

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 65

**Division/Agency:** Australian Wool Innovation

**Topic:** Shearing Matters

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator WILLIAMS asked:**

1. How many shearers are currently in the industry in Australia
2. What is the average age of these shearers
3. Can the agency advise whether numbers are declining or increasing

**Answer:**

1. The 2011 Census lists the number of shearers at 3 204.
2. The average age of shearers varies significantly. Of those the Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) has trained, the average age for wool handlers is 24 years old and the average age for shearers trained is 40 years old. AWI cannot confirm whether this is representative of the rest of the industry, but only of those trained as a result of AWI activity.
3. The number of shearers has been declining for some years.

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**Agriculture and Water Resources**

**Question:** 66

**Division/Agency:** Australian Wool Innovation

**Topic:** Q Fever

**Proof Hansard page:** Written

**Senator WILLIAMS asked:**

1. Have there been incidences of shearers contracting Q fever
2. Has there ever been consideration of an awareness programme for shearers to be vaccinated against Q fever.

**Answer:**

1. Within the remit of Australian Wool Innovation's (AWI) role as research, development and marketing organisation for the wool industry, we do not have direct involvement in this issue. However AWI is aware that some contractors request their employees to have Q Fever shots prior to commencement. The Shearing Contractors' Association represents the interests of shearers and may have more detailed information to assist.
2. AWI is not aware of such a campaign currently operating, however in New South Wales, the responsible agency, NSW WorkCover, has previously covered vaccination costs for industry workers. The issue has not been raised with AWI by growers in terms of identifying it as a priority area in which AWI should invest Research Development & Extension (RD&E) levy funds. The Shearing Contractors' Association represents the interests of shearers and may have more detailed information to assist on this matter.