

MEDIA RELEASE

Shearing facility a powerful tool to train industry's next generation

- \$65,000 sponsorship brings portable shearing yards to Uralla Showgrounds
- Modular facility a boost for shearer and wool sorter training and competition

12 February 2025, NSW – Uralla Showground will be home to a new portable shearing facility, helping to train a new generation of shearers and wool handlers and to bring sport shear competitions to the district.

The modular shearing yards are being provided through a \$65,000 sponsorship agreement between renewable energy developer ACEN Australia and the Uralla Show Society.

News of the sponsorship and new facility comes on the heels of a successful inaugural Uralla Sports Shear event held at the Uralla Show last weekend.

The event showcased some of the best local and inter-state shearers and wool sorters, vying to advance to the NSW Sport Shear State Finals to be held later this year.

Uralla Show Society President Jeffrey Scott said the support from ACEN Australia was a very practical demonstration of how renewable energy and agriculture could work together to support regional communities.

“Uralla is one of Australia’s best fine wool producing regions, so it’s fitting that we celebrate and encourage shearing and wool handling skills that are fundamental to the industry,” Mr Scott said.

“The new portable shearing equipment will be based at Uralla Showground, so it means we now have the facilities for future Sports Shear events in the region, including the potential for State and national championships.

“It will also be a valuable training facility for a new generation of wool classers and shearers, so it’s very positive news for the industry.”

ACEN Australia is the operator of New England Solar near Uralla, which went into operation at the end of 2023. New England Solar is home to around 6,500 fine wool Merinos and cross breeds – the largest solar grazing flock in the country.

ACEN is also constructing a 400 megawatt hour Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on site and is in the planning stages for the 320MW Deeargee Solar project, 12km south east of Uralla.

ACEN Australia Managing Director David Pollington said the shearing facility sponsorship is an example of sharing the benefits of renewable energy with the wider community.

“New England Solar’s host landholders have been grazing their sheep across the project site for almost 18 months now,” Mr Pollington said.

“It’s been a very successful partnership, showing that renewable energy and sheep grazing can work very well together.

“We want these sorts of benefits to extend to the wider community, so we’re very pleased to be supporting the Uralla Show and helping to grow the skills the industry needs to succeed.”

The modules’ portability will enabled the show society to lease the facility for events and training in other areas, generating income for the society.

Sports Shear NSW President Jeremy Newberry welcomed the potential to transport the modules for other competitions, training, or promotional events.

“This means that other towns and regions can rent the equipment and share the benefits with their local wool growers and community,” Mr Newberry said.

“It’s critical that we do all we can to promote the industry to the next generation of shearers and wool handlers.

“New equipment for training and competition helps attract that future workforce.”

The portable shearing module is expected to arrive and be installed on site by the middle of the year.

Training coordinators from both TAFE NSW and Australian Wool Innovation Limited have welcomed the new facility and believe it could be used extensively through the year.

About ACEN Australia

ACEN Australia is the platform representing ACEN’s renewable energy assets in Australia. With more than 1 gigawatt (GW) capacity of large-scale renewable energy generation in construction and operations, and more than 13GW capacity in the development pipeline, its portfolio includes solar, wind, battery and pumped hydro projects across Australia.

New England Solar (Stage 1) in NSW is ACEN Australia’s first operational project which commenced generating in 2023. Stubbo Solar in the NSW Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone is ACEN Australia’s second project, which is currently being commissioned and will be in full operation by mid 2025.

With 100+ employees and growing, our people are based in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia.

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