visited by someone from the organising committee or a trusted agent, to try and guard against breakdown in communication about venue specifications such as ceiling height, venue capacity and distracting noises. Ensure check list for venue specifications is adhered to when seeking suitable venues.
- Ensure all speakers are fully aware of the importance of providing a draft of their presentation for preview.
- Allow an adequate planning time line of at least 5 months.
- Ideally more commitment from senior and experienced staff members of each corporation, in particular those with some industry experience and networks with both producers and professionals.
- MLA & AWI should ensure more resources, including topic specialists, are available to review presentations in a timely manner.
- Create more opportunity to provide speakers with feedback on presentations, content and style while on the road travelling as a group. Suggest this be a task of the chairperson for each series.
- Consider incorporation of Audience Response System technology (clickers), including incorporating their use within presentations.
- There is still room for improvement with how some speakers emphasise the opportunities for attendees to follow up with further reading or training opportunities, including referring people to the forum booklet contents.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Event locations, venues, topics and speakers

2017

Location	Date	Venue	Topics	Speakers
Ceduna	Aug 2 nd	Ceduna Foreshore Hotel	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook	Cameron Allan – MLA
Kimba	Aug 3 rd	Kimba Gateway Hotel	Making your Ewes Work for You	Andrew Thompson – Murdoch University
Cummins	Aug 4 th	Cummins Ramblers Football Club	Sheep Feed Options in Mixed Farming Systems Efficient Integration of Cropping & Livestock Making Multi-Generational Businesses Work	Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Simon Vogt – Rural Directions Ken Solly – Solly Business Services
Wagga Wagga	Aug 15 th	Charles Sturt University	Lamb – Meating Consumer Expectations Making your Ewes Work for You Winning with Wool Healthy & Contented Sheep Getting a Jump with Genetics Sheep Feed Options in Mixed Farming Systems The Business of Sheep Making Sheep Easier to Manage	Hamish Chandler – MLA Helen McGregor – Achieve Ag Solutions Emily King – AWI Bruce Allworth – Charles Sturt Uni Daniel Brown – MLA Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Basil Doonan - Macquarie Franklin Andrew Ritchie – Icon Agriculture
Esperance	Aug 22 nd	Esperance Civic Centre	Lamb – Meating Consumer Expectations Making your Ewes Work for You Winning with Wool Getting a Jump with Genetics Healthy & Contented Sheep What's the Potential? Stocking Rate and Sheep profitability The Business of Sheep Making Sheep Easier to Manage	Graham Gardner – Murdoch University Sarah Blumer – Murdoch University Emily King – AWI Daniel Brown – MLA Brown Besier - Brown Besier Parasitology Ashley Herbert – Agrarian Management Tamara Alexander – DPIRD John Paul Collins - DPIRD

Northam	Aug 24 th	Bridgeley Centre	Lamb – Meating Consumer Expectations Making your Ewes Work for You Winning with Wool Getting a Jump with Genetics Healthy & Contented Sheep Sheep Management for Dry Seasons The Business of Sheep Making Sheep Easier to Manage	Sarah Stewart – Murdoch University Sarah Blumer – Murdoch University Emily King – AWI Daniel Brown – MLA Brown Besier - Brown Besier Parasitology Andrew Ritchie – Icon Agriculture Tamara Alexander – DPIRD John Paul Collins - DPIRD
Hamilton	Aug 31 st	Hamilton Exhibition and Conference Centre	Lamb – Meating Consumer Expectations Making your Ewes Work for You Winning with Wool Getting a Jump with Genetics High Performing Pastures Healthy & Contented Sheep The Business of Sheep Making Sheep Easier to Manage	David Pethick – Murdoch University Nathan Scott – Achieve Ag Solutions Emily King – AWI Luke Stephen – NSW DPI Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Andrew Whale – Livestock Logic Basil Doonan – Macquarie Franklin Andrew Ritchie – Icon Agriculture

2018

Location	Date	Venue	Topics	Speakers
Cooma	Jul 24 th	Alpine Hotel	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Managing Ewes in Dry Times Maximising Lamb Performance Measuring to Manage Your Sheep Health is Your Wealth Extending Positive Price Cycles	Emily King – AWI Megan Rogers – SheepSMART Solutions Doug Alcock – Graz Prophet Consulting Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Matt Playford – Dawbuts Simon Vogt – Rural Directions
Gunning	Jul 25 th	Gunning Shire Hall	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Managing Ewes in Dry Times Maximising Weaner Performance	Emily King – AWI Megan Rogers – SheepSMART Solutions Geoff Duddy – Sheep Solutions

			Measuring to Manage Your Sheep Health is Your Wealth Extending Positive Price Cycles	Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Matt Playford – Dawbuts Simon Vogt – Rural Directions
Cowra	Jul 26 th	Cowra Services Club	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Managing Ewes in Dry Times Maximising Weaner Performance Measuring to Manage Your Sheep Health is Your Wealth Effective Integration of Cropping and Livestock	Emily King – AWI Megan Rogers – SheepSMART Solutions Geoff Duddy – Sheep Solutions Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Bruce Watt – Central Tablelands LLS Simon Vogt – Rural Directions
Dubbo	Aug 14 th	Taronga Western Plains Zoo	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Managing Ewes in Dry Times Maximising Lamb and Weaner Performance Measuring to Manage Your Sheep Health is Your Wealth Effective Integration of Cropping and Livestock	Emily King – AWI Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Geoff Duddy – Sheep Solutions Ben Swain – BCS Agribusiness Matt Playford – Dawbuts Simon Vogt – Rural Directions
Walgett	Aug 15 th	Walgett District Sporting Club	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Managing Ewes in Dry Times Maximising Lamb and Weaner Performance Measuring to Manage Your Sheep Health is Your Wealth The Way Forward	Emily King – AWI Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Geoff Duddy – Sheep Solutions Ben Swain – BCS Agribusiness Matt Playford – Dawbuts Mark Gardner – Vanguard Business Services
Dirranbandi	Aug 16 th	The Old Moey Motel		
Longreach	Aug 21 st	Stockman's Hall of Fame	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Animal Welfare Market Signals and Non Mules Case Study	Ted Parish – MLA Geoff Lindon – AWI Hamish Chandler – MLA Andrea McKenzie – DAF Brecken Curtis – Sprout Agribusiness
Tambo	Aug 22 nd	Tambo Shire Hall	Sire Selection – Minimum Effort, Maximum Return	
Mitchell	Aug 23 rd	Mitchell Shire Hall	Securing Your Flock Health Making Sustainable Financing Choices	

2019

Location	Date	Venue	Topics	Speakers
Birchip	Feb 26 th	Birchip Community Leisure Centre	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Maximising Ewe Performance Winning with Weaners Making Money from Measuring Sheep Health is Your Wealth Dry Times Decision Making	Alana McEwan – MLA Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting Rob Inglis – Elders Ben Swain – BCS Agribusiness Helen McGregor - Redefining Agriculture Hilary Beech – Holmes Sackett
Deniliquin	Feb 27 th	Deniliquin RSL Club		
Benalla	Feb 28 th	Benalla Town Hall		
Jamestown	Mar 26 th	Sir Hubert Wilkins Centre	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Maximising Ewe Performance Winning with Weaners Sheep Health is Your Wealth The Effect of Mulesing Status & Staple Length on Price Dry Time Decision Making	Nigel Gosse – AWI Helen McGregor – Redefining Agriculture Daniel Schuppan – Landmark Colin Trengove – University of Adelaide Geoff Lindon - AWI Hilary Beech - Holmes Sackett
Karoonda	Mar 27 th	Karoonda Football Club		
Naracoorte	Mar 28 th	Naracoorte Town Hall	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Maximising Ewe Performance Winning with Weaners Sheep Health is Your Wealth Objective Carcase Measurement & Feedback Capitalising on Positive Price Cycles	Nigel Gosse – AWI Helen McGregor – Redefining Agriculture Daniel Schuppan – Landmark Colin Trengove – University of Adelaide Richard Apps – MLA Simon Vogt – Rural Directions
Armidale	April 2 nd	Armidale City Bowls Club	Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Maximising Ewe Performance Mob Size and Marking Rates Winning with Weaners Wool Market Trends and Buying Patterns Making Money from Measuring Dry Times Decision Making	Joe Gebbels – MLA Megan Rogers – SheepSMART Solutions Jason Trompf – JT Agri-Solutions Geoff Duddy – Sheep Solutions Scott Carmody – Wool Trade Consultant Ben Swain – BCS Agribusiness Sandy McEachern – Holmes Sackett

7.2 Appendix 2: Example program flyer

AN INITIATIVE OF
Making More From Sheep

AWI Australian Wool
Innovation Limited

mla
MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA



It's ewe time!

- ✓ Tailor management to seasonal conditions
- ✓ Prepare and plan for the year ahead
- ✓ Maximise your returns in the market place

THE SHEEP INDUSTRY'S POPULAR SERIES OF FORUMS ARE BACK!

- **Sir Hubert Wilkins Memorial Centre, Jamestown SA:** Tuesday, 26 March
- **Karoonda Football Club, Karoonda SA:** Wednesday, 27 March
- **Naracoorte Town Hall, Naracoorte SA:** Thursday, 28 March

FEATURING GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDING:



HELEN MCGREGOR
Redefining Agriculture
*Maximising Ewe
Performance*



DANIEL SCHUPPAN
Landmark
*Winning
With Weaners*



COLIN TRENGOVE
University of Adelaide
*Sheep Health is
Your Wealth*



HILARY BEECH
Holmes Sackett
*Dry Times
Decision Making*



SIMON VOGT
Rural Directions
*Capitalising on Positive
Price Cycles*

Registration for the half-day forum opens from 8.30am, the forum starts at 9am and finishes at 12.50pm, followed by informal lunch with speakers. Cost is \$35 per person, including forum booklet and all catering.

FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER AT:
www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au/events or call 1800 070 099

Making More From Sheep

It's ewe time! Forums

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
8.30	Registration	
9.00	Introduction and Sheepmeat & Wool Outlook Nigel will chair the forum and provide a brief insight into the market outlook for both the sheepmeat and wool sectors.	Nigel Gosse AWI
9.20	Maximising Ewe Performance Nutrition and management of pregnant and lactating ewes are both crucial factors in maximising ewe and lamb survival, as well as the lifetime productivity of the ewe and her progeny. Helen will discuss nutrition requirements and on-farm management strategies that can be put in place to ensure a successful outcome and look at strategies for identifying the most productive ewes.	Helen McGregor Redefining Agriculture Melbourne Vic
9.55	Winning With Weaners What actions can you take on farm to achieve optimum weaner survival and performance? Daniel will discuss the critical factors for the management of weaners, including planning a system, growth targets, feed and nutrition, animal health, genetics and minimising stress. Participants will learn about the practical pathways to winning with weaners.	Daniel Schuppan Landmark Jamestown SA
10.30	Sheep Health is Your Wealth Best practice health management programs are the cornerstone of any sheep production system. Colin will highlight best practice management strategies for tackling internal parasites, flies, lice and Johnes Disease. He will also discuss metabolic disorders due to nutritional stress, reproductive diseases and effective vaccination programs.	Colin Trengove University of Adelaide Roseworthy SA
11.05	MORNING TEA	
11.30	The Effect of Mulesing Status & Staple Length on Price (Jamestown & Karoonda) Australia is the world's largest exporter of non-mulesed wool, but it still accounts for less than 10% of the national clip. Geoff will highlight strategies for breeding for reduced risk of flystrike, and will provide insight into current wool market signals in relation to staple length and mulesing status and the importance of informing the supply chain of on-farm practices.	Geoff Lindon AWI Wagga Wagga NSW
11.30	Objective Carcase Measurement & Feedback (Naracoorte) In the food sector the consumer is king. Ensuring our lamb consumers have a pleasurable eating experience is essential to industry profitability. New technologies offer opportunities to better describe carcase quality and value. Richard will discuss developing objective measurement technologies and their potential application for the lamb industry and consider carcase and eating quality feedback that will potentially be available to producers.	Richard Apps MLA Armidale NSW
12.05	DryTimes Decision Making (Jamestown & Karoonda) Managing sheep in dry times is no easy feat. Hilary will step through the decision-making required in challenging seasons, including whether to feed or sell stock and if joining ewes in a poor season makes sense. She will also look at the planning decisions required when drought breaks and how to assess the opportunity costs of decisions.	Hilary Beech Holmes Sackett Wagga Wagga NSW
12.05	Capitalising on Positive Price Cycles (Naracoorte) With strong wool and lamb prices, Simon will look at how you can invest wisely now to either reduce long-term cost of production, boost productivity, or create robust off-farm investments which can be valuable for long-term wealth creation. Key profit driver benchmarks and their relevance in the South East will be explored and Simon will discuss the merit of investing in professional development.	Simon Vogt Rural Directions Clare SA
12.40	Closing comments	Nigel Gosse AWI
12.50	LUNCH	

Supporting Partners



7.3 Appendix 3: Monitoring and evaluation example

Making More From Sheep

It's ewe time!

Evaluation Form: Jamestown

A joint initiative of



Australian Wool Innovation Limited



Meat & Livestock Australia

Section 1: Tell us about your business (Tick the appropriate box/boxes for each of the questions below)

1. Are you a (please tick box):

- ☐ Lamb specialist (>50% farm income) ☐ Mixed farmer ☐ Consultant
☐ Wool specialist (>50% farm income) ☐ Livestock agent ☐ Other agribusiness
☐ Wool Broker ☐ Other (please specify) _____

2. Please tell us about your sheep enterprise:

Area managed _____ (☐ ha or ☐ acres) Number of breeding ewes: _____
 Number of prime lambs produced annually: _____ Number of bales of wool produced annually: _____

3. How did you hear about this *Making More from Sheep* forum? (tick all applicable)

- ☐ Meat & Livestock Australia ☐ Australian Wool Innovation ☐ Upper North Farming Systems
☐ Stock Journal ☐ Sheep Connect SA ☐ Word of mouth
☐ Stock agent ☐ Wool broker ☐ Social media
☐ SA Livestock Consultants ☐ Other (specify) _____

Section 2: Please rate each of the questions below out of 10 (Where 1 is negative and 10 is positive)

4. Overall, how satisfied are you with this event? _____/10
5. How much do you feel you increased your understanding and/or skills about the topics covered at the forum? (1 = very little; and 10 = a lot) _____/10
6. How confident and motivated to improve your sheep enterprise are you feeling as a result of this forum? (1 = no more motivated; and 10 = highly motivated) _____/10
7. Rate the value of today's speakers for value to your business, content and presentation:

	Content	Presentation	Value
Session 1: Meat and Wool Outlook	/10	/10	/10
<i>Nigel Gosse, Australian Wool Innovation</i>			
Session 2: Maximising Ewe Performance	/10	/10	/10
<i>Helen McGregor, Redefining Agriculture</i>			
Session 3: Winning with Weaners	/10	/10	/10
<i>Daniel Schuppan, Landmark</i>			
Session 4: Sheep Health is Your Wealth	/10	/10	/10
<i>Colin Trengove, University of Adelaide</i>			
Session 5: Effect of Mulesing Status & Staple Length on Price	/10	/10	/10
<i>Geoff Lindon, Australian Wool Innovation</i>			
Session 6: Dry Times Decision Making	/10	/10	/10
<i>Hilary Beech, Holmes Sackett</i>			

Your feedback is valuable to us; please turn over to continue completing this evaluation.

Section 3: Please tick your response and provide short answer response for each of the questions below

8. Did you learn anything new today? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure If yes, please give an example

9. Do you intend to seek further information on any of the topics discussed today?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure If yes, what topics are you interested to learn about?

10. Do you plan to make changes to your business as a result of attending this forum?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure If yes, what changes will you make?

11. What changes would you make to improve today's forum?

12. What did you like most about today's forum?

Section 4: Tell us about yourself by answering the following questions

13. Would you like more information on any of the following AWI or MLA programs/workshops:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bred Well Fed Well Sheep | <input type="checkbox"/> Profitable Grazing Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Winning With Weaners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Producer Demonstration Sites | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Ewe Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Edge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bred Well Fed Well Cattle | <input type="checkbox"/> Picking Performer Ewes | <input type="checkbox"/> RAMping Up Repro |

Name:

Email:

Address:

Post Code:

 Telephone:

MLA and AWI may contact me to further assess the impact of their programs ☐ Yes ☐ No

MLA and AWI may contact me informing me of future events and activities ☐ Yes ☐ No

7.4 Appendix 4: Example of producer action following forum attendance

Friday Feedback article, 8 March 2019

Refining the management calendar

NSW producer David Clark says the biggest lesson he took home from the *'It's ewe time!'* forum he and his wife Joanne attended last year was to concentrate on the management calendar, including condition scoring at appropriate times.

The Clarks attended the forum in the hope they'd get some ideas to sharpen their management skills to help increase the profitability of their prime lamb enterprise in the midst of a difficult season. They breed crossbred lambs and finish trade lambs on their 400ha property at Gooloogong, north of Cowra in central NSW. Until recently, they ran breeding cows and steers for finishing, but have destocked the cattle due to the drought.

Their flat red country sown down to lucerne usually enjoys a 550mm average annual rainfall but last year it was 360mm.

"We've been able to put into practise everything we learnt," David said.

"The forum we went to was just before we put the rams in with the ewes, which was really helpful timing."

Tighten the joining period

The first management change David and Jo made as a result of the forum was to reduce the joining period from eight weeks down to five.

"I used to think that we'd just leave the rams in for another cycle to make sure we caught them all, but the shorter joining makes sense," David said.

"The sheep were in good nick at joining and our scanning rates were good.

"We separated ewes carrying twins and singles this year for the first time. The singles are on stubbles and the twin carriers are living the life of luxury on better pastures and supplementary silage.

"Like everyone in central-west NSW, we're in the middle of a drought. It was a terrible year last year – autumn was pretty patchy and we didn't have a spring. There's no subsoil moisture.

"We've got the work ahead of us still, with lambing due to start very soon, but so far it looks good. We're aiming for at least 120% weaning rate in this tough season. We've done all the pre-lambing checks and the ewes are on dry licks (supplementation) and good nutrition."

David said *'It's ewe time!'* showed them what was possible in an enterprise comparable to theirs.

"At least we know now there's room for improvement," David said.

Half a day off to benefit your enterprise

David and Jo are currently running about a quarter of their normal stocking rate, and have sold all their cattle.

"Our local Elders livestock specialist David Trengove recommended we go along to *'It's ewe time!'* and he's helped us put it into practice," David said.

"I don't think anyone could go along to one of the forums and not learn something. I'm not a field day junky, but you pick the ones that would benefit your enterprise.

"We're all time poor, but I think anyone can afford a morning off to learn this stuff."

LESSONS LEARNED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concentrate on the management calendar.• Tighten the joining period.• Scan for multiples and separate twins and singles into different mobs.

7.5 Appendix 5: Detailed report of forum monitoring and evaluation

Available as a separate file "IET Forums Evaluation Report 2017-19".