

OPTUS STADIUM — STATE OF ORIGIN

Statement

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral) [9.59 pm]: I rise to talk briefly about the great spectacle we saw in Western Australia on the weekend. I hope everyone was wearing blue, because it was definitely an absolute hammering from the great New South Wales Blues at Optus Stadium on Sunday night.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Who was the Premier barracking for?

Hon KYLE MCGINN: The Premier cannot be on the right side all the time; I did notice he was wearing a Maroons scarf. Hopefully we will change that for game 3.

I come from Darwin and rugby league is massive in the Northern Territory. This is the first State of Origin game I have ever been to. When I got to the stadium—this is not well known until one walks into the stadium—I noticed that a Western Australian women's team was playing a NT team. The Northern Territory is a very rugby-oriented place. People there play AFL, but rugby league is massive. The WA women's team was thumping the Northern Territory team. They were absolutely going to town and it was really great quality rugby to watch. The crowd was getting into the game. I could feel the atmosphere in Optus Stadium; people were packed outside and when the main game came on, it was absolutely pumping inside the stadium.

We were talking about tourism earlier. That game brought tourists into Western Australia. I heard that 20 000 interstate visitors came to watch the game. They went across to Rottnest Island to look at the quokkas and did all that sort of stuff. The game had a massive impact on Western Australia, and putting us on the map with a State of Origin game is a great achievement. To see such a high-quality game from the Blues was excellent. Unfortunately, the Maroons did not really show up, but that is okay; we can deal with that. It was really good to see that the crowd got into the game, and that there were no real issues on the night. It was a massive spectacle.

The next day, I got up to go and have a run and play touch footy with a couple of other members from the chamber. That was really good as well. The game was part of the Parliamentary Friends of Rugby League and a State of Mind program around mental health that the National Rugby League runs. It has been doing amazing things up in the north, particularly in the Kimberley, with ex-players Preston Campbell and Dean Withers. Some amazing players are getting out there and really getting to the grassroots to put forward mental health as a priority in sport. On the day, there were some great tries during the touch footy game. I was playing for New South Wales, along with Hon Robin Scott. Hon Matthew Swinbourn was playing for Queensland and had the play of the day when he scored a try coming down the wing. He put the ball down in front of himself, let momentum get the better of him and went straight over the top of the ball. It was good that it was on replay on the big screen for all of us to see again. It was a great day and it was good to get out and have a bit of a run around. The players were really serious. Nathan Hindmarsh and Dean Withers were really serious about the fact that NRL has a lot to offer, particularly the mental health stuff that they are doing. It is good to see. The state should look seriously at NRL. It was the biggest crowd for a sporting event that Optus Stadium has had, and that says something. I am sure that when we look back to see how much we have benefited financially, we will find that it has been a great thing for Western Australia. Go the mighty Blues for round 3! Well done WA for hosting the game!