



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT

LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

25 June 2021

Mr Jim Story
Secretary
Australian Wool Innovation
Level 6, 68 Harrington Street
The Rocks, Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Story,

The Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) appeared before the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee (the committee) during Senate Additional Estimates on 23 March 2021 and during Senate Budget Estimates on 27 May 2021.

At the time of Additional Estimates on 23 March 2021, the publicly available AWI board charter did not include a maximum tenure clause for the chairperson (refer to attachment 1). In response to question on notice 9, AWI attached a copy of the board charter (refer to attachment 2) which included the maximum tenure clause 5.1.4.

When questioned on the inclusion of the maximum tenure clause in the board charter on 23 March 2021, Mr. Stuart McCullough responded:

Yes, it should have. It should be there... It wouldn't have been removed. It would just be a function of not getting to update that on the website or something. We'll check that immediately.

However, the clause was not in the publicly available version of the board charter.

In follow-up questions to question on notice 9 and the subsequent changes between the versions of the board charters, Senator Bridget McKenzie sought clarification on the matter from AWI during Senate Budget Estimates on 27 May. You responded as follows:

... I don't have an answer for you about the difference between July 2020 and October 2020 about when some document found its way onto the website or not, I'm afraid. But that is the sequence.

Further detail on the discrepancies between the versions is outlined below:

1. Version control

The board charter referred to by Senator McKenzie during Additional Estimates on 23 March 2021 and the board charter included by AWI in the response to question on notice 9 are both referenced as 'Version 5' indicating that there may not have been changes to the board charter to include Clause 5.1.4 as Mr. McCullough led the Senate to believe in evidence given on 23 March 2021.

2. Review date

The review date remains unchanged in both versions of the board charter. Both copies of the charter list the last review date as October 2020, and so Clause 5.1.4 should have been included in both versions.

3. Amendment table

In the board charter provided in response to question on notice 9, the amendment table has been updated for version 4, July 2020 to 'Section 5.1 - Chairperson. Items 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 and 5.1.5'. However, the version available on the AWI website that Senator McKenzie referred to did not include this amendment. Instead, the copy referred to on 23 March 2021 stated, 'See previous version'.

The committee reminds AWI of their obligations to ensure that answers provided to the Senate are clear and correct, and requests that AWI clarify the evidence given at the estimates hearings by providing a sequence of events detailing the change to the charter, and publication of that change.

Yours sincerely,

Senator Susan McDonald
Chair