

## RURAL

# Reform still hot topic

BY JOHN CHANTER

COMMENTS from ACCC commissioner Mick Keogh at last week's Agribusiness Law Conference have been welcomed by those pushing for reform in the red meat sector.

Mudgegonga producer Loretta Carroll, a member of the Cattle Producers Australia implementation committee, said grass-fed cattle producers did not have an equal voice with Cattle Council Australia and reform was long overdue.

"It's great that he said 12 months ago they would review the progress and it's great they recognise there has been only limited progress, or hasn't been any progress," Ms Carroll said.

Cattle Producers Australia will be a new body to represent grass-fed cattle producers nationally and was expected to formally launch and open for membership within weeks.

"If farmers can align with us and become members we can take it to government and say we want to become the new peak body ... It's a long time since anyone put



**REFORM FOCUS:** Loretta Carroll and Greg Mirabella, Wangaratta VFF discuss red meat sector reforms with Senator Bridget McKenzie after the Senate Inquiry Report into Red Meat Sector was released last September.

grass-fed producers front and centre.

"If you're a representative entity you've got to be talking to your members."

Mr Keogh said that while competition in the beef sector was "generally quite strong" improvements in the selling options were needed.

He highlighted the ACCC's 12 month review of its market

study of the cattle and beef market in Australia, which said transparency changes and reforms were slow to non-existent from the peak representative bodies.

"Mick Keogh's speech identified that regulation can actually enhance the economic performance of a sector," said Paul Wright, who chairs of the implementation

committee, praised the continued focus on the sector.

The ACCC said the Red Meat Advisory Council's lack of commitment to market transparency reform highlighted the fundamental dysfunction that plagues grass fed cattle producer representation at the national level. Dr Wright said the new body was warranted because

Cattle Council Australia told a Senate Inquiry it no longer appropriately represented Australia's grass-fed cattle producers.

"Government and industry should urgently comply with the Senate recommendations to replace CCA with a new more representative peak industry council," he said.

## Katter will not back Ley ban bill

MEMBER for Farrer Sussan Ley looks unlikely to have the numbers to be successful in her bid to ban the live sheep trade with at least one crucial crossbencher ruling out his support for her private members bill.

In an unsurprising move, KAP leader and Federal Member for Kennedy, Bob Katter, has confirmed he would "definitely be voting no".

Despite the backing of Federal Labor, Ms Ley would currently need another 10 MPs to support her bill - a scenario with zero chance of playing out, many insiders say.

Mr Katter said he had hoped Federal Labor would have learned from "their mistakes", referring to the impact of the 2011 ban on live cattle exports on primary producers.

"The live cattle ban halved the price of cattle in this country," he said.

— FAIRFAX MEDIA

# Scholarship finds recipient close to home



**HOME GROWN:** Winner of this year's Geoff Green scholarship Hume Forests operations assistant Emily Post, who was raised in Tumut.

THIS year's Forest Industry Council Geoff Green Scholarship has gone to 19-year-old Emily Post who is an operations assistant with Hume Forests Limited Tumut.

The scholarship honours the late managing director of Greenfreight Logging, Geoff Green, who was a great supporter of educational excellence in the forest industry.

"I grew up in Tumut and have spent my whole life around forestry," Ms Post said.

"My dad Anthony Post has worked for the Forestry Corporation of NSW for well

over 30 years in various positions."

Ms Post said in Year 12 at Tumut High School through the influence of teachers and her father's colleagues, she developed a greater interest in the environment and forestry, and applied to do a Forest Science Degree at Southern Cross University at Lismore.

"I was successful in gaining early entry, but decided to take a gap year in 2017 before commencing my studies.

"During my gap year, I was lucky to be employed by

Hume Forests as an operations assistant. This opportunity has given me a strong grounding in forestry.

"Hume Forests has played an integral role in encouraging me to take up my four-year Forest Science Degree, while allowing me to retain my employment and in-field experience opportunities," she said

Ms Post said she would use the FIC scholarship money to help pay for course text books, accommodation and travel between Tumut and Lismore.

— JOHN CHANTER



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