

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC, GOVERNOR
OF TASMANIA TO OPEN THE 175TH CAMPBELL TOWN SHOW,**

SATURDAY 1ST JUNE 2013¹

Thank you very much for inviting me to join you at this year's Show and thank you for asking me to perform the opening ceremony. As you all know, this year's Campbell Town Show is not just another Campbell Town Show - it is the 175th Agricultural Show to be held here at Campbell Town. Two thousand and thirteen is the year to celebrate the amazing fact that the Campbell Town Show, - first held in 1838, is Australia's - although some claim the Southern Hemisphere's - oldest continually running Agricultural Show. That is a record of which to be very proud. It is sometimes difficult to grasp how much things have changed over all the years during which the Campbell Town Show has been running. That first Show was held no more than 35 years after white man first arrived at what was to become Hobart Town. That first show was held no more than 17 years after Governor Macquarie came here and mapped out what was to become Campbell Town. And in 1838, when that first Show was held, bridges across the Macquarie and Elizabeth Rivers had only been in place for 2 years, but even so there was then no continuous road between Launceston and Hobart.

So, although there have been many changes over the last 175 years, as Mr David Downie was reported as saying in last Sunday's newspaper, "over that period of time there has been no deviation from the Midland Agricultural Association's original aim: 'The improvement of stock, agricultural and the rural economy in general.'"² Today, as was the case in those early days, sheep and wool is the main business of the Campbell Town Show, but I think that like all Shows, there is more to

¹ 2/06/2013 10:35 AM

² Sunday Tasmanian, May 26 2013, page 18.

the Campbell Town Show than just sheep and wool. We see proud displays of well-bred sheep, cattle and other animals as well as the well trained sheep dogs and horses. In addition, the Show helps to establish and maintain breed standards, showcase new machinery and new methods of farming as well as providing friendly competition in the home and decorative arts. Since the nineteenth century, Australia's agricultural shows have provided us with opportunities to reflect on the values and aspirations of our communities; to celebrate achievements ranging from excellence in animal breeding to the beauty of a delicate piece of embroidery; and to enjoy a break from the routine of everyday life. The Show is a place of work and leisure, as well as a place of education and entertainment. Like all country Shows, the Campbell Town Show is also a time for the people in the district to simply get together, exchange ideas and to just have fun together. An Agricultural Show provides the community with social cohesion and, when organised by an enthusiastic committee like this one, remains an integral part of life in small towns and communities. According to a survey of Australian Shows, this blend of entertainment, commerce, education and popular culture that characterises agricultural shows is unique to Australia. Country Shows and Festivals like this one play an important part in the lives of those who live in the surrounding communities.³

By fulfilling its primary role of improving stock, agricultural methods and the rural economy in general, the Campbell Town Show contributes to the economy in addition to generating community goodwill and social cohesion. The fact is that Agriculture is one of the key drivers of the Tasmanian economy. The primary industry sector

³ <http://aso.gov.au/titles/collections/agricultural-shows/>

makes a significant contribution to the Tasmanian economy. For example, Tasmania is a net exporter of food with 74% of food production destined for interstate and overseas markets. The resulting trade income in 2007-08 (the latest figures I could find) exceeded \$1.95 billion, underpinning a significant portion of the Tasmanian economy.⁴ And now, it seems to me inevitable, that that contribution to the economy of the State will increase dramatically as that water starts to flow into this, and other dry areas in the centre of Tasmania.

If that is right, then it makes one wonder whether the 175th Show will be the last of the great wool and sheep shows and whether the 176th Show will see the emphasis start to move away from wool and onto crops, vegetables, fruits and the like. Only time will tell with respect to that, but I am confident that whether or not the future sees a change of emphasis at the Campbell Town Show from wool to crops, its underlying commercial and social strengths will see it continue to prosper as the oldest continually running Agricultural Show in Australia.

So, I congratulate the Midland Agricultural Association, the sponsors, supporters and volunteers on a long and successful history, wish them all a continuation of that long and successful history and have much pleasure in declaring the 175th Campbell Town Show open.

(7 minutes)

⁴ ABS, 7123.6.55.001 cited http://www.pc.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/99920/sub148.pdf