



## Wheat Growers' Action Group

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Wheat growers go to the United Nations

Australian wheat growers have gone to the United Nations to voice their concern about proposed changes to their industry.

The Wheat Growers Action Group (WGAG) condemns the Rudd Labor government's Wheat Export Marketing legislation, which will abolish the national pool and an orderly marketing system.

It will instead be opened up to foreign owned multi national commodity traders and there's fear they'll drop wheat prices as they try to secure overseas markets, as well as monopolise ports and storage facilities.

The WGAG has written to the head of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO) explaining how the laws will damage the industry and threaten grower viability.

It's also slammed the Rudd Government of hypocrisy.

"Kevin Rudd's Foreign Affairs Minister, Stephen Smith, recently attended the Rome Global Food Summit where he announced 'the Government will develop a comprehensive action plan to lift Australia's engagement in international efforts to address the root causes of food insecurity'. He also pledged 'to lift agricultural productivity in key staple crops and to improve rural livelihoods', " WGAG chairman, Peter Cannon said.

"However, at the same time, his colleague in the Rudd Government - the Agriculture Minister, Tony Burke - was pushing the Wheat Export Bill through Parliament. This is hypocritical and inconsistent.

"The Bill, which will see a sharp decline in annual wheat production in Australia, shows a callous indifference to food security for Australia's working families and vulnerable communities through out the world.

"A similar deregulatory action in South Africa a decade ago saw the country's wheat industry decimated and it become a net importer of wheat.

"Australia is the world's fourth largest wheat exporter and chaos and uncertainty will see food prices increase locally and further catastrophic food shortages world wide."

Mr Cannon has called on Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to withdraw the Bill and for the UNFAO's support.

**WGAG has launched a petition opposing the Wheat Export Marketing Legislation – go to its website: [www.concernedwheatgrowers.com](http://www.concernedwheatgrowers.com)**

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