

# The wool market

**Australia is the world's leading producer of wool, producing almost 345 million kilograms of wool; about one-quarter of global wool production.**

Australia is also the world's leading **exporter** of wool and the leading producer of fine apparel wool, producing more than 90 per cent of the world's supply of wool less than 19.5 microns.

About 90 per cent of Australian wool is sold by live (open-cry) auction, where potential buyers all bid on the wool they want and the highest bidder secures the wool.

Each **sale lot** is **core tested** and the results made available to potential buyers with a **grab sample**, so they can be assured of the quality of the wool they are purchasing.

This information helps buyers assess the suitability of each lot of wool for its intended purpose.

## Fast facts

- Australia produces about 90 per cent of the world's fine apparel wool.
- Most wool produced in Australia is sold by live auction, where the highest bidder wins.
- China is Australia's major wool buyer.
- Most of Australia's wool is sold and exported as **greasy wool** and processed overseas into a wide range of end products.

## Major markets

Australia sells wool to many countries around the world, but China is the main market for Australian Merino wool. Other important markets include India and Italy.

Most wool sold in Australia is sent overseas as **greasy wool**, processed and made into a wide range of products, such as fashion garments, textiles and furnishings.

After processing, some of the products are imported back into Australia and sold to local consumers, but most are sold to consumers in the Northern Hemisphere.

Processing is expensive and labour intensive. Countries like China have less expensive labour and can process wool more cheaply than Australia.

## Did you know?

- The Woolmark Company has developed a seasonal guide to the best wool fabrics and yarns in the world to promote wool to the textile industry — The Wool Lab.



**Global market:** China is Australia's largest market for high-quality Merino wool. **Greasy wool** is exported to China, processed and made into a wide range of luxury clothing sold all around the world.



**Marketing wool:** Australia invests in marketing to promote wool to designers and textile manufacturers worldwide.

### Wool marketing

As a fibre, wool has to compete against many other fibres, such as cotton and a range of synthetics, for market share.

The Australian wool industry invests in marketing to promote the benefits and qualities of wool to fashion designers and consumers around the world.

Marketing campaigns promote wool as a premium, luxury, natural fibre that is soft on the skin and the environment.

The use of social media is helping to connect a new generation of global consumers with wool. Check out Woolmark on YouTube and social media channels.

## Glossary

**Core tested** — core tests measure the most important wool characteristics, such as fibre diameter, staple length, staple strength, yield, vegetable matter content and colour.

**Exporter** — a country that sells goods and services to another country.

**Grab sample** — sample of wool (about 3-4kg each) from a sale lot that can be inspected by potential buyers before auction.

**Greasy wool** — wool that has been shorn from the sheep but has not gone through any further processing.

**Sale lot** — a group of bales from a single producer that is of similar quality.

## Campaign for wool

The Campaign for Wool is a global community of sheep producers, retailers, designers, manufacturers and wool lovers.

The Campaign for Wool was instigated by HRH The Prince of Wales in January 2010. As a serious environmentalist, the Prince believes the natural, sustainable origin and highly-technical structure of wool can offer fashion, interiors and the built environment many superior benefits.

Choosing wool — as the Prince

understands — will also help care for our planet.

The combined efforts of the leading wool organisations, industry associations and the textile industry across the world has created a campaign to promote the wonderful properties wool offers to textiles and in doing so, the wool industry and textile community internationally.

The Campaign for Wool aims to educate as many people as possible about the incredible benefits and versatility of wool in fashion, furnishings and everyday life. This, in turn, supports many

small businesses and local farmers whose livelihoods depend on the wool industry.

### Wool Week

Every year The Campaign for Wool holds 'Wool Week' — a week-long celebration packed with woolly stunts, events, artisan workshops and gorgeous wool fashion.



**THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL**  
Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales

### More information

**For more information about wool markets and marketing, go to:**

- [learnaboutwool.com](http://learnaboutwool.com)
- Beyond the Bale: [beyondthebale.wool.com](http://beyondthebale.wool.com)
- [campaignforwool.org](http://campaignforwool.org)
- [www.awtawooltesting.com.au](http://www.awtawooltesting.com.au)
- Download the free Wool Lab iPad application

