“Western Australia’s agricultural sector is on the cusp of its biggest boom in a generation. Global population growth, particularly in Asia, as well as international investment in clean, safe and high quality food will place Western Australia front and centre of a world-wide agrifood boom.”
Western Australia’s agricultural sector is on the cusp of its biggest boom in a generation.

Already the State’s second biggest industry, with more than $8 billion of primary production and around $6 billion in food and beverage manufacturing, agriculture provides 30,000 direct on-farm jobs, and supports 60,000 jobs in processing, manufacturing, retail and related services.

Global population growth, particularly in Asia, as well as international investment in clean, safe and high quality food will place Western Australia front and centre of a world-wide agrifood boom.

To build on this success and capitalise on the opportunity that rapidly growing demand for high quality food presents, a re-elected Liberal Government will continue to work to double the value of the agriculture and food industry to provide 20,000 new jobs by 2025.

A Liberal Government will do this through:

• Making more land and water available for agriculture;
• Intensifying and diversifying agricultural production;
• Value adding; and
• Improving productivity.

**Fast Facts**

- WA produces on average 13 million tonnes of grains (cereals, oilseeds and pulses) each year.
- Grain exports generate more than $4 billion for the WA economy each year – making it the largest agricultural sector in the State.
- Grain is the fourth largest export industry after iron ore, oil and gas, and gold.
- In 2014/15 live cattle exports were valued at $236.7 million; beef at $192.8 million; live sheep exports at $192.2 million and sheep meat at $329.3 million.
- The wool industry in WA had a gross value of $541 million in 2014/15 – 53% of the total contribution of the sheep industry.
- Wheat production accounts for 70% of total cereal production in Western Australia with about seven million tonnes generated annually in a rain-fed system across four million hectares of land.

**Our Achievements**

The Liberal-led Government has made a more one billion dollar investment in Agriculture sector over the past eight years, including:

Developing and accessing markets - $30 million worth of projects have helped regional agrifood businesses expand and capture new market opportunities. Twenty export opportunities have been identified in to eight key Asian markets, with Government support securing lucrative long term export agreements for horticultural products into Singapore. Under the Liberal-led Government total agricultural exports have risen more than 50 per cent.

Developing and supporting the expansion of irrigated agriculture - Almost 70,000 hectares of new
land and water resources have been identified for irrigated crops across WA, lifting the potential for job creation in regional areas and export revenue. This includes:

- A $322.5 million investment in the Ord East Kimberley Expansion for new all-weather roads, irrigation channels and flood protection levies, and overhauling land tenure to provide more opportunity to farmers, pastoralists and investors. This has resulted in almost 20,000ha of world-class agricultural land being released.

The private sector has also invested more than $200 million in new agricultural development. The Federal Government contributed $195 million for social and community infrastructure.

Crops sown include sandalwood, chia, quinoa, chickpeas, sweet corn/maize, borlotti beans, green beans, mango, paw paw, banana, citrus (grapefruit and limes), sorghum, watermelon, rockmelon, honeydew melon, pumpkin and millet.

In addition:

- $25 million has gone to the Gascoyne Food Bowl to enable an additional 400ha of irrigable land to be brought on line in the Gascoyne.
- A $60 million investment in the construction of levee banks in Carnarvon to help protect the region’s horticultural industry from flood damage.
- A $49.3 million investment into Nambeelup – a 1,000ha business park and 27,000ha food zone and integrated water management system just south of Perth.
- The $12.5 million Pilbara Hinterland Agricultural Development Initiative (PHADI) to assess the potential for irrigated agriculture in the Pilbara using surplus mine dewater and other in-situ water resource.
- $37 million for the Myalup-Wellington Water for Growth program to provide up to 20 gigalitres of water for agriculture at Myalup, Harvey and Brunswick.
- $19 million for the Southern Forests Waters Futures irrigation scheme to construct a new 15 gigalitre dam, pipeline and pumping infrastructure to support local growers.
- The La Grange irrigated agriculture project – 180km south of Broome – which identified and mapped 60,000ha as suitable for irrigation and the Mowanjum irrigation trial.

Supporting Livestock Producers

$25 million has been invested in projects in the Sheep and Beef industries. These projects have seen Australia’s first license for chilled sheep and beef into China obtained. This will deliver an extra 500,000 lambs from WA. New opportunities for beef have also been identified in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The State Government’s $72 million Regional Livestock Saleyard Strategy included the Muchea Livestock Centre, completed in 2010 at a cost of $54 million; $17 million to build a $25.4 million state-of-the-art
Katanning Regional Sheep Saleyards and $2 million to the Mount Barker saleyards.

**Funding Grains Research**

More than $50 million has been invested into research and innovation in WA’s grain sector, focusing on technology, regional agronomy, frost, increasing yields and water use efficiency. This is in addition to $20 million every year for world class research and development. A further $54.4 million has been committed to future Grains R&D conducted through a new commercially relevant entity to drive efficiencies and work in partnership with industry.

**Investing in Technology**

A $28 million investment in six Doppler radars will provide the entire WA grain belt with detailed weather information for farm businesses. This complements 175 weather stations from the Kimberley to the South Coast.

The $10 million E-Connected Grainbelt project is creating a data exchange system for growers and consultants enabling real-time, agronomic and business decisions including initiating development of crop management apps that apply immediate rainfall and weather data from the new Doppler radars and weather stations.

A new soil water tool is also helping grain growers optimise crop yields and profitability providing local information on plant-available soil moisture.

DAFWA has also released a pest identification app. The Western Australian Rangeland Monitoring System (WARMS) shows changes to the landscape and allows objective assessments of the pressure the land is under to determine whether management is environmentally sustainable.

**Improving Transport Links**

The Liberal-led Government has made big investments in regional roads to improve grain freight routes and commodities roads. This includes a $420 million upgrade of the Great Northern Highway between Muchea and Wubin including fixing the treacherous Bindi Bindi curves, improvements to the efficiency and safety of the Albany and Great Eastern highways and a commitment to the $1.2 billion Northlink road project.

A recently announced $48 million Local Government Agricultural Freight Fund will further upgrade roads that carry agricultural commodities such as livestock, grain or fertiliser and a further $15 million will upgrade key agricultural lime cartage routes. A $16.3 million commitment to seal Moonamang Road to the WA/NT boarder will support the Sea Dragon Project and expansion of the Ord Irrigation Expansion Project.

The $70 million expansion of the Busselton-Margaret River Airport will expand opportunities for airfreight for premium agricultural product from the south west.
Boosting Biosecurity

WA has successfully been declared free of Qfly, saving a potential $65 million a year in lost production. A $20 million Boosting Biosecurity Defences program saw the State host the biggest emergency response exercise in a decade, as well develop new technologies to eradicate Mediterranean fruit fly. The 112-year old State Barrier Fence has been upgraded.

Controlling Wild Dogs

Stock losses on sheep and calves from wild dogs in WA are estimated to cost up to $25 million a year. The Liberal-led Government has announced a $20 million investment to support Western Australia’s livestock industries and help landowners to control predatory wild dogs and other agricultural pests in regional areas.

The Western Australian Wild Dog Action Plan 2016-2021 aims to reduce the economic and social impact of wild dogs on livestock producers in affected pastoral and agricultural areas through:

• The formation of the WA Wild Dog Alliance
• Boosting support for existing biosecurity groups which have formed to control wild dogs and other pests.
• Ongoing funding for 24 professional doggers.
• $1.5 million for competitive grants for cell or cluster fencing.
• Further upgrades and extensions to the State Barrier Fence in the southern agricultural area to extend it to Esperance.

Developing a Brand for WA – WA Worth Sharing

Western Australia Worth Sharing is an $8.1 million initiative to increase awareness of the State and its products among international retailers and provides WA exporters with tools to market their products overseas and promote the State as a reliable source of premium and safe food products.

In addition the Buy West Eat Best campaign has steadily transformed a niche market for local produce into a significant commercial force for the food sector. An annual, Signature Dish cooking competition, supplemented in 2016 with a Best Burger in the West competition, has helped ensure that more than 65% of consumers now recognise the Buy West Eat Best brand, and of these consumers more than 95% choose to purchase the local product.

Supporting the use of GM Technology in Agriculture

The Liberal-led Government lifted the ban on growing genetically modified (GM) cotton in the Ord River Irrigation Area and announced an exemption under the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003 to allow GM canola to be grown in agricultural areas. This Act has now been repealed giving Western Australian farmers the choice of growing GM crops to increase yield, decrease their use of pesticides, access more cost effective weed and pest management and make savings in labour and fuel costs.
Deregulating the Potato Industry

In 2016 the Liberal-led Government repealed Western Australia’s Marketing of Potatoes Act 1946 and the Marketing of Potatoes Regulations 1987, to remove market impediments to growers. A $14 million industry adjustment package is now supporting growers and the industry to make the transition to a deregulated market.

Our Commitment

A Liberal Government will support the growth of the WA Agriculture and food industry.

To support the sheep and cattle industries, we will:

• Construct a $110 million new dedicated live export facility at Kwinana to be developed in conjunction with industry with the Government contribution coming from the sale of Western Power.

• Allocate $2 million to acquire land for a new South West livestock handling facility, to replace the aging Boyanup saleyards, and associated livestock activities.

• Continue the implementation of the $20 million Wild Dog Action plan to protect more sheep and calves from wild dog attack and to increase the profitability of livestock producers.

• Further support the State’s livestock industries with a commitment to grow the sheep flock from 14 to 20 million by 2025. A Liberal Government will focus on working with producers to harness technology to improve genetics, animal nutrition and stocking rates. New technology will also help producers and buyers trace animals through the supply chain and to develop ethical production systems to maximise the value of WA sheep.

• Support the beef industry by supporting more intensive beef production systems using irrigated feed production techniques, to bring the northern pastoral industry into a new era of prosperity.

To support the development of the WA grains industry a Liberal Government will:

• Oversee the Government’s already allocated investment of $54 million over the next three years to support grains research in partnership with the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

• Support farmers in the use of science and cutting-edge technology to maximise productivity, increase frost resistance and drought tolerance and reduce the need for chemical spraying through continued access to genetically-modified seed.

To support the development of irrigated agriculture and increased intensification of agriculture and more productive land use, a re-elected Liberal Government will:

• Work with farmers and pastoralists to support intensive irrigation development and continue to streamline approvals required for intensive agriculture.

• Continue to identify additional land and water for irrigated agriculture, including: on the Bonaparte Plains in the East Kimberley; in the Gascoyne Food bowl region; and in the Pilbara.

• Investigate releasing land currently under pine plantations at Myalup for high value horticultural production.

• Work to assist farmers and pastoralists through the approval processes necessary to unlock agricultural land and to identify and remove unnecessary red tape. Including through:

  • The establishment of strategic development areas and working with decision-making agencies (such as lands and environment) to establish the appropriate tenure and obtain the necessary approvals for the release of land for primary production.

• Working to better align the Land Administration Act with the Native Title Act to streamline approvals through the native title process.

• Continue working to reform the Land Administration Act to provide more productive forms of tenure for pastoralists and more effective pathways to obtain this.

The Liberals will also further pursue irrigated agriculture initiatives by:

• Continuing to drive industry expansion in the Ord as part of this Government’s broader target of doubling the value of WA’s agrifood sector by 2025.

• Overseeing the implementation of the Myalup-Wellington Water for Growth program to increase the area available for irrigated agriculture in the region from 7,000 hectares to 35,000 hectares.

• Commencing the Southern Forests Water Futures irrigation scheme to lift the value of production in the Warren-Donnelly catchment by at least $20 million every year.

A Liberal Government will support Western Australia Worth Sharing to develop a stronger presence for Western Australian products in international markets.