



Yarn Circle # 5

Governance Discussion Summary

Facilitator: Claire Hewat

Topic: Good Governance – From Harmony to Prosperity: Leading the Way

Claire Hewat led a dynamic and engaging Yarn Circle session focused on the importance of good governance in ensuring the long-term prosperity and harmony of agricultural shows. The discussion was lively, with participants contributing a broad range of experiences and challenges, reflecting the diverse contexts of local shows across NSW.

Key Themes Discussed:

- **Harnessing Volunteer Talent:** A strong emphasis was placed on the need to manage volunteers effectively by placing them in roles that suit their skills and interests. Good governance involves creating an environment where volunteers feel valued, understood, and well-matched to their responsibilities.
- **Managing Behaviour and Culture:** Participants discussed the challenge of dealing with inappropriate behaviour in committees or broader volunteer teams. Establishing and upholding codes of conduct is essential to maintaining respectful, inclusive, and productive governance environments.
- **Right-sizing Committees:** There was a shared recognition that overly large or inactive committees can hinder effective decision-making. Streamlining committee structures and ensuring active engagement can improve operational efficiency.
- **Overcoming Resistance to Change:** A common obstacle is the “we’ve always done it this way” mindset. Claire encouraged approaches that respect tradition while facilitating necessary change for future viability.
- **Induction and Capacity Building:** The importance of robust induction processes for committee members was highlighted. Clear onboarding supports continuity, strengthens leadership, and reinforces expectations and responsibilities.
- **Meeting Efficiency:** Effective agendas and meeting processes were noted as foundational tools for strong governance, enabling strategic focus and clear decision-making.

The session reinforced the importance of maintaining up-to-date constitutions, governance documents, and policies to remain compliant and relevant. Claire encouraged all shows to undertake regular reviews, embrace both tradition and innovation, and take actionable steps toward more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable governance practices.