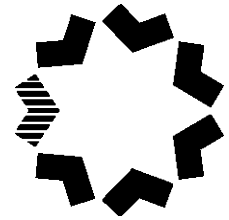


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PRESS RELEASE

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BARLEY DEREGULATION GOOD NEWS FOR VICTORIAN GROWERS

The President of the National Competition Council, Mr Graeme Samuel has warmly welcomed today's decision by the Victorian Government to deregulate the Victorian export barley market.

Deregulation was the clear recommendation of the 1997 National Competition Policy review of barley marketing in Victoria and South Australia. The independent review found there was no public interest in retaining the monopoly marketing powers of the Australian Barley Board (ABB).

Deregulation and competition are about CHOICE for the grower and PRICE PERFORMANCE by the marketer.

Growers have nothing to fear and a lot to gain from a reduction in government involvement in grain marketing. Competition in transport, handling, storage and marketing avoids waste, improves performance, and maximises prices.

Progressive growers need choice and the opportunity to innovate to adapt successfully to a rapidly changing world economic environment.

However, deregulation will not mean the end of marketing as we know it. The ABB will no doubt continue to operate and growers will still be able to sell to it if they wish – but, if they think they can get a better deal elsewhere they will be able to do so.

Victoria has shown substantial leadership in its decision to proceed with deregulation.

No doubt NSW and South Australian growers are already looking jealously over the border.

For further comment contact: Anna Schulze 03 9285 7789
