



# Provenance storytelling for success

**Case Study 4: Australian Wool Network**  
February 2020



**AgriFutures™**  
National Rural  
Issues

## Storytelling for agribusiness

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This case study is one of a series produced for an AgriFutures project to investigate product provenance storytelling used by agriculture producers and businesses.

In addition to the case studies, a Futures & Consumer Trends Report is available analysing existing and emerging options and technologies to support the development and communication of provenance and storytelling.

A storytelling handbook and useful templates to assist with platform selection are also available to help Australian agribusinesses tell their own stories.



Learn more [agrifutures.com.au/provenance-storytelling](https://agrifutures.com.au/provenance-storytelling)



**“Our overall objective was to deliver on our promise of being innovative in wool and to deliver genuine value to our client’s businesses - it’s this that underpins everything we do.”**

- Cynthia Jarratt, Wool Provenance Program Manager -DNA,  
Australian Wool Network

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# Company overview

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The Australian Wool Network (AWN) is a privately-owned Australian company established in 1999. Built on the idea of being different and innovative in the wool marketing and wool services arena, traditionally known as wool brokering services. AWN's purpose is to deliver genuine value to its client's wool growing businesses through innovative wool marketing opportunities.

Australian wool growers have long wanted to know where their wool goes when it leaves the farm - what it was made into and who would eventually wear or use it. AWN started with a vision of bringing wool growers closer to wool processors, to bridge that gap and make connections between the two. Today that vision is to now make those connections all the way through to the consumer. In 2014, this vision was finally realised with the acquisition of a knitwear manufacturing business in Victoria. AWN is currently the

only wool broker in Australia that has its own Australian based knitwear manufacturing business. The only one to take clients' wool all the way through the processing line to the consumer. Through this business AWN is now able to connect to the consumer through product provenance stories, showing where the wool came from, who grew it and then all the way through the processing pipeline to a yarn that AWN would then use to manufacture garments here in Australia.

## Location

### National and International

Multiple locations

## Products

### Wool

To be used in Merino apparel, accessories and homewares

## Other details

### Employees

Less than 500



**“It makes me proud to have grown the fibre which has finished up in a garment that someone wants to buy.”**

- Nathan, Terry and Ros Howard, Kangaroo Island, DNA program participants

# The story

**AWN’s Direct Network Advantage (DNA) Provenance Program is a wool supply program made available exclusively to its wool growing clients. The program showcases these clients and the regions in which they grow their wool through unique stories.**

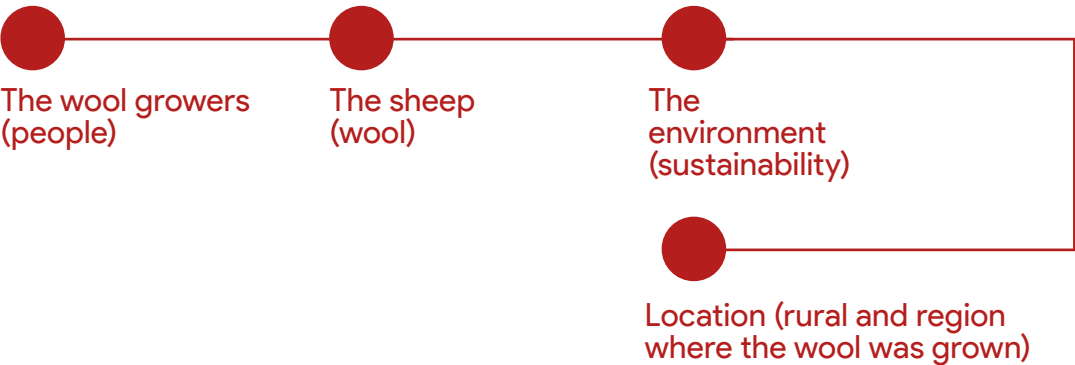
Each story is unique relating to the location and region the wool is produced in, the environment in which it was grown, the sheep, and the dedicated people involved in bringing the wool to market.

Kangaroo Island, South Australia was the first regionally branded DNA program for AWN. Around 20 wool growers, all members of the Kangaroo Island Wool group, joined both AWN and DNA. Through visiting Kangaroo Island, building relationships with the growers and the

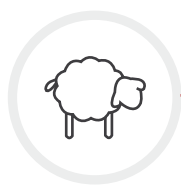
environment in which the wool is grown, AWN discovered the true reason as to why their wool was so special. Rodney and Judie Bell are one of the many families who grow 6000 Merino and Merino X sheep at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island. The Bell family have been farming at Kingscote forever and still love the challenge. They run a family business, with all their kids at home working on the farm and forming a big part of their successful business.

Through the DNA program the Bell family have been able to see what happens to their product when it leaves the farm, prior to engaging in this program they had not been able to. For the first time they are seeing the end result of their hard work. Farming on Kangaroo Island has become a bonus, rather than a disadvantage. It is a unique place to live and work, and the Bell family can now share this with everyone through the DNA program.

## The story elements

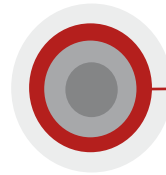


# Summary



## Industry sector

Wool



## Business size

Medium Business  
(Less than 500 employees)



## Customers

Australian Wool growers  
Global Wool retailers  
Global Wool customers



## Key markets

Domestic and international (global)

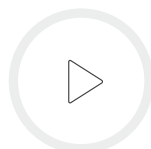
## Platforms used to tell their story



Social Media



Website

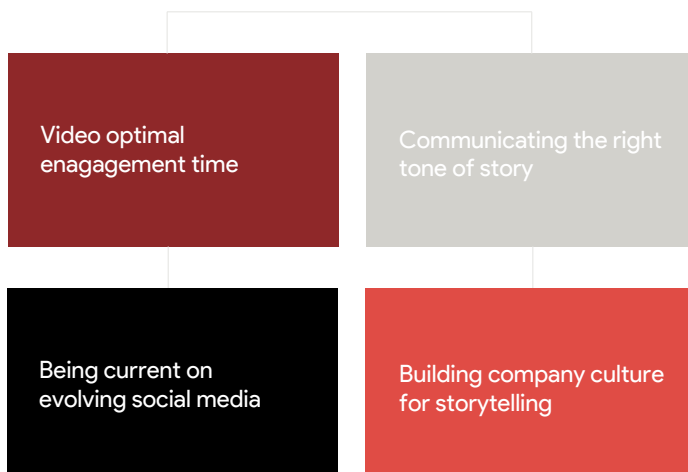


Video



QR codes on swing tags

## Challenges



# Business goals

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**The whole idea behind the AWN's DNA provenance program started from the Paddock to Plate movement - increasingly people particularly wanted to know where their food and fibre came from, who has grown it and if it grown responsibly and sustainably.**

This provenance program was ultimately driven by the consumer and a desire to meet this demand by being innovative in how the wool was presented to the wool consumer. The consumers are interested from a holistic point of view and want to be seen to be supporting products that are sustainable and grown responsibly.

Provenance storytelling highlighting the sustainability and naturally grown attributes of the product has resonated with consumers and has also increased the AWN customer base by attracting new clients to Australian Wool Network. This was a core business objective.

From a retailing point of view the program has allowed retailers to leverage the product provenance story with their own customers - providing them with a unique point of difference and adding extra value at point of sale.

For the vast majority of growers, the goal of participating in the DNA provenance program is three-fold - to know where their product is being used, to be part of something bigger, actively helping to drive demand and to be growing wool for a purpose and specific end use. There is also a price premium advantage; however, for many this is less of a driver for participation.

Strong communities are an important part of life in rural Australia for wool growers. Promoting and leveraging the community in which the wool was grown is equally as important. As such rural communities are highlighted through the DNA provenance stories. Wool growers from a particular region can leverage their stories across their communities and through regional tourism organisations.

There is strong evidence that consumers buy a product because it has a provenance story. Provenance stories are important here in Australia but are stronger in the northern hemisphere, AWN expect that in time they will become equally as important here too. The DNA provenance program ensures that AWN clients' wool is market ready to meet consumer demand for provenance.



Build relationships and trust with our customers



Increase in sales



Educate consumers to value products, how it is produced and where it comes from



Differentiate product from the competition



Support market strategy/ positioning



Support expansion to new markets





**“It completes the circle for us - we breed the lambs, care for them into adulthood, shear annually and sell our wool for processing into garments. To know people are wearing garments with our wool is the final piece of the puzzle!”**

- Christine and Lloyd Berry, Kangaroo Island SA, DNA Program participant

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# Provenance storytelling platforms

Australian Wool Network use a variety of digital platforms and customer touchpoints to communicate their provenance story. The following pages describe how Australian Wool Network use the platforms highlighted in red below.



## **Social Media**

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter:  
Sharing of social media content on grower stories



## **Website**

Website with grower stories



## **QR codes on swing tags**

QR codes are used on swing tags to communicate product provenance stories with consumers



## **Video**

Vimeo channel:  
sharing platform, to communicate grower stories, embedded to website and social media platforms

YouTube channel:  
embedded to website and social media platforms. Focus on grower stories and wool manufacturing



# Platform deep dive

## Video



AWN uses Vimeo as an alternative video sharing platform to YouTube, a way to communicate provenance stories and information about wool manufacturing.

Most of the AWN provenance storytelling videos are stored and leveraged through Vimeo, mainly because of the perceived quality of images and to avoid the advertising and clutter that comes with YouTube.

This technology has been embedded into their website and shared on their social media platforms.



Flockers Outback - Rhythms of Life  
• Video thumbnail



Flockers Outback - Feel the Spirit  
• Video thumbnail



Flockers Outback - Ancient Mysteries  
• Video thumbnail



Flockers Outback - Outback Melrose  
• Video thumbnail

### Vimeo Snapshot



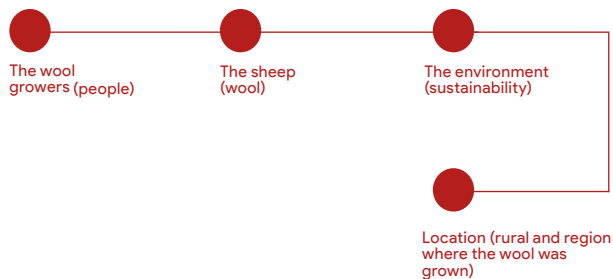
Vimeo is a video sharing platform that is an alternative to YouTube. Both were started in 2004 but there are several differences between the two platforms. Over 1 billion users watch millions of hours of content a day on YouTube. While Vimeo is a much smaller community with 170 million viewers with about 25% of them in the USA. YouTube produces more content, but quantity does not always mean quality. There are different levels of memberships on both platforms. Different levels provide different users experiences. Vimeo is ad free while YouTube will show ads unless you have a paid premium membership. Both platforms can be embedded in your website and be linked to social media platforms.

Learn more

<https://vimeo.com/woolnetwork>



## Story elements



## Impact

Videos have had the greatest engagement with the target audiences. Consumer engagement is a key message of digital and social media with more than 15,000 lifetime plays of the various different woolgrower stories. Swing tags and point of sale boards which bear the QR (quick reader) code that link the consumer directly through to the video have had positive results with around 30% of plays originating from a swing tag. The point of sale (POS) board have had significantly less (<2%) but the results are in line with our expectations given where these are used and the limited available retail space.

## Target audience reached

Wool customers, clients and consumers.

## Challenges

Finding the sweet spot from a duration point of view. AWN have experimented with different lengths of storytelling. They have found that the shorter the better - maximum of 30 seconds seems to be the optimal time. Getting the tone right is also a challenge. AWN have learnt that humour wins 9/10 times - not every story lends itself to a humorous aspect but when it does it certainly works quite effectively. Storytelling that expands over two to three episodes has also helped to create deeper audience engagement.

Learn more

<https://vimeo.com/woolnetwork>





# Platform deep dive

## QR codes on product swing tags

AWN uses QR codes and swing tags to communicate product provenance stories with retail customers at the point of sale.

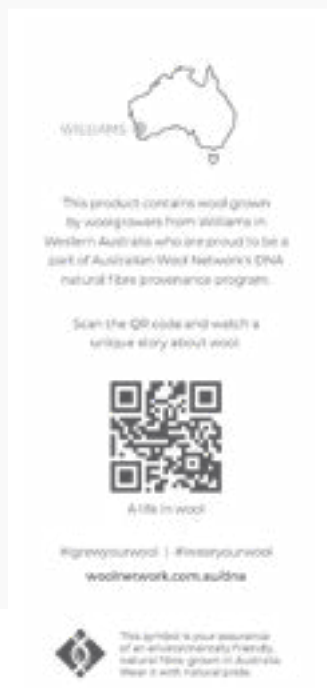
Using this platform AWN introduces consumers to the wool growers who contributed to the making of the garment, their sheep and the environment and region of Australia in which the wool was grown.

The QR codes are used on the product swing tags and when scanned link to the videos in the AWN DNA program. This connects and engages the consumer and gives the product its provenance, or DNA, by sharing a story about the life of the wool grower. Through the library of stories generated via the DNA program, wool growers are now connected with the consumer, giving them a genuine opportunity to know who will be wearing their wool.

### QR Code Snapshot



A QR code (short for 'quick response' code) is a type of barcode that contains a matrix of dots. It can be scanned using a smartphone with a built-in camera. QR codes have a high information storage capability including text, URLs and videos with the capacity to link consumers to product authentication information. Easy to generate and link to information. QR codes can be printed on many different materials including waterproof packaging and labels. Scanning a QR Code is quick. It takes an average of 15 seconds. This includes the time it takes to take out your smartphone, open a scanning app, hold the device steady towards the code and scan.





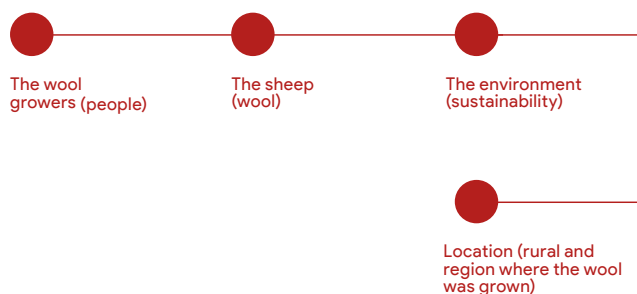
“We captured this story on film and can now share 'the other side' of wool growing with consumers via a QR code enabled swing tag on MerinoSnug garments. There's always more to growing wool than you think!”

- Jigsaw Farms, Hamilton VIC DNA Program participant

## Target audience reached

Wool customers and Wool Growers

## Story elements



Learn more

<https://www.woolnetwork.com.au/dna.html>

## Impact

AWN has seen that consumers will buy the product because it has the provenance story. It is important domestically but particularly important in the Northern Hemisphere, from a retailing and manufacturing point of view it has added extra value to retailer businesses. AWN have retailers leveraging the product provenance story with their customers at point of sale. Engagement and responses from clients and enquiries from new clients is a Key Performance Indicator and these continue to exceed expectations. Wool growers are continually wanting to be part of this revolution in provenance based wool marketing.

## Challenges

Bitly codes - shortened URL codes - have been instrumental to helping to track and monitor different links and maintain integrity of our QR codes once they hit market.

# Platform deep dive

## Social media



AWN uses Facebook to show the videos and introduce viewers to the premise behind the DNA wool grower story through engaging content. Instagram provides an opportunity to share “simple, beautiful and emotive” posts – a brief, beautiful glimpse.

Facebook has been particularly effective in building a strong network and genuinely engaging our audience. It has helped to spread the stories far and wide across broader networks, and celebrate the successes of the program.

Social media growth has been organic with no investment in paid advertising.

### Social Media Snapshot



Social media are web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by both sharing and consuming information. The most common ones used for storytelling are Facebook and Instagram. However, other platforms such as Pinterest, Snapchat and Twitter can also be used. More platforms are likely to be developed in the future. Content is critical on social media. Every single clip, blog, video or image on social media should be a mini-story in itself and have a beginning, middle and end. Each piece of content can and should be used to build a bigger story too - one that connects with your product provenance and your unique story.

Learn more

<https://www.instagram.com/woolnetworkaus/>

<https://www.facebook.com/australianwoolnetwork/>



**Instagram**  
**1,207 followers**  
*August 2019*



**Facebook**  
**1,280 followers**  
*August 2019*







## Target audience reached

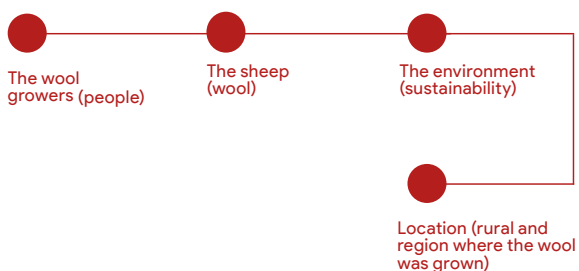
Clients, consumers and customers

Target audience is 30-50s +

## Impact

Fantastic impact achieving the most likes and shares for video stories when posted on Facebook in particular.

## Story elements



## Challenges

Since starting the storytelling journey 5 years ago AWN have recognised that the social media environment is constantly shifting. On Facebook in particular audiences are changing, and key demographics are even starting to drop off. There is a need to monitor the changes and to keep an eye on other potential platforms to replace or supplement the current social media platforms.

Recognising the growth and finding the resources, staff and the people to support provenance storytelling has been a challenge. It took AWN a long time to evaluate how effective provenance storytelling was for their business and the resources that were needed to do it effectively. As a result, they report that there was so much more that they could have done earlier to leverage it and make the road to the success they now enjoy shorter.

# Summary

## Impact against business goals

Overall what AWN were trying to achieve was to be innovative and to be seen to be different - proactively different. In addition to meeting their business goals provenance storytelling has had some unexpected benefits.

For example, while growing market share was not an original goal, AWN has been successful in doing that, expanding markets domestically and internationally.

Goal	Description	Impact (star rating 1-5)
	Educate consumers to value products, understand how it is produced and where it comes from	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	Increase sales	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	Get higher prices	Not applicable
	Support market strategy/positioning	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	To differentiate the product from competitors	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
	Support expansion to new markets	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
	Grow market share	Not applicable

★ Low to no impact	★★ OK impact	★★★ Medium impact	★★★★ Valuable impact	★★★★★ High impact
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# Summary

## Platform effectiveness

“Our base platform for detailed information is our website. From there visitors can find out about the DNA program and go to other parts of the website to find out more about AWN and what we do.”








- Cynthia Jarratt, Wool Provenance Program Manager - DNA, Australian Wool Network

The AWN website acts as a central point. It has been effective by providing an opportunity to expand on the provenance stories and encourage people to explore more in depth personal and

individual information about the wool growers, their farm and their life as a wool grower.

Video stories are core to the effectiveness of the AWN DNA provenance program and are stored on Vimeo. Facebook has proven to be a strong networking tool, helping to spread the AWN provenance stories far and wide.

Instagram is also used as part of a portfolio of digital channels. It is less effective than Facebook in terms of sharing in depth information, however, it is good to showcase short videos, beautiful and emotive images and targets a different demographic.

Platform	Description	Impact (star rating 1-5)
	Website	★★★★★
	Facebook social media	★★★★★
	Instagram social media	★★★☆☆
	Youtube	★★☆☆☆
	Twitter	★★☆☆☆
	Vimeo	★★★★☆
	QR Codes	★★★★☆



Low to no impact



OK impact



Medium impact



Valuable impact



High impact



# Future plans

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AWN will continue to produce video stories and reach out to more wool growers around Australia to share their stories.

AWN currently has 48 different and unique stories and still haven't run out. No two stories are the same because everyone has a unique story to tell.

One of the ways that they will expand and grow audience engagement is to delve into Podcasts.

AWN has not focused on WeChat and other platforms popular in China and other parts of Asia. So this is another area for future consideration.

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**Thanks to Australian Wool Network  
and Cynthia Jarratt for their time and  
contribution to this case study.**

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*All images in this document are provided by Australian Wool Network.*

## More information

More information about storytelling and a step by step guide to help producers tell their 'Story For Success' is available on the AgriFutures website [agrifutures.com.au/provenance-storytelling](https://agrifutures.com.au/provenance-storytelling)

This case study can be viewed at  
[agrifutures.com.au/australian-wool-network](https://agrifutures.com.au/australian-wool-network)



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