

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Conduct of the inquiry

1.1 Exposure Drafts of the Wheat Export Marketing Bill 2008 and the Wheat Export Marketing (Repeal and Consequential Amendments) Bill 2008 (the bills) were tabled in the Senate on 11 March 2008.

1.2 The Wheat Export Marketing Bill 2008 establishes Wheat Exports Australia as a statutory entity to regulate the export of bulk wheat from Australia through a wheat export accreditation scheme. Consequential on the Wheat Export Marketing Bill 2008, the Wheat Export Marketing (Repeal and Consequential Amendments) Bill 2008 repeals the *Wheat Marketing Act 1989*, and makes consequential amendments to six Acts as well as transitional amendments.<sup>1</sup>

1.3 On 12 March 2008 the bills were referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport for inquiry and report by 11 April 2008. On 13 March 2008, the Senate moved to extend the reporting date for the inquiry to 24 April 2008.

1.4 On 24 April 2008 the Chair of the committee, Senator Glenn Sterle, presented a progress report to the President of the Senate, indicating the committee's intention to table on 30 April 2008. The committee's final report was presented to the President of the Senate on 30 April 2008.

1.5 The committee advertised the inquiry in *The Australian* on 17 March 2008. The inquiry was also advertised in *The Land*, the *Stock and Land*, *Queensland Country Life*, *Farm Weekly* and the *Stock Journal* on 20 March 2008. In addition to the relevant government agencies and departments, the committee wrote to a number of individual growers, grower groups and peak bodies inviting written comment on the bills. The committee also approached a number of interested parties prior to the closing date for submissions, with an invitation to provide evidence at public hearings.

1.6 The committee received 48 submissions (including four supplementary submissions). A full list of submissions is at Appendix 1.

1.7 The committee held four public hearings as follows:

- Wednesday, 26 March 2008                      Canberra
- Thursday, 27 March 2008                      Canberra
- Monday, 31 March 2008                      Perth

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1 Senate Table Office, Bills List, as at 2 April 2008, p. 42.

- Tuesday, 22 April 2008 Canberra

1.8 The committee heard evidence from a number of witnesses, including representatives from government departments and agencies, grower groups, industry organisations, peak bodies and farming groups as well as individual growers. For a full list of witnesses see Appendix 2.

1.9 The relevant submissions and the Hansard transcripts of the committee's hearings are available on the parliament's homepage at <http://www.aph.gov.au>

### **Acknowledgements**

1.10 The committee appreciates the time and work of all those who provided both written and oral submissions to the inquiry – particularly in view of the short timeframe. Their work has assisted the committee considerably in its inquiry.