



# POLWARTH

SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

## Australia - Land of Extremes

The summer of 2020-21 has been and gone and thankfully much of the country was spared a repeat of last summer's devastating bushfires. However as we know, Australia is a land of contrast and during March this year the eastern seaboard had massive falls of rain resulting in devastating floods.

Rather than being impacted by the floods, our Queensland and New South Wales members have benefited from the large rainfall totals. The Aisthorpe family in Roma, QLD had 5" over two weeks. The dams have replenished and there is now a good body of feed available for the lambing ewes according to Alan Aisthorpe.

In Dubbo, NSW Betty-Ann McFarland said they had 4½" which is unusual for this time of year. The feed is knee high and recently her agent bought in some cattle to chew it down. Unfortunately, the rainfall has led to a mouse plague which Betty-Ann said was the worst she has seen. According to Betty-Ann, a solution of peppermint and water can help in stopping mice invade the home. Other than that, they are relying on the frosts to bring the plague to an end.

## The Shows are Back!

In 2020 we saw the cancellation of local and major shows due to the Covid-19 pandemic. While we are still experiencing some uncertainty, many shows are going ahead amidst an array of covid precautions.

### 183rd Campbell Town Show

**Friday 28th and Saturday 29th May 2021**

Online entries have opened at: [www.campbelltownshow.com.au/sheep/entries](http://www.campbelltownshow.com.au/sheep/entries) and close on 21/05/21.

### Victorian Sheep Show

**Sunday 20th June 2021**

The schedule has not yet been published however you can keep an eye on the website address below:

<https://www.ballaratshow.org.au/attractions-events/ballarat-show/show-schedule/>

### Australian Sheep and Wool Show

**Friday 16th - Sunday 18th July 2021**

**Entries** are open at <https://myasws.rasv.com.au/entries>.

**Polwarth Judging** commences 9.00am Friday 16th July.

**Polwarth Dinner** Friday 16th July, National Hotel, 182-186 High Street, Bendigo at 6pm.

**Annual General Meeting** Saturday 17th July with more details to come.

## Australian Sheep and Wool Show—Fleece Competition

Entries have opened and close on Friday 4th June 2021. Log into <https://myasws.rasv.com.au/entries>

### Polwarth Classes

- Class 29 Polwarth Stud Ram
- Class 30 Polwarth Stud Ewe or Wether
- Class 31 Polwarth Commercial Ewe or Wether



### Royal Adelaide Show

**4-12 September 2021**

<https://theshow.com.au/competitions/livestock/sheep/>

## Congratulations Ashburn Polwarths

Ashburn Polwarths, Carrick, TAS topped the Medium Merino wool sales on 25th March with 1050 cents.

Nareen Station, Coleraine	1285	9	18.6	77.4	45	Fox & Lillie Rural
RJ & M Harricks, Avarat, Vic	1267	8	18.5	75.9	40	Elders
Rokm Pty Ltd, Geelong	1252	4	18.7	75.9	48	Aust. Wool Network
Macpherson Family Trust, Barmganie, Vic	1254	6	18.7	76.6	37	Nutrien Wool
PA Chisholm, Camperdown, Vic	1186	6	18.8	73.7	36	Nutrien Wool-Geelong
Marg Davis, Warronbayne, Vic	1023	7	20.0	74.7	27	Quality Wool
Lott Family Trust, Bendigo, Vic	953	8	18.9	60.2	27	Quality Wool
Marcollat Past Comp, Naracoorte, SA	892	20	20.2	68.4	32	BYV Woolbrokers
Marcollat Past Comp, Naracoorte, SA	863	5	20.2	66.7	27	BYV Woolbrokers
<b>MEDIUM MERINO</b>						20.5-22.4 micron
Ashburn Polwarths P/L, Carrick, Tas	1050	5	21.4	79.4	36	Nutrien-Tasmania
K & R Rees, Penhurst, Vic	1027	5	20.7	79.1	42	Elders

## Willawa – Flock no. 406 by Kaye Potter

In early February, Greg and I had the pleasure of visiting Willawa located near Carramut, VIC. These days, fourth generation brothers Tim and Greg King work together to manage the flock of 5000 Polwarths and 1000 head of Poll Hereford cattle.

Willawa was originally part of 'Lawrenny Station', a property 12,700 acres in size owned by the McArthur family. Tim and Greg's great uncles on their great grandmother's side purchased 3200 acres of Lawrenny in 1904. They named their new property Willawa, an Aboriginal word meaning 'to rest here'.

In 1923, Tim and Greg's grandfather, Keith King returned from Perth to take over Willawa from his aging great uncles. He married, built the first home on the property and had two boys one of whom was Tim and Greg's father Peter King. Peter really wanted to become a doctor, however the premature death of his brother due to a WW2 war injury meant he came home on the farm instead.

Peter's father retired in 1963 and handed the reins to his son. Peter and Joy bought up four children at Willawa including Tim, Greg, Jeremy and sister. As young men, both Tim and Greg attended Glenormiston Agricultural College to complete a two-year course in Farm Management.

Willawa was registered with the Polwarth Sheep Breeders Association of Australia in 1960 as flock number 406 with the purchase of the Barna stud, flock number 38 from Ellerslie, Victoria. At time of registration the flock had 61 ewes. However, Tim recounts stories of Polwarths on Willawa much earlier than 1960. He can remember his grandfather/father telling him about the truck load of ewes purchased from the Dennis family in 1937.

In 1982 tragedy struck the family. Greg, Tim and Jeremy had gone down the road on their private tanker to help fight a grass fire. Greg was driving and Tim and Jeremy were on the back. Jeremy, a bad asthmatic had taken a Ventolin inhaler at the encouragement of his mother. Sadly, the extreme heat caused the inhaler to explode killing Jeremy (aged 20) and leaving Tim with burns to 30% of his body. It took many many months for Tim to recuperate from his injuries. He remained at home to help his father while in 1986, Greg went to Melbourne for work.

Peter King passed away in 2013 aged 83 years and his wife Joy died in 2019. It was at this time that Greg returned to Willawa to work in partnership with Tim. Willawa's fifth generation is in the making. Greg's twin boys currently aged 15 years take a keen interest in the farm's activities. Although Greg wants them to finish school, go to university and experience some of life first, it is reassuring to Tim and Greg to have the boys in the wings.



Above right: An Elders certificate from 2015 with samples of the wool from the stud ewes, 3yo ewes and weaners (the wool has yellowed with age). Below: An expansive view of Willawa looking back to the house and shearing shed.





Right: Greg Potter and Tim King looking at the shearing shed which has gone through a number of transformations. It can now house 1000 sheep.

Below left: Elders certificates for Willawa recording the highest price in the Comeback section. Note the bottom row certificates where the floor price dropped to \$4.44 in 1992. Four years later it was still only \$5.11.

Below right: Tim King standing at the edge of the six stand raised board.

Bottom left: Greg King in the expansive wool room with some pieces from their recent crutching.



Right: The Willawa letter box is several kilometres from the house.



## Life Members and life friendships

By Peter English

In mid March, Hilda and I (right) took the “back road” from Bendigo to our Newcastle based family, travelling via Forbes.

We had dinner with and stayed overnight night with this legendary Polwarth couple. Alec and Lorraine Todd (left) took us on a circumnavigation tour of their former property, home to Coree Polwarth Stud.

They remain extremely interested in all things Polwarth, especially their many Polwarth friends of many years. Wonderful to see them again and whilst they’re slowing down a tad, I reckon Alec could still shear a couple of hundred sheep a day by mid afternoon and then have time to give anyone and everyone a bit of cheek for which he was renowned.



Below top left and right: Mt Crawford ewes getting excited about their ‘sheep chocolate’—lupins! Below left: Look at those nice rounded bums at Narang. Below right: Jared McArdle at Taljar demonstrating ‘101 in skirting’ to the next generation.



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