

Wednesday 24 August 2022

Dowerin Field Days Organising Committee

Dowerin GWN7 Machinery Field Days

**Address by His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson
APM**

Governor of Western Australia

Speech length (5 mins)

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Ballardong people of the Noongar Nation – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

What a delight it is for me to be with you here today for the Dowerin GWN7 Machinery Field Days. I am advised by the organisers that this year's event has sold out once again which is a testament to what a successful event this is, and I congratulate them on this result.

It's important to note that I am Governor for all of Western Australia, not just Perth and its surrounds.

I am firmly committed to representing the interests of all Western Australians, including those in regional and remote areas.

I am no stranger to our vast State's regions, having travelled extensively in my previous role as Commissioner of Police, and I look forward to re-engaging with fresh eyes, now as the State's Governor.

Like many of you, my wife Darrilyn and I have lived and worked in the regions. We come from a proud heritage of farming families, on both sides of the family. Our forebears established farms from the Great Southern, the South West, the Wheatbelt and the Mid-West.

The challenges in the bush have been made tougher over the last couple of years. We face labour shortages, and interruptions to supply chains impacting trade internationally and the freight of essential goods.

To this, we can add what has become an increasingly volatile natural climate. Temperatures are rising and clean water is becoming increasingly precious.

We are experiencing spikes in our cost of living including rising interest rates and prices of farm essentials like fuel. I know that cost of living pressures are felt just as much here as anywhere, if not more so.

I admire your grit, your perseverance and your commitment to growing our agricultural economy which is vital to our State. Farm-based businesses contribute \$10 billion to the State's economy each year, which is massive.

Western Australian agricultural products are the finest around, and the technology developed by businesses like yours is world-leading.

It has been very pleasing to see that last year yielded a record harvest for our State, particularly for wheat, barley and canola, with high demand driving high prices, all of which is good news.

We've had significant rainfall in recent months, and it looks like another strong yield this year. This is good news too for the manufacturers of farming machinery here today, and I encourage you all to take this opportunity to invest to drive even greater efficiency gains.

Whether it is a bumper crop or a failed harvest, ample rains or dry as a bone, country people adapt, improvise and overcome.

Be in no doubt that what you do here is extraordinary.

In these lands you are:

- Growing industries;**
- Seeding connections; and**

- **Cultivating community.**

We see and appreciate what you do here, and on behalf of all Western Australians, I thank you.

I will not pretend that I know all of the issues you face, or that I have the answers. I am here to listen to your concerns and do what I can for you in my role as Governor.

Firstly, to celebrate your achievements and the wealth and opportunity you are creating here in the Central Wheatbelt and beyond.

Secondly, to learn from you about the challenges you face and use the profile of this role to advocate for your interests.

I am just at the start of learning this new role and setting my future priorities. I am here to listen to you and find how I can add value in support of everything you do.

Let's continue that conversation.

But for now, let's get things underway.

I encourage you to check out all the new machinery and innovations on display here, meet as many people as you can, and who knows what great new businesses will germinate here over the next two days.

I thank the organisers for staging this impressive event, and it is my great pleasure to declare the Dowerin GWN7 Machinery Field Days 2022 officially open. Thank you.