

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL DAY

Statement

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural) [6.34 pm]: I rise today to recognise National Agricultural Day and to celebrate Western Australia's incredible agricultural industry. I think it is very important we take the time in this place and, indeed, to stop and thank our agricultural sector, and that those within the industry also take time to celebrate their achievements and the contribution they make to our society. Ecologist Allan Savory once stated —

Agriculture is not crop production as popular belief holds—it's the production of food and fiber from the world's land and waters. Without agriculture it is not possible to have a city, stock market, banks, university, church or army. Agriculture is the foundation of civilization and any stable economy.

As members would realise, agriculture is a pillar of the Australian and Western Australian economy. It contributed about \$8.6 billion to our state's economy in 2017–18, employs around 24 000 people and supports thousands of businesses, most of which are in regional Western Australia.

It has been famously said over many decades that the Australian economy rides on the sheep's back. I do not know that that is necessarily the case these days, with the rise of other industries, but the wool industry in Western Australia is a strong industry and wool is one of our top three agricultural commodities, being worth nearly \$1 billion for our state. We produce other significant commodities including wheat, canola, barley, cattle, sheep and lambs, hay, dairy and eggs, not to mention the horticulture industry. It provides some of the most magnificent fruit and vegetables in the nation, such as avocados, carrots, apples, pears, berries, citrus fruits —

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: Are you getting a \$40 000 cheque tonight?

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: I would love one. Are you writing them out, minister?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: No, but I think Gina does for you guys on this day.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: She might. I am not going there.

Our premium food and beverage sector makes an important contribution, including Wagyu beef, craft beer and ciders, olives, honey and—do not forget—wine, which many of us enjoy a glass of every now and then, in moderation. Of course, there are also truffles.

Our farmers do good things. They do great things, and they deserve to be celebrated. Across our state there is the Western Australia Farmers Federation, the Pastoralist and Graziers Association of Western Australia, the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association, the Grain Growers Alliance, Farmers Across Borders and The Sheep Collective. In the electorate of the Agricultural Region, the South East Premium Wheat Growers Association; the Association for Sheep Husbandry, Excellence, Evaluation and Production; the Liebe Group; the Facey Group; the Merredin and Districts Farm Improvement Group; the Northern Agri Group; the Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network; Southern Dirt; the Corrigin Farm Improvement Group; and the West Midlands Group are just a few of the agricultural and industry related groups that do great things to support each other and provide a much-needed connection for members of the community in those areas. They help educate people about what is involved in agriculture, bring feed to drought-affected farmers and continue to drive research and development into the industry, which will continue to ensure that agriculture is a strong and thriving industry in this state. Today, I would like everyone to take a moment to think about our farmers, pastoralists and everyone who works in the industry. I extend my personal thanks to all our hardworking farmers and their families.