

BUY WEST EAT BEST

Statement by Minister for Agriculture and Food

HON JACKIE JARVIS (South West — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [1.07 pm]: October marks an important milestone for the state's Buy West Eat Best program, which is celebrating 15 years of operation. No other state or territory jurisdiction in Australia enjoys a statewide food labelling program run by government, owned by industry and championed by business. It stands as the longest running government program in current operation, with eight out of 10 Western Australians familiar with the Buy West Eat Best brand. The Buy West Eat Best program is a voluntary labelling and marketing initiative developed by the WA government to assist local food and beverage producers to promote their products to grocery shoppers and those who dine out. Launched in 2008 by the late Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Kim Chance, Buy West Eat Best operated under the former Department of Agriculture and Food. Its genesis followed a petition that attracted 58 000 signatures calling for a genuine state-of-origin food labelling program to help identify authentic WA food. At the time there were a range of brands around, but none offered consumers a brand mark of trust and integrity. This was a powerful signal given it was long before the advent of social and digital media. From these humble beginnings of 38 founding members, the Buy West Eat Best brand has helped complacent grocery buyers choose local and, in turn, has provided WA food businesses with a distinct trust mark to differentiate their products on retailers' shelves, which in today's world is proving to be more challenging to navigate. The program today is more than 240 members strong, with an almost 50–50 split between metro and regional with a diverse representation in location and business scale and size; business complexity; and industry associations and representative bodies across the entire food and beverage supply chain. There are 1 500 food and beverage businesses in WA employing 19 000 people and turning over \$8 billion in revenue a year. The Buy West Eat Best membership represents 16 per cent of this capture. Food represents, by value, around 12 per cent of WA's manufacturing industry, with the food service sector employing more than 85 000 people across approximately 8 000 businesses. Combined, the food and beverage manufacturing and food services sector in Western Australia employs over 100 000 people, with an annual turnover of more than \$16 billion.

The program works across the supply chain from producers, processors, retail and food service businesses providing a critical conduit to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of businesses and identify provenance for consumers. Since its launch, the program has been busy working at the grassroots level—working with members on retail promotions and public relations events such as retail activations with supermarkets and activations at public events like the Perth Royal Show. Marketing activities have evolved from originally advertising and participating in third-party activities to high-profile signature events creating bespoke opportunities for members, launching significantly curated digital and social media platforms and extensive retail and partnership promotions to build the capacity and capability of WA's food and beverage businesses and bridging a strong culture across the state's food supply chain. The regional footprint and visibility of the program has been extended significantly over the past five years through the development of strategic partnerships and a dedicated campaign series that attracts strong and committed co-investment and has strengthened the value proposition of the program. Across the years, the program has matured beyond a food labelling scheme to become vitally important to the state from an economic and employment perspective, with the food and drink industry being the second largest exporting sector to mining and resources and a critical industry to the diversification and sustainability of local communities and regional development across the state. There has never been a better time to support and celebrate WA food and beverage produce.

Buy West Eat Best has been in operation for 15 years, which is a testament to the co-creation, co-support and co-investment from its members. The support received from members in recognition of the 15-year anniversary has been extraordinary and we thank you. The WA Government will continue to work closely across industry to raise the profile of the WA agrifood and beverage sector in key markets, domestically and internationally, and I am excited to see where the next 15 years will take us.