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2010 Orange Country Fair & Wool Expo
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INTRODUCTION

To her Excellency the NSW Governor Professor Marie Bashir; the Mayor of Orange Councillor John Davis; and the President of the Marsden Memorial Rural Research Centre, Ron Gander and Kevin Isbester, and to the Elders of the Wiradjuri people, past and present, on whose land we are, ladies and gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you today to reflect on the rich history of the City of Orange.

I would like to commend the Marsden Memorial Rural Research Centre for its work here highlighting and celebrating the stories of the people that have come before us, helping to build the way of life that we all enjoy today.

Just like agriculture, mining has been a big part of the lives of thousands of people in Western NSW for more than 150 years.

This part of the State is hugely significant in the mining story and in the development of the early NSW colony.

Gold was first found in NSW near Bathurst in 1823, followed by a gold-rush that made Hill End the largest inland centre in NSW with a population of 8,500 in the 1870s.

But just like agriculture has had to endure tough times with drought and fluctuating demand, mining has also had ups and downs since those heady days in the 19th

Century. But the industry remains a major driver of the local economy and an important part of the local community.

That's why the NSW Minerals Council is proud to be the major sponsor of this weekend's Country Fair and Wool Expo. Supporting this event is a part of our ongoing commitment to the communities where we live and work across the Central West.

Mining directly employs almost 9,000 people in the State's West. Our workforce spends its wages with hairdressers, restaurants, supermarkets and mechanics in towns across the region and mining companies invest billions of dollars a year in local service providers.

I also want to recognise the hard-working people in mining that use their expertise, innovation and technology to deliver quality products, world-class safety and ever improving environmental management techniques.

Our innovations drive improvements in mines around the world. And we also help strengthen society back at home.

The industry contributes hundreds of millions of dollars to causes important to our communities, including mental health; men's health; life saving medical equipment; support for victims of domestic violence; school programs; film festivals; Indigenous employment and education programs; music, sport and the arts; and the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Here in Orange, the NSW Minerals Council has been a sponsor of the night markets during FOOD week.

With direct support from Cadia Valley Operations, our EnviroSmart program recognises and encourages environmental excellence at schools across the Central West.

We are also helping local teenagers that are interested in a career in the minerals industry. There are currently 24 students in our Minerals Education Bursary Scheme, sponsored by Cadia Valley Operations, who are getting a unique insight into a potential career in mining and support from experts from within the industry.

We don't want to just give back to the community. We want to build capacity in mining communities for helping the most vulnerable and providing opportunities in diverse regional economies.

There are times where the minerals industry is criticised. Sometimes that criticism is valid and sometimes it is not. But we are committed to addressing the genuine concerns about mining, minimising our impact on the environment and improving our relationships in the community.

If humanity didn't reflect on its past, like we are being encouraged to do here today, we would never learn from our mistakes. There is no future in ignoring the past.

The minerals industry has never been afraid of doing things differently. We have a great track record of learning from past mistakes.

That's why we will again embrace that spirit of innovation so that we continue to make a positive contribution here in Orange and across the State, not just for our generation, but for future generations that will remember our legacy.