

BUNBURY–GEOGRAPHE GIFT

Statement by Member for Bunbury

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury) [12.26 pm]: The first WesTrac Bunbury–Geographe Gift was held on the weekend of 28 and 29 April at the recreation ground in Bunbury. It was developed by Mr Colin Piacentini, Mr Dylan Panizza and Mr Tom Dillon with the aim of developing a major iconic event that would attract national, if not international, attention. Modelled on the famous Stawell Gift, the event was held over two days, with the sprints as the feature events. The weekend’s events included a range of community and family activities, including a community fun run, food truck event, food obstacle course, street theatre and a Good Nights music cafe. This event had something for everyone. The choice of venue for the event and its proximity to the CBD meant that it directly supported Bunbury’s central business district and the many retailers, coffee shops and restaurants that are located there.

The motivation for the gift was to further build Bunbury’s reputation for iconic and different events. It attracted support from a large number of sponsors who together supported a prize pool of \$78 000, attracting around 180 competitors, many of whom were from interstate. From its inaugural presentation, the gift attracted multiple Commonwealth Games athletes and an Olympian, which bodes well for its future. The more than 3 000 people who attended the event were able to celebrate the victories of Kiara Reddingius in the women’s headline event and Evan Jarvis in the men’s event—both Western Australian athletes.

The Bunbury–Geographe Gift is symbolic of the change that is taking place in Bunbury, with a new sense of optimism about the future and renewed business confidence, buoyed by strong investment from both the state government and the private sector. Very special mention goes to Colin Piacentini and his wife, Anne; Dylan Panizza, who helped organise the competitors; the officials who run the races; and Tom Dillon, who, along with Jo O’Dea, is a superb organiser.