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Member for Kingston

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I rise today to talk specifically about one of the great export industries of South Australia, the wine industry. In the electorate of Kingston we have the beautiful area of McLaren Vale, which is world renowned for its shirazes but also has many other great varieties of wine. Slowly McLaren Vale is also becoming known as a place for food, whether it be olives or cheeses. It is certainly an area which I would encourage the majority of members to visit, but in South Australia we also have many other great regions. Mr Deputy Speaker Secker, you would be well aware of the number of those regions, including the Coonawarra, the Barossa, the Clare Valley and the Limestone Coast area. I think South Australia is very proud of its role in exporting wine.

I was very pleased to hear the announcement on 1 December by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke, who announced that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, had overnight signed a new Australian-European Community agreement on trade in wine. This agreement, signed in conjunction with the European Union Commissioner, is a very important agreement because it really indicates that the wine of Australia has stepped up to the plate and is now internationally recognised as an incredibly great product. This agreement really advances the 1994 agreement and includes a lot of measures that ensure we have a much better opportunity to export our wine to the European market.

In 2007-08 Australia exported 397 million litres of wine to the EC and we imported 18 million litres from Europe. You can see that the benefits from a wine trade agreement are particularly important for Australian wine. The benefits to Australian producers of this agreement will include European recognition of an additional 16 Australian wine making techniques, including the use of oak chips to add flavour. There will also be simpler arrangements for the approval of wine making techniques that may be developed in the future and a simplifying of the label requirements for Australian wine to be sold in European markets, as well as protection within Europe of Australia's 112 registered geographical indicators. Australia will also be able to continue to use a number of traditional expressions such as 'vintage', 'tawny' and 'ruby'.

This agreement marks much more than the specific issues in the agreement. It is really recognition from the European Community of just how far Australian wine has come. I was lucky enough to be on a delegation to visit China recently and I was speaking with their trade department head who

talked about how well recognised Australian wine is becoming. It is a new market for us in Australia. I think, from talking with people in China, there is a huge opportunity for Australian wine there. I am certainly keen to see it grow. The Chinese were talking about taking a little while to become accustomed to the dry nature of Australian wine but, as we have seen in other places around the world, Australian wine is becoming particularly important.

I would like also to congratulate a couple of wineries in my electorate that have recently been nominated for an Australian Export Award. They are wines I am sure many people in this place are familiar with: Fox Creek Wines and d'Arenberg wines. I wish them the best of success in the Australian Export Awards. Fox Creek Wines has also recently won some state-wide export awards, so they are certainly doing their bit for the region. I would also like to congratulate the people of the McLaren Vale region who, whether they work in grapes, wine, tourism or food, always work together to really promote the brand of the region. I think they are a good example of how working together can really make a region grow.