



Australian Government

Export Wheat Commission

Senate Budget Estimates: 26 May 2008
Opening Statement: Export Wheat Commission
Chairman: John Watson AM

Chairman, with your agreement I would like to make an opening statement.

Given the changes to the wheat export arrangements in 2007 and those now being introduced to Parliament, it will be useful for me to outline the activities of the Commission since I became Chairman on 1 October 2007.

The EWC has three functions (or outputs) outlined in the *Portfolio Budget Statement 2008-09*.

Output 1.1: *is to monitor, examine and report on the export performance of AWB International in relation to wheat exports and the resulting benefits to growers.*

The EWC reported to the Minister, growers and the wider industry last December through the *Growers Report 2007* and I am pleased to report that we are currently finalising the follow up reports to the Minister, growers and the wider industry. The public version, the *Growers Report 2007 Addendum* will be available in mid-June.

The reports focus on AWBI's performance in managing the 2005/06 National Pool and other wheat export issues.

Output 1.2: *is the control of bulk wheat exports.* Since the EWC last reported in the *Growers Report 2007*, the Minister has approved an additional 450,000 tonnes of bulk wheat exports by companies other than AWBI.

Output 1.3: *is the administration of the Non-bulk Wheat Quality Assurance Scheme.*

Since the deregulation of container exports, in administering the Scheme the EWC has accredited 62 packers with 102 locations and 12 laboratories and superintendence companies with 43 locations across five States.

The EWC has subsequently received and processed around 4,000 notifications from accredited exporters and laboratories since the scheme commenced. This high level of activity in container wheat exports is further reflected by EWC statistics published monthly on our website.

The EWC statistics to 30 April showed that during the first eight months of deregulation more than 1.5 million tonnes of wheat had been shipped in containers to 37 countries by Australian exporters.

Compared with 548,073 tonnes exported during the same period in 2006/07, this represents a three-fold increase.

Looking ahead, the EWC will be replaced by a new regulator, Wheat Exports Australia, with new functions as described under the new legislation.

The EWC has been working on the transition to the new body and was tasked by the Government to consult with grower groups and exporters in the development of the new Wheat Export Accreditation Scheme.

A meeting of EWC Commissioners will consider the draft Scheme next week prior to an Exposure Draft being released for industry comment.

As this will be my last appearance as Chairman of the EWC before the Committee, I would like to wish all industry participants well for the future.

Thank you.

ENDS.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and
Transport
Budget estimates 2008-2009
DAFF

Tabled document no: 2

By: Mr John Watson, Chair, Export wheat
Commission

Date: 26 May 2008