

Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan's Speech to National Agriculture and Related Industries Day

Well thank you very much ladies and gentlemen, and thank you Adam for that very kind introduction, but really I can't take any credit for what happened up there in QLD during the election. All accolades must go to Mr Bob Brown and the role he played. I did note on the agenda for this evening there are some awards later for people who have provided excellent service to the agriculture and related industries over the past year, and I unfortunately won't be here for those awards as I have another dinner to go to. But I am going to put in a late nomination for Bob Brown to be considered, so hopefully he will get something.

But can I also thank Mrs Gina Rinehart for what she does for this event, but more importantly before I get to that, but what she does for the country and getting things done. We live in an era where so many people tell us we can't do certain things. There's so many people who want to stop us from developing our nation, building mines, building new farming operations and Mrs. Rinehart is one shining example in this country that we can still get things done. We can still get things done in Australia. She has proven that day in and day out. And I think it's also great that Mrs Rinehart has put on this event now for three years, as she has said seeking approval from the federal government to do so – it's one thing we have approved for you Mrs. Rinehart in the last few years, I just want to note that.

It is a great initiative because in some respects, ideally we wouldn't need a day like this. Ideally, we wouldn't need National Agriculture and related Industries day. Ideally every day Australians would celebrate our farmers and what they do for our nation. But we all know that the reality is, that that doesn't happen. It particularly doesn't happen on a little hill in Canberra – in certain streets in our capital cities, in our states capital cities. They sometimes forget what our farmers do, and not so much spending their days helping our agriculture industries get better but often they're to stop people from doing certain things.

Now I don't think it's all doom and gloom though. Nights like this are very important and look at this amazing audience here, we are all committed to this here this evening. But there's also some positive developments this year, particular the big win that occurred at the election this year. I think that will go down as a fork in the road for this country where we did take a better road. And we did because we defeated these people who wanted to stop things in this country. Our political opponents a few months ago explicitly stood up behind big red octagonal signs. Big red signs that said stop on it and some other words on it, which you've all heard before. It was a stop sign. That was their battle shield. That's what they took in to the election. They wanted to stop things from happening in this country. They are the stop sign people in our nation.

Now in my view, fortunately they lost. They lost, and they lost to a side who is best represented by a different traffic symbol, and that's a green light. A green light, because I don't want to stop dams. I don't want to stop mines. I don't want to stop people from driving or fishing or hunting or enjoying their life. I want to put a green light up for our country. To build our nation. To get things done. To make a better country for our children and grandchildren after us and thanks to that victory, a green light has been put up in front of our nation and we have won.

But we've got a lot more work to do to keep that going and that's why nights like this are important. I think it's also important that we reflect on why we do what we do in our farming sector, and our mining sector and lots of other industries. They do provide huge amounts of jobs for Australians. They do provide tax revenues to fund public services. They do help build our regional towns and communities. But more important than any of those things, it's what they actually produce that benefit human beings that is important. It is the food that our farmers produce which we're all

enjoying here tonight, but also helps feed the world as well. It's our energy and mineral resources that help develop poorer countries and provide them with electricity and the means to get ahead. And we must never forget, that in a world where there are billions of people that go to bed tonight hungry, that go to bed tonight without being able to turn a light on, to remove the shadows from the dark, it is our industries in this country that provide a brighter and better future for those people.

So I celebrate there here tonight. We must continue to fight for that. Thank you all for joining that fight here this evening. All the best in the future and God bless.