

**Freestyle Note:** Kia ora whanau – use this space to write a message, let your loved one know why you thought they'd be interested in this opportunity.

## Would you like to train to become a Wool Classer?



Wool classers sort wool into categories according to breed of sheep, age, colour, length and micron (fibre thickness). They ensure contamination is removed from the wool, and complete identification and documentation prior to sale.

**Pay** - Wool classing is rarely a year-round job, and most wool classers work full time for only about three months of the year.

- Wool classers working in a shearing shed are usually paid per fleece, and typically earn between \$35 and \$55 an hour.
- Those working during the shearing season (July to November) can expect to earn between \$20,000 and \$50,000.

Most wool classers have to pay their own travel expenses and ACC levies because they are self-employed. Many wool classers supplement their income by doing other related work such as shearing or wool-handling.

**What you will do** - Wool classers may do some or all of the following:

- discuss requirements with the farmer before shearing starts
- sort wool into groups to produce lines that have uniform colour, length, fault, and fibre diameter, and keep wool breeds separate
- ensure wool is free from contamination (such as black fibres, twine, and other foreign objects)
- ensure wool is sorted into the correct categories and placed in the correct bin (a cage for collecting similar wool types)
- operate and maintain wool-weighing, sampling and wool-blending machinery
- supervise the pressing and branding of wool bales
- keep records of the wool bales pressed
- be responsible for woolshed management.

**Skills and knowledge** - Wool classers need to have:

- knowledge of different wool grades and sheep breeds
- knowledge of market requirements for wool, and wool industry standards
- knowledge of wool-handling and woolshed procedures
- skill operating wool presses and other machinery
- wool-evaluation skills.

**Working conditions** - Wool classers:

- work from 7am to 5pm in the main season (from July to November) and most weekends when the weather is good. At other times of the year, hours are few and irregular
- work mainly in shearing sheds, but a few are employed in wool stores and wool scouring (wool-cleaning factories)
- work in conditions that may be dirty, dusty, noisy and greasy depending on the quality of the woolshed or store
- may travel long distances by road to get to the farms.

## **Hey, I'm only 13 years old & I'd like to train to be a Wool Classer. But how do I prepare myself if I've even touched a live sheep?**

1. Set your goals for learning the skills you need while you're still at school – Take responsibility for your life.
2. If there is a local NZ Defence Cadet Core, then join. The reason you'd do this is because you'll be exposed to a whole range of experiences such as tramping and shooting that will all add to your skill set. Another valuable lesson you'll learn in the Cadets is self-discipline. & finally – it will look good on your CV. If you don't have a CV, print off my guide to writing a CV.
3. Try and get **any** after-school or holiday job. Even it's a boring job that you don't like – Just do it & do it well. **Why?** Because by working hard you'll be: 1) earning some money. 2) Be able to write some 'work-history' into your CV & 3) If you do a good job, you will be able to ask that employer for a 'work reference.'
4. Set up a saving account at your Bank and start saving money. This way when your 15 years old you will have money to pay for some driving lessons and the driving license fees too.
5. Another reason you'll want to set aside funds is to be able to buy everything you need to make your life as comfortable as possible during your first shearing season.

**Once you know what you want to do, 'keep your eye on the prize' & do everything you can to make your goal a reality.**

Did you see the Shearing series that ran on Telly? If not YouTube 'Peter Lyon Shearing' & watch some episodes. I took the information below from their website – [www.peterlyonshearing.co.nz](http://www.peterlyonshearing.co.nz)

#### Frequently Asked Questions

##### When are your peak periods?

Pre-lamb shearing: July to October.  
Summer Shearing & Crutching: January to April

##### Where are the closest airports?

Queenstown is one hour away, Dunedin is two hours away & we are happy to pick people up if we are given adequate notice.

##### Do you work weekends?

Generally, we work when there is work. Our job is very dependent on the weather. This usually means 7 days a week during our busy pre – lamb shearing season.

##### What about days off?

Give us enough advance notice and we will do our best to accommodate your requirements.

##### How do we get paid? And how often?

We pay weekly direct into your bank account on a Thursday night.

##### What Qualifications do I need?

No formal qualifications are required but we offer training courses regularly and in shed training is provided. Good attitude and willingness to work is a great start.

##### Transport

Transport is provided from our quarters to our work places. There are 12 transit vehicles, 4 Toyota hi ace vans that provide safe and comfortable transport for our traveling gangs. We also get you to the farmers quarters in a camp-out situation.

##### Accommodation

Our main quarters provide accommodation for 80 people and in the busy pre-lamb season we use accommodation at the Alexandra Tourist Park which Peter and Elsie also own.

**We have two full time cooks which provide wholesome food that we are proud of (TUMEKE!).**

**Contact: Peter & Elsie Lyon – Lyons Shearing**  
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You can also email Peter & Elsie from their website: [www.peterlyonshearing.co.nz](http://www.peterlyonshearing.co.nz)

