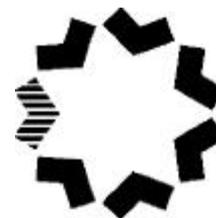


National Competition Council

Casselden Place Level 12 2 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia

Telephone 03 9285 7474 Facsimile 03 9285 7477

Web Site Address www.ncc.gov.au



PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 11 July 2000

SECURING THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA'S AGRICULTURE

The President of the National Competition Council (NCC), Mr Graeme Samuel today launched the first in a series of Community Information Papers on agriculture at the opening of the Victorian Farmers Federation Annual Conference.

The NCC is endeavouring to play a greater role in communicating the aims and outcomes of Competition Policy to the broader public.

While Competition Policy is bringing significant benefits to rural and regional Australia, many reforms have immediate financial and social implications for the community. It is therefore essential for individuals, industry and community groups to have access to information in order that they can fully understand the arguments for and against reform.

The NCC is releasing three Community Information Papers on agricultural marketing arrangements. These include an overview, and two specific papers on the barley and sugar industries.

The papers are short, easy to read brochures that broadly canvass key issues and the current arrangements.

Specifically the papers highlight that the Competition Policy reviews seek to determine whether agricultural marketing arrangements should be *compulsory* or whether *choice* and competition would deliver better outcomes.

If the compulsory aspect of marketing arrangements was removed, producers could still form collective arrangements for export markets if they wished, however, they would not be compelled to do so.

The Council hopes the papers will assist the current debate about what arrangements will best assist Australian agriculture to prosper into the future.

It is anticipated that further agriculture related papers will be developed in the near future.

For copies of the papers please contact the Council on 03 9285 7497 or visit www.ncc.gov.au.

For further comment contact: Ms Tania Coltman, 03 9285 7497