

60 Years AASMB

Sixty Years of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (1959 – 2019) and onwards

(Acknowledgement: Research and original compilation by Carol-Ann Malouf OAM for AASMB website, edited/updated by AASMB)



Although established in 1959 to become the national body for Merino Studs in Australia, and incorporated in 1987 as a company limited by guarantee, a history of the formation of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (AASMB) would be incomplete without tracing the origins of the Australian Stud Merino Flock Register, now maintained by the AASMB, and for that we need to go back to the earliest Sydney Sheep Show.

For three years from 1890, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW had conducted the Inter-Colonial Sheep Show on the Moore Park grounds each July which also coincided with the auction sale of rams. However the 1892 show ran at a loss, largely due to the withdrawal of a Government subsidy of 50 per cent of prize money and it was decided to cancel this show.

In the press however, particularly the influential Pastoralists' Review, there was considerable pressure for the establishment of a sheep breeders' association to conduct a sheep show and also to establish a stud register. Although the RAS had established a "stud sheep flock book" in 1893, this listed only British sheep breeds which led to the claim that Merinos were selling cheaply because of their unrecognised pedigree. In the late 1880s there had also been an attempt to form an Australian Sheepbreeders' Association but this failed due to the difficult times and lack of consensus "amongst pastoralists."

In 1894, a councillor of the RAS, the Hon George H Cox, played a major role in the formation of the NSW Sheepbreeders' Association (NSWSBA) and was elected president, an office he held until his death in 1902. The objects of the association stated that it was to "deal with any matter conducive to the improvement of the breed and quality of sheep, particularly by holding Annual Sheep Shows at such time and place as the Committee may appoint" and with this charter the newly formed association conducted the first Sydney Sheep Show the following year, 1895, in the wool store of Winchcombe Carson.

In records of the 1911 Annual General Meeting of the NSWSBA, reference is made to a report on the compilation of a Stud Merino Register but it was not until the 1917 AGM that a proposal was put forward which was to be mailed to all members for an expression of opinion. That meeting however had weightier issues of the day to

discuss such as the difficulties in securing Anthrax vaccine, the benefit of "cross country" rail links for moving stock, the effects of war and the national economy and the need for repatriation arrangements, blowfly control measures, the protection of studs from the Closer Settlement Act, and the decline in stock numbers. The main item of business however was consideration of the previous year's proposal by the RAS of NSW that they amalgamate with the NSW SBA for the running of the Sydney Sheep Show.

During the joint subcommittee discussions that followed, Mr H M Somer, a committee member of the NSW SBA who was also then secretary of the RAS, proposed that the association "do something in the way of getting a history of the Merino flocks of Australia". The suggestion was also made that the maintenance of the register should be the main function of the NSW SBA, whereas previously the conduct of the Sydney Sheep Show had been its focus.

The case of advocates for the flock register had been strengthened after WWI by the demand from overseas for Australian Merinos and the minutes of a special general meeting of the NSW SBA on 5 October 1920 state that

Circumstances had altered which made the establishment of the Register essential for the welfare of the Merino studs, and the further possibilities of trade in these and other countries make some official record of the flocks absolutely necessary; to prevent and contradict many miss-statements made abroad by irresponsible persons to the detriment of any particular flock or flocks; to hallmark the breeding of our existing studs and those that may be established in the future; and to ensure eligibility of Australian Merino Stud sheep in the flock-books of other countries which have them already established and of other countries which intend to do so.

Within the NSW SBA, debate and member consultation was to continue until late 1921 when regulations were adopted and a provisional committee was appointed. Committee representation of two delegates each was sought from similar organisations in Western Australia and South Australia and, along with three delegates representing registered owners and three from the NSW SBA, they met in July 1922 as the Flock Register Executive Committee to finalise the regulations and content of the first volume of the Register of Stud Merino Flocks of the Commonwealth of Australia. This was at last published in June 1923 containing the records of 192 flocks based on the figures of 1921, the 500 copies incurring printing costs of £138.

Flocks No 1 to 93 were from NSW; 94 to 101 from Queensland; 102 to 131 from South Australia; 132 and 133 from Tasmania; 134 to 141 from Victoria; and 142 to 192 from Western Australia. Within seven years that number had more than doubled with the listing of 397 active registered flocks.

Early volumes of the register set out the objects for which it had been established, namely the promotion of the pastoral industry and the encouragement of the breeding of Merino sheep by the publication of a flock register of recognised sires and ewes, and the annual registration of the histories of such sheep. Then, as now, members are required to keep records and provide annual returns of the number of sheep in the stud flock as well as any additions or disposals of sheep throughout the year.

As Charles Massy, author of *The Australian Merino*, writes "While 'certain omissions' riddle the 'little purple book of lies', to quote Neilson Mills' famous statement, the register nevertheless contains an outstanding record of the rise and progress of the Merino industry as a whole, and of individual studs in particular, as well as providing a reasonably accurate base for some genetic decisions." The provision of national Merino statistics has also been an important contribution from stud members.

In 1959, when Volume 36 was released, the last to be produced by the NSW association, there were 1617 flocks from the mainland States. Volume 37 was to be compiled by the newly formed Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders. Fifty years later there are 1185 registered Merino studs in Australia.

The last printed version of the Australian Stud Merino Flock Register was published in 2000, followed in 2002 and 2005 by CD software versions, Volumes 68 and 69. Volume 70 was available from a website download and technology now allows information as well as search facilities on the AASMB website.

FORMATION OF STATE ASSOCIATIONS

New South Wales

The formation of the NSW association (since 1979 called The NSW Stud Merino Breeders' Association), is mentioned above. At that time there were 125 members with entry not confined to stud breeders.

Western Australia

With the NSW association driving the publication of a flock register, then president, Franc B S Falkiner of Haddon Rig, Warren, had written to the Pastoralists' Association of Western Australia and the Royal Agricultural Society of WA in late 1921 outlining the proposal and inviting stud breeders in WA to register their flocks for inclusion in the new publication.

RAS president, Michael Corbett of Telyarup stud near Gnowangerup, recognising the importance of the proposal, not only advocated it but also became the driving force behind the movement for a local stud breeders' association. Thus it was that on 23 May 1922, the Western Australian Merino Stud Breeders' Association (now known as The Stud Merino Breeders' Association of WA Inc) was formed with Michael Corbett as president. It was immediately resolved to affiliate with the NSW association for the purpose of producing a flock register and delegates were appointed to the Flock Register Executive Committee.

South Australia

Some time earlier that year the South Australian Stud Merino Sheepbreeders Association had been formed with 30 members and with W G Hawkes of Koonoona stud, Burra, as president. Subsequently Mr Hawkes worked closely with the WA association, on occasion attending their meetings and advising on the formulation of that association's constitution. Two delegates were also appointed to the Flock Register Executive Committee.

Queensland

Following discussion among stud Merino breeders at the 1933 Brisbane Exhibition, a preliminary committee circularised the State's Merino stud breeders and upon receiving a virtually unanimous response, proceeded to draw up rules in preparation for the foundation of the Queensland Merino Stud Sheepbreeders' Association (QMSSA). At the association's inaugural meeting held on 7 August during the 1934 Exhibition, Robert P Lord of Victoria Downs, Morven, was elected president presiding over a committee of 36 foundation members.

In addressing this first meeting, acting president of the NSW Sheepbreeders' Association, E I Body, was greeted with applause when he said that he had "no doubt in the future there would be a need for a Federal council of the Merino stud sheep breeders of Australia".

Victoria

The Victorian Stud Merino Sheepbreeders' Association was formed on 31 July 1951 with the inaugural president being Sandford R Beggs. At that time there were already 30 registered Victorian flocks in the Flock Register. By the time of the association's first general meeting a year later these memberships had been transferred from NSW Sheepbreeders' Association to the new Victorian association with the number being further bolstered by another 70 members, bringing the total for Victoria to 100.

Tasmania

The first formal structure in Tasmania came with the foundation of the Tasmanian Fine Merino Breeders Association in 1947, set up predominantly as a wool promotion and marketing group for fine/superfine Tasmanian wool. While initially declining inclusion in the Flock Register in favour of promotion from within Tasmania, seven studs did apply for inclusion in 1962. As new studs were founded and broader bloodlines introduced to the island State, it was felt that a more encompassing body should be formed with the Stud Merino Breeders Association of Tasmania holding their first meeting on 13 June 1986 under the chairmanship of inaugural president, John Taylor of Winton. In that year there were 23 Tasmanian registered studs.

AUSTRALIAN STUD MERINO FLOCK REGISTER

Flocks registered from Vol I that remained in 2019

F. No Stud	F. No Stud
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NSW	QLD
7 Boonoke	100 Victoria Downs
11 Bundemar	SA
18 Caroonboon	102 Anlaby
32 Egelabra	115 East Bungaree
42 Goolgumbla	WA
48 Haddon Rig	153 Cranmore Park
51 Kilnyana	162 Jaloran
56 Merryville	166 Mianelup
57 Merryville-Murgha	172 Privett
63 Mumblebone)	
83 Wanganella	
87 Willandra	

Historical Reference Flocks

Belle Vue (Tas), Brindley Park (NSW), Brindley Park (NSW), Camden Park (NSW), Collaroy (NSW), Esk Vale (Tas), Lara (Vic), Rambouillet (France & Usa), Scone (Tas).

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUD MERINO BREEDERS



In 1958 at the instigation of NSW Sheepbreeders' Association president, George Falkiner, a special meeting was convened in Melbourne, attended by the presidents and senior vice presidents of the state associations and NSW SBA secretary, Ralph Storey. Previous attempts to form a national body in the thirties did not meet with success although the outbreak of WWII had some bearing on this.

The decision had been driven by what was seen as an urgent need for the formation of a body to represent stud Merino breeders on a national level and by the considerable increase in the numbers of members of the associations in Victoria, SA and WA. Until the early '50s, NSW studs dominated as far as numbers of breeders, numbers of sheep owned and also the number of rams sold.

It would also seem a natural progression as Volume 35 of the Flock Register, produced in 1958, shows the Flock Register Executive Committee in a similar format to that of 1922 with delegates from each mainland State, as well as a Flock Register Sub-Committee comprising 12 committee members from NSW and Queensland, 8 from SA and the full councils of the Victorian and WA associations.

Of that first meeting, convened to prepare a constitution for submission to the first annual meeting of the new body in 1959, Ralph Storey recalled, "it was a very friendly meeting with all those present firmly of the opinion that a national body was essential if stud Merino breeders were to be properly represented".

It was unanimously agreed that the council of the new body should comprise three members of the NSW association and two from each other State except Tasmania, which would have one representative. Today the association's council comprises up to two members from States (one from Tasmania and one from Queensland) plus the president with an additional position, that of treasurer, if required.

At the inaugural meeting in June 1959, Mr George B S Falkiner was unanimously elected president and Ralph Storey undertook the role of secretary. The association also had as a prime objective the production of the *Australian Stud Merino Flock Register*, previously handled by the NSW SBA. The AASMB is officially regarded as the body which speaks on behalf of all registered stud Merino breeders in Australia and part of its charter is to make representations to governments on behalf of members on a range of issues that affect them. It is sometimes necessary to defend breeders' rights in such areas as flock health standards, animal welfare and other issues. There is also liaison with statutory authorities and scientific and research organisations as well as stock agents and various other sectors of the industry. **An overall responsibility is to ensure that the genetic requirements of commercial woolgrowers continue to be met.**

In 1961, the newly formed association made its first submission to the Commonwealth Government which had set up the Wool Marketing Committee of Inquiry to look into the efficacy of the systems of marketing and promoting the Australian woolclip. In those early years the AASMB was also active in seeking relief for studs in relation to Land Tax and had commenced a campaign for the relaxation of the Merino export embargo. The association had also taken control of the *Journal of Wool Technology and Sheepbreeding*.

The AASMB was consulted in 1968 by the Australian Wool Industry Conference (AWIC) on the conditions to be placed on the sale of Merinos for export when the embargo was lifted and in 1970 when the Government announced that Sydney would be the location of the first permitted export sale, detailed conditions were drawn up to protect the interests of local breeders and to ensure the security and identification of rams purchased for export. However the sale was subjected to industrial action and immediate shipment was prevented. This issue was debated through the '70s with the embargo being reinforced and woolgrowers divided over its abolition.

In July 1979 the unions relaxed their attitude and a compromise was reached. The Federal Government established a quota system which initially allowed the annual export of 300 rams realising over \$1000 at auction with no limit on rams under \$1000. The export of Merino ewes and embryos was prohibited and this ban remained in place until 2010. The AASMB was appointed to oversee all designated Merino export sales and guidelines and conditions were set which were reviewed by the Department of Agriculture and AASMB from time to time. In 2009 the quota was 800 rams plus 100 rams nominated as export semen donors. It is interesting to note that over the ten year period 1999 to 2009, the largest number of rams exported in any one year was 170, and the lowest 4.

As well as six export auction sales, a *National Register of Merino Semen Export Donors* was established and maintained by the AASMB, whereby no more than 100 rams may be so nominated in any one calendar year and no stud may nominate more than three rams per year outside the export auction system.

Following a government review of Australia's Merino export policy in 2009, the Livestock Export (Merino) Repeal Order (No. 1 of 2009) was passed and took effect from 1 January 2010, resulting in all restrictions on Australia's Merino export trade being removed.

The AASMB undertook to continue its role as the peak industry body that oversees the quality of Merinos for export. It was agreed that the AASMB recommendation and guidelines on procedure for the Export of Merino sheep and genetic material be used to establish a sustainable export structure for the future.

In 1980 the AASMB introduced objective measurement data in sale catalogues and updated annual returns to record technological advances, such as AI. There was a further export review and submissions regarding stud shearing rates and railway freight charges. The AASMB also lobbied against the provisions of legislation regarding cruelty to animals which would affect the operations of stock owners.

The following year (1981) the AASMB was accepted as an associate member of Wool Council and after conveying the association's views to this forum for the next 18 years voted to discontinue membership in 1999 on the grounds that the sought after implementation of substantial reform and restructure had not occurred.

Other issues looked at during that decade were the importation of fat-tail sheep, Texan Rambouillet Merinos, sire referencing schemes, and there was further input to the question of Merino ram exports particularly in regard to sale quotas, terms and conditions of sale, video sales, sale of semen and health protocols. In June 1987 the AASMB also joined the Australian Federation for the Welfare of Animals and was involved in counteracting erroneous suggestions made by those representing the Animal Liberation Movement. AASMB remained a member until the federation ceased operations in 1994.

In the mid '80s the AASMB was appointed by Central Test Sire Evaluation (CTSE) site committees as the independent body to oversee national activities and lay guidelines to ensure the highest level of quality and credibility. The AASMB's National Sire Evaluation Policy Committee met regularly to review and set procedures, assess accuracy and endorse publication of results from accredited sites. In early 2000 the AASMB withdrew from the oversight role when the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) was formed to take over the role of overseer.

In 1987 the AASMB was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

During the decade of the '90s, the wide-ranging activities of the association included standardisation of shearing dates, tags and certificates; lobbying against the importation of African haired meat breeds - a contaminant to the Australian wool clip, and subsequently lobbying for controls including an AWEX code of practice; and oversight of genetic improvement schemes, specifically WoolPlan and its replacement, RAMPOWER which was directed by a national co-ordinating committee made up primarily of representatives from AASMB and commercial woolgrowers.

Throughout that decade the association continued to take a close interest in such matters as quarantine procedures, live sheep exports, the activities of the statutory wool authorities and their associated wool marketing functions, as well as government initiatives related to drought relief procedures, transport regulations and costs and a range of other government regulations affecting the Merino industry. Most of these avenues of involvement have continued. Support was also given to the Australian Games Uniform Company by sourcing donations of wool for uniforms for Australian athletes in the 1994 Commonwealth Games and the 1996 Olympic Games.

The year 1996 saw unprecedented involvement by the AASMB in the issue of the fixed selling of the wool stockpile. In June of that year a meeting of the AASMB endorsed the resolution of the NSW and WA associations that "the Government be asked to legislate immediately to alter the fixed selling schedule of the stockpile in favour of a more commercially flexible selling strategy and that interest and holding costs be met from the sale proceeds".

This unprecedented involvement by the national and state breeder associations in entering a debate on wool industry reform was born of the despair and frustrations being voiced by woolgrowers across Australia. What followed was, to quote The Land newspaper in their commentary after the August Ministerial Roundtable (5 September 1996), "one of the most successful grassroots mobilisation campaigns in the recent history of Australian farming".

The campaign was taken Australia-wide through media releases and advertising and after a series of thirteen meetings in all Merino breeding states in the course of just over a fortnight, 10,577 votes had been cast with 95 per cent voting in favour of change. The association's submission was then presented to a Ministerial Roundtable and a more commercially flexible release schedule was the outcome.

During 1999 the AASMB addressed all terms of reference in a detailed submission to the Australian Wool Industry Future Directions Task Force calling for an in-depth analysis of operational structures to avoid retention of past thinking under a new name. The association also successfully supported an approach to MLA for research funding into teeth eruption and eating quality in young sheep and was successful in lobbying for the retention of the Falkiner Memorial Field Station.

Also that year a sub-committee of the AASMB held meetings with the Sheepmeat Council of Australia and MLA requesting that an equitable proportion of transaction levy funds paid by the Merino industry be applied to the promotion, research and development of the Australian Merino lamb market. While the association mounted strenuous opposition, legislation was passed enforcing a tax on the sale of all sheep despite the Rural Senate Committee finding in favour of the AASMB's argument that the levy should be a once-only tax paid on the sale of sheep for slaughter or for live export.

The AASMB also launched its website in 1999, www.merinos.com.au which, along with general AASMB information and Merino history, contains links to the websites of the various State Merino associations, genetic comparison information, downloadable forms, Merino export procedures and search facilities for all studs contained in the Australian Stud Merino Flock Register.

Through much of that decade and well into the new century, a considerable amount of the AASMB's time, and indeed that of the State associations, was spent under the cloud of Ovine Johne's Disease, working towards solutions for control and for fair compensation. The AASMB was consistent in its criticism of the management of the disease and the regulation programme, seeking more equitable and practical solutions while at the same time supporting affected members through a range of initiatives including concessional membership. The AASMB supported risk-based trading with vaccination and along with taking a number of initiatives to Government, consulted on bringing accuracy to export protocols. Under the AASMB's umbrella, State associations were also very active in seeking solutions, supporting members and applying funds to research aspects such as vaccine trials. In 2015 OJD management and controversial controls continue to be a priority in animal health.

The new century has seen the AASMB continue to raise concerns about the contamination threat from exotic sheep breeds, dark and medullated fibre and bale contamination; renew lobbying for research into blowfly control; and publicly support the live sheep trade, bearing in mind that good husbandry practices and healthy sheep are a priority pursuit of all members.

In 2000 recommendations were adopted on minimum standards for on-property ram sales and recommendations on requirements for sampling and testing rams at shows and multi-vendor sales were introduced. The association also worked on "Minimum Standards for Conduct of Wether Trials" for acceptance by departments of Agriculture.

In 2006, the AASMB's first National Leadership Course was held in Clare, South Australia with 20 participants who had been nominated by the state associations. With sponsorship from Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), the course focussed on the development of leadership skills to ensure that future leaders maintain and expand their profile and advocacy role in the Australian Merino industry. Open to young Australians involved in the Merino sheep and wool industry, the AASMB subsequently conducted a second course, sponsored by AWI, FarmBis and the National Australia Bank in 2008 and 2010. Further successful courses are now conducted as a biennial event with support from AASMB under the AWI platform.

The AASMB's stand on mulesing has been widely publicised with the association supporting mulesing with pain relief until there is an economically viable alternative. It strongly supports research being conducted into a satisfactory alternative to mulesing. Australian Merino stud members, through genetic development, have been placing emphasis on plainer/less wrinkle traits, with some work being achieved on seeking bare-breech genes for a more easy care Merino.

Currently, the AASMB has representation at or is working on projects involving the Merino Consultative Group, the AWI Industry Consultative Committee, Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association, WoolProducers Animal Health and Welfare Committee, Wild Dogs, Livestock export, National Wool Forecasting Committee, Rural Youth Leadership and has had representation on the panel of each three-yearly WoolPoll.

In 2015 AASMB's first female President was appointed. Mrs Georgina Wallace from Trefusis in Ross, Tasmania.

In 2016 the AASMB launched the Breed More Merino Ewes Campaign designed to help address the serious decline in Merino numbers in Australia and raise awareness of the Merino's flexibility and profitability.

For 60 years, the AASMSB has stood united behind all its stated aims, objects and endeavours as it continues to strive to meet the needs of its members and commercial woolgrowers.

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THE AASMB SECRETARIAT

On 5th April 1990, the Australia Merino Centre (AMC) was officially opened at Sydney Showground, Moore Park, beneath the Bill O'Reilly Stand. Prior to this, the secretariat had been operated by the RAS in its Administration Building. The opening was performed by His Excellency Rear Admiral Sir David Martin, Governor of NSW.

The secretariat of the AMC was responsible for the administrative and secretarial functions of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders Limited, under the directorship of Mrs Carol King until 2011. The centre also served as the headquarters of the NSW Stud Merino Breeders Association Limited and the World Federation of Merino Breeders. Since the transfer of Sydney Showground in 1997 to Homebush Bay, now Sydney Olympic Park, the AMC has been located on the first floor of the RAS Administration Building. In a rationalisation of the Association in 2013, the AASMB offices were transferred to Victoria.

In the association's first fifty-years there were only 3 registrars of the association, Ralph Storey (1959 -1980), Douglass Aspinall (1980-1997) and Carol King (1997-2011). Since then Ed Dugan (2011-2013); Marion Gibbins (2013-current).

The association also has the prerogative of appointing Honorary Life Members "to pay tribute to people who have made an outstanding contribution over many years to the Australian sheep and wool industry". The award was introduced in 1985 when Sir William Gunn was inducted as the inaugural Honorary Life Member. To those ranks since have been added Mr Ron Collins in 1986, Mr Don Vanrenen AO in 1987 and Mr Eric Ashby in 1989, Mr GL Keamy in 2010, Messrs WB Merriman and RJ Ashby AM in 2012.

At a Council meeting in 1997 the position of Associate Life Member was also introduced with former AMC executive director and secretary of the AASMB, Douglass Aspinall AO being appointed.

The Poll Merino Breeders' Association

The Poll Merino Breeders' Association of Australia (PMBA) was formed on 2 June 1956 with Basil Clapham as president. In acknowledgement of Otway Falkiner's significant contribution to the Australian wool industry through the establishment of the Boonoke Poll Merino flock and stud he was elected patron and the Boonoke Poll stud was registered as Poll Flock No 1, as it remains to this day.

The first separate section for Poll Merinos in the *Australian Stud Merino Flock Register* appeared in Volume 34 the following year with 86 Poll studs listed. Objects were similar to those of the various state Merino associations with the added qualification that the association was also formed to protect the breed from possible attempts to establish a Poll Merino by the infusion of other breeds and to ensure the purity of blood in any registered stud. The PMBA was also given a seat for two representatives on the Flock Register Executive and on the state Sub-Committees. The PMBA continued to administer the association until it was disbanded in 1977 and since then the AASMB has maintained the Poll Merino section in the Flock Register. In 2009 there were 370 Poll Merino studs in the flock register; in 2019 (at the time of writing) there are some 427 Poll Merino studs in the flock register, representing 47% of the 907 registered Australian Merino studs.

The World Federation of Merino Breeders

In July 1982, the AASMB conducted the 1st World Merino Conference having formed an organising committee in 1980. Held in Melbourne, it was an outstanding success with representatives from each Australian state and 12 countries. At the close of the conference a meeting was held between members of the AASMB and representatives of those countries present with the decision made that a second World Merino Conference should

be held in Spain in 1986. It was further resolved that an international association of stud Merino breeders be formed and this was ratified with the formation of the World Federation of Merino Breeders (WFMB) during that 2nd World Merino Conference. Donald Vanrenen was elected foundation president and a World Merino Conference has been since held at four year intervals.

The AASMB has led large delegations to each of these, South Africa (1990), Uruguay (1994), New Zealand (1998), Hungary (2002), Perth, Australia (2006) Rambouillet, France (2010), Stellenbosch, South Africa (2014), Uruguay (2018) and staged an exhibit at each conference. Refer to [this page](#) for more information.

The AASMB is indebted to Carol-Ann Malouf OAM for the research and recording of the history of 50 years of the AASMB (1959-2009) and acknowledges her work originally compiling this document. The AASMB continues periodically to edit and update this document to continue the recording of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders.