

THE LAW

CRIMECHOPPERS: *Illegal logging hits the economy and the environment*

THINKSTOCK



territory governments to develop the subordinate legislative instruments required," Dr Kelly said.

Illegal timber harvesting costs the global economy US \$60 billion annually

"The Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2011 delivers on the government's policy to restrict

the importation and sale of illegally logged timber in Australia.

"It will remove unfair competition posed by illegally logged timber for Australia's domestic timber producers and suppliers and establish an even economic playing field for the purchase and sale of legally logged timber products and provide assurance to consumers that products they purchase have been sourced in compliance with government legislation." •

AGRICULTURE

Wheat exports open up

Accreditation scheme to be abolished.

The Australian wheat export market will take the final steps to deregulation under legislative changes contained in the Wheat Export Marketing Amendment Bill 2012.

Wheat exporters are currently required to be accredited under a scheme overseen by Wheat Exports Australia, which replaced the old 'single desk' export model administered by the Australian Wheat Board prior to July 2008.

The amendment will phase out the requirements for accreditation, and the associated Wheat Export Charge that is applied to all wheat exports to fund the accreditation scheme.

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Sid Sidebottom said the accreditation scheme has served its purpose in supporting the transition from a single exporter model to a deregulated market.

"Abolishing the scheme will ensure that the benefits to industry provided by accreditation during the transition to deregulation are not undermined in the longer term by the direct and indirect costs of continuing with a scheme that has served its purpose," Mr Sidebottom said.

"These costs include the WEC and the administrative and regulatory burden of accreditation, as well as the negative impact of unnecessary regulation on efficiency and competition in the wheat industry over time."

However the Victorian Farmers Federation has voiced opposition to the bill, saying the WEC and Wheat Exports Australia should be maintained and used to fund and direct improvements to the industry.

"We believe that there is an opportunity with the WEA to control the WEC," VFF Grains Group president Andrew Weidemann said. •