AWI Directors

Michael Staley

Michael Staley is a bio-chemist with experience in the commercialisation of research in the agriculture and healthcare sectors and governance of intellectual property. In short, he understands how to turn science and research into practical, commercial applications.

Michael spent many years in Tasmania (1979 – 1997) working with the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, where he set up the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research. He managed a start-up company for genetically engineering grape vines and, in 1999, moved into his current position as Chief Operating Officer at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

Michael's qualifications in microbiology, coupled with his understanding of the development of vaccines, equips him to contribute to AWI's strategies for disease control and eradication in sheep. He has an extensive network with the providers of vaccine development within Australia and has many contacts with international agencies for the commercialisation and use of vaccine technology. Experience in computerised robotics, makes him the ideal board member for the new ShearExpress technology being developed jointly by AWI.

Michael is skilled in the development of corporate strategies for the identification, protection and management of intellectual property. He has driven the development of AWI's IP register, which he regards as the management yardstick of the company. His knowledge of the current trends in patent protection for gene discovery and his understanding of the complex nature of cross licences, is important in the formulation of AWI strategies.

Michael is acutely aware of the need to position AWI with a secure financial future and actively participates in finance committee meetings. His experience of the control of resource allocation in these environments is invaluable in board decisions to maximise the core business of research for the benefit of wool producers.

Alan Trounson

Professor Trounson believes in life. The Director of the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development in Melbourne, Prof. Trounson is one of the world's leading geneticists who works to prevent diseases and create new human and animal life. He heads the recently created $44 million Biotechnology Centre of Excellence, set up to research the potential application of both adult and embryonic stem cells in the treatment of diabetes, vascular, bone and nerve damage, kidney disease and diseases of the blood and the skin.

The Centre will be the world's first research facility dedicated to the study and commercialisation of stem cell therapies. AWI is considering investment in the Centre as a step towards funding serious science to investigate solutions to Ovine Johnes disease, internal parasites and eliminating diseases such as Foot and Mouth.

A graduate from Wool and Pastoral Science from the University of New South Wales in 1968, Prof. Trounson's scientific interests and accomplishments include the freezing of animal and human embryos, the development of human IVF treatments, artificial insemination, transfer of genetic material and embryonic stem cells. He led the team at the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development which achieved a world first in cloning the elite dairy bull, Rameses. This has great potential for the beef industry as it could allow performance tested bulls to be cloned and made available as natural service bulls. The advantages of artificial breeding could be brought to Australian beef herds without the complications of managing artificial insemination.

Prof. Trounson provides invaluable expertise to the AWI Board on projects such as mapping the sheep genome, which will allow the wool industry to utilise DNA to increase production efficiency and wool quality more rapidly than by conventional breeding.

Prof. Trounson believes that the discoveries that are evolving from research in genomics and their application through new artificial breeding biotechnologies will underpin the competitiveness of Australia's agricultural industries. He urges Australian farmers recognise the importance of taking the leadership in animal biotechnology research. "We need to create the new flocks with the high value products that are already being demanded by customers and consumers worldwide."

Trish Murphy

Trish brings a strong background in finance and economics to the board of AWI, having spent eight years with the State Bank of NSW in the corporate finance area. She also has significant expertise in trading derivatives and currency with the NSW Treasury. Her exposure to the fast-moving international trade in agricultural commodities enables her to analyse financial aspects of major wool projects quickly, concisely and accurately. She understands how overseas markets operate, which is particularly valuable to AWI when it is considering investments in countries such as China and seeking to develop technologies which will more effectively target downstream wool products into major textile markets.

Trish has worked in the rural sector as an economist with NSW Agriculture and Meat and Livestock Australia in the Sustainable Grazing Systems project. Currently Trish is a member of the Riverina Regional Development Board and a director of companies involved in medical and hardware distribution and sales. She is married to a wool producer.
