

# Media Release

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## Government ignores wheat growers

The NSW Farmers' Association is calling on both sides of Parliament to consider the issues affecting wheat growers when they debate the Wheat Export Marketing Bill in Federal Parliament today – before it's too late.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says so far, most of the growers concerns have been ignored by the Federal Government, a fact the Association finds extremely worrying.

"The Association believes that the Bill has the potential to create an imbalance of power in favour on non grower sectors of the value chain," Mr Laurie said.

The Association will be sending an open letter to all Federal Members of Parliament expressing its concerns with the Bill.

"We are particularly concerned about the rapid introduction of the changes to wheat marketing as proposed under the Bill," he said.

"The Association raised seven key concerns in its submission to the Senate Committee Inquiry and only one has been addressed relating to the provision of information sessions for growers in order to improve their understanding of marketing and risk management.

"The Government hasn't addressed the concerns growers have with the loss of benefits through a national pool as there is no provision under the Bill for the existence of a single national pool," Mr Laurie said.

Many growers are also worried that the majority of the costs of establishing the new wheat export marketing system will be passed back to growers.

"Growers are seeking an industry owned entity to perform some of the fundamental administrative procedures not currently proposed to be undertaken by Government's new entity – Wheat Exports Australia," Mr Laurie said.

"There has been no recognition by the Federal Government of the need for an independent body to administer a quality assurance scheme to maintain and protect Australia's reputation for the production and export of quality wheat.

"As Parliamentarians sit down to debate this Bill we strongly believe that in doing so, those people who will be most affected by these changes need to be remembered – the growers," Mr Laurie concluded.

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