Hon Dave Grills (Mining and Pastoral) [6.16 pm]: I would like to acknowledge the recent East Kimberley Aboriginal Achievement Awards ceremony and the 14 wonderful award recipients. Thinking about yesterday’s reconciliation debate and the debate just now, I can tell members that I know some of these people, and some of the things that I do actually work. I wish I could get that message out to others.

The awards are designed to increase public awareness of the contributions being made by Aboriginal people and organisations in the East Kimberley and to acknowledge and celebrate their leadership. Wunan Foundation chairman, Ian Trust, says that his organisation is proud to be continuing its long association with the awards. The East Kimberley Aboriginal Achievement Awards are designed to highlight the often quiet achievements of groups and individuals in the East Kimberley and to celebrate their efforts in a public way. He said that many people in the East Kimberley Aboriginal community have worked tirelessly for many years not because they expect recognition, but because they are deeply committed to improving the lives of Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley. East Kimberley Aboriginal Achievement Awards coordinator, Natasha Short, says that we often hear about the negative aspects of what is happening in our region, but these awards show the other side of the coin. She said that these awards really showcase the many successes of local Aboriginal people and we hope that they will continue to inspire our young people to aim high and realise their dreams. I am pleased to announce the following award recipients.

The award for junior outstanding individual achievement went to Martina Karadada. Martina is an inspiration for others in her home community of Kalumburu. Always striving for excellence, Martina has achieved outstanding sporting and academic success.

The award for junior person of the year went to Bernard McPhee Stretch. After being referred to the youth service diversion program at the Shire of Halls Creek in 2014 for minor offending, Bernard has turned his life around.

The award for outstanding individual academic achievement went to Kenneth James Martin from Halls Creek. One of nine children, Kenneth took on a plumbing apprenticeship as a mature-age student. He finished his apprenticeship, having received the Master Builders Association of WA award for most outstanding first-year apprentice in 2011, and is now employed full time as a plumber in Kununurra.

The award for outstanding individual sporting achievement went to Collen Nulgit. Collen has achieved excellence in his sporting endeavours through dedication and commitment. He was selected to represent the Kimberley in an Australian Rules football development carnival at the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre for excellence. Collen is a natural leader and sets a fine example for other young people both on and off the field.

The outstanding individual contribution to arts and culture went to Agnes Armstrong. A renowned artist, whose work has been recognised nationally and internationally, Agnes takes a lead role in promoting Miriwoong art, dance and culture. Agnes has a big heart, a big smile and is proud to share her knowledge of art and culture whenever and wherever she can.

The award for outstanding individual contribution to family and community life went to Petina Pitt Lancaster. Petina has been helping people in the East Kimberley community for more than 25 years, both professionally and in her many volunteer roles. She has a particular commitment to promoting Aboriginal women’s lore and culture and providing support for women and children experiencing family violence.

The award for outstanding organisation or program contributing to community life went to Follow the Dream. Follow the Dream is a targeted program that supports high-achieving Indigenous students in years 7 to 12 at Kununurra District High School to complete year 12 and go on to further education or training. That program is also operating at Esperance Senior High School and is working really well.

The award for upstanding individual contribution to Aboriginal education went to Ansana Birrell. Ansana loves her role in supporting Aboriginal students in Halls Creek and always encourages them to study hard and make something of their lives. She inspires them to do more than the minimum and is always very proud when she sees them strive to do their best.

The award for outstanding contribution to Aboriginal employment and training went to Yeehaa Trail Rides. That reminds me of another program in Halls Creek that I worked really hard on, Burks Park, run by Roy and Helen Wilson. Yeehaa Trail Rides has achieved outstanding outcomes with disengaged teenage boys through a program based on practical skills development. That program runs for longer than 12 months, because I agree with what the Attorney General said about 12 months not being long enough. These programs all take a while.
As one community member says, “We swell with pride when we see our young men involved in this and see the transformation in their lives.”

The award for employee of the year went to Jason Reid. This also links to Yeehaa Trail Rides. Jason currently holds down two jobs—one at Yeehaa Trail Rides and the other at Kununurra District High School. Among other things, he is a skilled horseman, a tenacious individual, and a dedicated employee who goes above and beyond the call of duty. He plans to study to become an instructor in the future.

The award for business of the year went to Sandra Lyndon at Wunan House Bed and Breakfast, owned by Wunan Foundation and managed by Sandra Lyndon. Wunan House is the only Indigenous-owned and operated commercial accommodation facility in Kununurra and consistently receives excellent reviews on websites such as Trip Advisor and Booking.com.

The award for non-Aboriginal person of the year contributing to Indigenous affairs went to Rob and Val Pitman of East Kimberley, who were mentioned by Hon Helen Morton, who has visited these people. Bob and Val have a long history of service to the community, including fostering many Indigenous children over the years. They are now in their sixties, but they are still caring full-time for five Indigenous children under the age of five, most of whom have special needs.

The joint winners of the award for person of the year were Councillor Robyn Long from Halls Creek and Des Hill from Kununurra. Robyn is a respected community leader in Halls Creek. She has been involved in many organisations and activities, and she played a pivotal role in bringing alcohol restrictions to the town. Des Hill has a long history of empowering community members and encouraging Aboriginal people to take responsibility for themselves and their families. Des takes an active role in shaping local reforms and is a strong advocate for the Miriuwung–Gajerrong people.

The award for elder of the year went to Button Jones from Kununurra. Button is a man with many hats—he is a senior law and culture man, artist, singer and performer, storyteller, and custodian of country, and one of the few remaining fluent speakers of the Miriwoong language. He has also been involved with Gogo Station’s irrigation project from the Ord, which the Miriuwung–Gajerrong people are working towards achieving.

As I said, I both agree and disagree with the debate we had on reconciliation. The reason I want to recognise these awards is because we need to acknowledge that there are people out there who are doing what we say people should be doing. We therefore need to put more time and effort into working collaboratively, as we all claim to be doing, because if we can take a bit from here and a bit from there, we can do it better.

The PRESIDENT: Before I give the call to Hon Helen Morton, in addition to those remarks I want to inform the house that the film Protagopuri and the Rainmakers, which is based around the same area that Hon Dave Grills was talking about, recently took out the major film prize at the Cinéfestoz film festival in the south west. The producers, directors and major actors were at that festival to receive that prize.