

## **SHIRE OF TRAYNING — CENTENARY OF SETTLEMENT**

### *Statement*

**HON MIA DAVIES (Agricultural)** [5.30 pm]: I rise tonight to note a significant milestone for the communities in the Shire of Trayning. There are three townships within the shire: Trayning, Kununoppin and Yelbeni. Kununoppin was gazetted as a townsite in 1911, Trayning and Yelbeni in 1912. This past weekend current and past residents came together to celebrate 100 years of European settlement and history in Trayning and Yelbeni. Kunno held its official celebrations last year. I want to register my congratulations to Linda Vernon and her centenary committee, to the volunteers, to the shire councillors and to the staff who worked so very hard to put together a weekend of celebration and commemoration. Organising such a celebration is never an easy task, and it was evident over the weekend, particularly on the Sunday when I attended, that an enormous effort had been put in by all involved.

For those members who are unfamiliar with the area, the Shire of Trayning covers an area of 1 632 square kilometres consisting mostly of agricultural land, some nature reserves and national parkland in the north eastern wheatbelt area of the Agricultural Region. It is about 230 kilometres east of Perth, and about 430 people live in the shire. The name of the shire has gone through a number of different iterations, starting life as the Korrelocking Road Board, then Ninghan Road District, then Kununoppin–Trayning Road District, and after 1961 it became the Trayning, Kununoppin, Yelbeni Shire Council. This was a little too much to fit on numberplates and the shire's letterhead, so it later became known as the Shire of Trayning.

The shire shares a similar heritage with many other towns in the Agricultural Region. It formed progress associations to build town halls and to organise sporting events, medical services and various other community infrastructure. Agriculture is the mainstay of the local economy, and it has been noted in historical writings that the first years of settlement were very difficult for the community, in particular for farmers. Drought, poor crops and lack of finance were compounded by the outbreak of the First World War, which diminished the population so much that many were never to return. Of course the community survived and continued to grow and prosper, and it reached its peak population in 1927 when 2 250 people called the region home.

Post World War II again saw an influx of returned servicemen. Their families took up land that had been abandoned in the 1930s during the Depression, and we saw the advent of much larger farm machinery on farms that led to an expansion in agricultural activity across the district. There was a period when there was a high rate of land clearing and, unfortunately, we are still dealing with some of those policy decisions today with the effects of encroaching salinity evident in some parts of the shire.

Don Couper, a well-known name in the region, notes in his historical writings that since the mid-1920s the health of the district had been in the care of Kununoppin Hospital and the doctors associated with it. My sister and a number of members of my family were born at Kununoppin Hospital. The hospital is very well known for Dr John Radunovich who practised there for many years. He delivered many babies there and the care of that community was under his watch for a long time. He is much beloved and is now retired, but he still returns every year to help with fundraisers that are held to retain the services at that hospital.

**Hon Helen Morton:** Much feared by regional groups, I believe!

**Hon MIA DAVIES:** Rather formidable!

As in all country communities, sport has been an important part of life. Don Couper reflected that the first organised game of football was played at South Trayning on Herbert Flowers' farm. Football, cricket and soccer were all popular in the early years, tennis became popular in the early 1920s and golf a little after that. Other sporting pursuits included hockey and there was a rifle club there. The trots were also a favourite, and in the early days the winning horse and sulky were presented with a barrel of beer as their prize. Therefore, 100 years later, Trayning, Yelbeni and Kununoppin are celebrating this significant milestone. So much has happened in the intervening years, but it is always worthwhile to reflect on our heritage and the events and circumstances that have shaped our community and the region. Much of Australia's collective history is built around those who pioneered their lives and wealth in the bush in the early days of our nation's life. The mateship and character of people who chose to forge their lives in such harsh circumstances in our early years and the innovation that resulted in the agricultural sector as a result of people trying to make do in quite difficult circumstances are hallmarks of the wheatbelt and make some of these communities and the sense of community in towns and shires like Trayning unique.

The agricultural sector has changed beyond recognition from the time of our forefathers who built these enterprises, but the spirit and pride of the families who at one time or another have called the Shire of Trayning or the district their home were definitely on show over the weekend. There were teachers, shopkeepers, pioneering farming families who still call the district home and police officers; they were all there. Trayning and Yelbeni looked spick and span. The school and the shire offices were open for people to go through and there

were tours of the district, photographic exhibitions, street stalls and displays of days gone by. It was an enjoyable afternoon. Again, I congratulate the centenary committee and all the volunteers who assisted. I commend the shire, led by Councillor Trevor Lamond, and the other councillors and dedicated shire staff for the support they gave to the committee. It was a privilege to be in attendance and take part in the formal proceedings.