

GERALDTON TURF CLUB

Statement by Member for Greenough

MR EDWARDS (Greenough) [12.53 pm]: I draw to the attention of the House the rejuvenation and success of the Geraldton Turf Club. The club started in approximately 1886, with the running of the first Geraldton Cup. Within its sphere of administration, the club incorporates the running of the Walkaway Cup and the Geraldton Gold Cup. To encourage and support regional involvement, the club also organises and runs the Northampton and Mullewa Cups at the Geraldton racecourse.

Two to three years ago the quality of the race track was such that it was necessary to close it for restructure and repair, as the club could field only five horses in a race. I am not sure of the expenditure involved in bringing the track back to a quality turf track, but I am aware of the organisations involved in the funding. They were local people, who provided dollars and in-kind support, the Provincial Racing Association, the Race Course Development Trust and the Western Australian Turf Club.

The repair and restoration of the track has been highly successful, and now the club is maintaining fields of between 10 and 13 horses in a race, and running between 14 and 18 meetings a year. Prize money is approximately \$25 000 for each meeting, and the club has plans to increase the amount, to continue to promote quality racing. The Geraldton Gold Cup attracts prize money of \$53 000 and is keenly contested by racing interests from around Western Australia. The current average crowd is approximately 1 200 a meeting, although I am aware that this year's gold cup attracted about 2 000.

I congratulate all those involved in the successful resurrection of the Geraldton Turf Club, and those who believed in the right of what they were doing. The communities of Geraldton and surrounding districts can be proud of a well-run and progressive race club that has a very bright future.