



Position Description: Chief Operating Officer

Australian Wagyu Association (AWA)

📍 *Armidale, NSW*

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Direct Reports: AWA Member and Technical Services Managers, AWA Progeny Test Program (PTP) Manager, ARC Research Geneticist

Term: 5 years

About the Australian Wagyu Association (AWA)

The **Australian Wagyu Association (AWA)** is a not-for-profit public company that provides **registration, genetic analysis, and breed development services** to members in over **40 countries**. As the **fastest-growing beef breed organisation in Australia**, AWA is a recognised global leader in **genetic improvement, data-driven breeding, and digital innovation**.

AWA has grown rapidly, with membership increasing by **400%** and registered Wagyu numbers rising by **600%** in the past decade. The Association supports more than **1,500 members** and engages with over **80% of the Australian Wagyu sector**, including leading vertically integrated beef companies. Through world-class genetic programs and data systems, AWA is driving breed excellence and industry value worldwide.

Our Commitment to Breed Development

Since implementing **AWA's genetic evaluation**, AWA members have conducted over **400,000 genomic tests** and registered more than **200,000 calves** with genomic-backed EBVs. AWA's extensive database integrates **live animal, carcass, pedigree and genomic records**, underpinning continuous improvement in **growth, maternal attributes, carcass weight, and marbling**. AWA also develops new technologies and

measurements for objective description of quality traits in Wagyu beef, along with live animal performance data capture and systems integration.

Our flagship **Wagyu Progeny Test Program (PTP)**—now in its fifth breeding cycle—continues to enhance genetic accuracy, develop new Wagyu traits, and test over **200 sires** through comprehensive performance recording and analysis.

Position Overview

The **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** is a key member of the AWA executive team, responsible for the **delivery of AWA's operational, technical, and genetic improvement programs**.

Leading a team of 12 across four key areas—**Member Services (Australia), the USA Office (Member Services International), Database & Genetic Services Development and the AWA Progeny Test Program (PTP)**—the COO ensures that AWA's operations, data systems, and service delivery are efficient, innovative, and aligned with delivery of AWA's strategic goals.

The COO will collaborate closely with AWA members, research and industry partners, and the Board through the CEO to drive operational excellence, innovation, and member satisfaction.

Key Stakeholder Relationships

The COO will actively engage with:

- **AWA members and service users**
 - **Research and development organisations** (CSIRO, universities, and private sector research partners)
 - **Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI)** and its **BREEDPLAN** team
 - **Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit (AGBU)**
 - The **Helical development team** (AWA's registry and data systems)
 - **Accredited DNA testing laboratories** (domestic and international)
 - **Corporate partners**, AWA staff, and the Board of Directors (via the CEO)
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Key Responsibilities

1. Program & Project Management

- Manage AWA's major projects, including the **2021–2031 Wagyu Progeny Test Program** and AWA's R&D initiatives.
- Coordinate logistics, data management, and analysis across contributor herds, feedlots, processors, and supply chain participants.
- Ensure timely reporting of project outcomes and results.
- Oversee engagement with project sponsors and stakeholders.

2. Technical & Genetic Services

- Lead the delivery and continuous improvement of AWA's **genetic evaluation, registration, and data services**.
- Develop and maintain reporting materials, including **data visualisations, publications, webinars, and digital resources**.
- Provide expert advice on **breed development tools** such as MateSel, GeneProb, and other selection decision systems.
- Manage the integrity and functionality of AWA's database and data pipelines.

3. DNA Testing & Genomic Systems

- Oversee DNA testing operations and liaise with approved laboratories to ensure accurate genotype management.
- Innovate and refine DNA testing systems and processes.
- Manage bylaw development related to DNA testing and ensure data accuracy and traceability.
- Handle member enquiries, troubleshooting, and parent verification analyses.

4. Data Management & Performance Recording

- Support AWA staff and members in loading and validating performance data for genetic analysis.
- Oversee data flow for genetic evaluations and ensure system reliability and accuracy.

5. Operational Leadership & Governance

- Develop and maintain AWA systems and processes to ensure quality and efficacy of AWA operations and data management.
- Support organisational governance, compliance, and reporting processes.
- Contribute to strategic and business planning with the CEO and Board.

6. People & Culture

- Lead, mentor, and develop a multidisciplinary team.
 - Foster a **collaborative, high-performance, and values-driven culture** aligned with AWA's mission and strategic priorities.
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Location

This role is based at **AWA's Head Office**, Suite 6, 146 Marsh Street, **Armidale, NSW**. Some travel within Australia (and occasionally internationally) will be required.

Remuneration

A competitive executive salary package, plus 11.5% superannuation, will be offered, commensurate with skills and experience.

Selection Criteria

Essential

1. Postgraduate qualifications in **quantitative genetics**, or extensive practical experience managing breeding programs for genetic improvement.
2. Proven experience in the **livestock or red meat industry**, with strong industry relationships and understanding of the Wagyu Sector.
3. Demonstrated ability to conduct or oversee **genetic analyses** using pedigree, performance, and genomic data.
4. Experience managing large-scale **projects and research programs**, including data management and reporting.
5. Strong organisational skills and ability to manage multiple priorities effectively.
6. Strong executive level and governance experience including reporting to Boards.
7. Demonstrated **customer and team leadership focus**.

Highly Desirable

1. Experience in **beef industry breeding and recording programs** and practical application of genetic principles.
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How to Apply

Applicants must submit:

- A **cover letter** addressing the **selection criteria**
- A **current CV or résumé**
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Applications and enquiries:

 matt@wagyu.org.au

Join AWA — Lead Innovation in Global Wagyu Genetics

This is a rare opportunity to make a lasting impact on one of Australia's most progressive agricultural organisations. As COO, you'll help shape the future of Wagyu genetics, drive operational excellence, and strengthen AWA's reputation as a world leader in livestock and beef innovation.