



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

MEAT AND LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA DINNER

Tuesday 25 November 2025

It is a pleasure to join you all here tonight.

It may not be retold as often as the dramatic tale of the Gold Rush, but the story of Victoria's pastoral prosperity was arguably just as significant.

In fact, it was a search for pastoral land for sheep that led to the initial British settlement of our State.

With a touch of irony, when deciding on a name for this new settlement in 1837, Governor Bourke elected to pay tribute to Lord Melbourne – or William Lamb, as was his name.

Perhaps it was a sign of what was to come.

Sheep farming is what fed and clothed Victoria over the ensuing years, enabling its early growth.

And while deposits of gold were found later, they were exhausted within decades.

In comparison, Victoria's agricultural successes have been sustained across generations.

Today, Victoria still produces almost half of all Australian sheep meat.

One may look at a map and assume 'the wide brown land' in the southern hemisphere is prime for farming, owing to the sheer size of its landmass.

It is true that there are parts of Australia that are well-suited to keeping livestock – particularly in Victoria – but it still remains an inherently difficult task, in any landscape.

Success in this industry is not achieved through luck, but through persistence and determination exercised over many years.

Our State's contemporary strengths are the result of countless hours of trial and error, of an early reliance on scientific research and its application, and of dedication to refining processes.

Today, food and fibre is one of Victoria's strongest exports – valued at over \$20 billion annually.

As Governor, I have the privilege of travelling across our State to visit many of the contemporary businesses at the forefront of this sector.

These enterprises are at the cutting-edge of innovation and driven by people with a deep passion and expertise.

And while Victorians are often quick to boast about our impressive major events calendar – our agricultural industry is a sector equally deserving of its international acclaim.

As I'm sure the *'Lambassadors'* here tonight will attest, it is the high-quality produce from the paddock that ensures we have the ingredients on the plate to sustain our vibrant culinary and hospitality scenes.

Though it is sometimes taken for granted at home, Victoria's strengths in this space are well known to those we export to – including customers here in Indonesia.

In 2023-24, 22 per cent of Victoria's total food and fibre exports were to Southeast Asia – with Indonesia being Victoria's 5th largest market in this sector.

Victoria is well-placed to meet rising demand for premium, organic, ethical and sustainable produce.

Fora such as these provide the opportunity to build connections and predict the consumer trends of the future.

But we must remember you don't get to this point by chance.

Victorian farmers have already done the hard part – having worked over many decades to create world-class products that are recognised and trusted around the world.

It is a significant achievement, but not isolated in a moment in time.

Rather, it is underpinned by an ongoing commitment to seize opportunities, and – above all – maintain the quality that is required to survive in competitive global markets.

I have no doubt that Victoria will continue to prove itself in this space and grow its presence in these markets in the years to come.

Thank you.