

# **Gina Rinehart's honour for York farmer and PGA president Tony Seabrook at national agricultural day awards | The West Australian**

Billionaire Gina Rinehart has singled out Pastoralists and Graziers Association president Tony Seabrook from among all Australians for his contribution to agriculture, while stepping up her crusade against government red tape and taxes.

Mr Seabrook, a York grain and sheep farmer, last night received the surprise award from Ms Rinehart at a river cruise gala event in Sydney Harbour, to celebrate the second annual National Agriculture and Related Industries Day, initiated by the mining and beef magnate.

Ms Rinehart said Mr Seabrook and the PGA had bravely stood up for agricultural interests many times, including for the rights of children in the bush to continue their School of the Air Program.

The first National Agriculture Day was held last year, with Ms Rinehart bestowing the 2017 recognition for contribution to agriculture, and a \$40,000 cheque to former agriculture minister Barnaby Joyce.

Mr Joyce ended up handing back the money to the event's organisers. There was no cash prize this year following the controversy.

Ms Rinehart initiated a petition at last night's event, which was signed by some 400 people on board, supporting moves to cut red tape and taxes, to be presented to the Federal Government.

Ms Rinehart said both had a bigger impact on driving farmers off the land than drought, and criticised unsolicited advice from government departments.

“Cutting the government cost burden — that big slab of expensive unproductive fat — so that those in the country and our small-to-medium enterprises, many of whom supply our agricultural industry, pay less for

ever-rising licence fees, and for tax, is what's most needed, not unreliable loans that need to be paid back with interest," she said.



Last night's gala event in Sydney.

"And certainly not advice from city bureaucrats, who've never had to manage a station, farm, fishing or pearl boat, or anything else successfully in our agricultural industry."

She said access to water was key to creating productivity.

"Isn't it time we used our water assets in a productive way for animal welfare, drought protection and to sustain and improve our economy," she said.

"When our stock are suffering greatly, aren't we tired of hearing government is doing something?"

"Talking to another department, talking to another State. We all know the government tape we need to go through to build another dam, if it were even permitted, if this is on our own property.

"Why doesn't government simply get out of the way?"