

KALGOORLIE CUP

Statement

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.20 pm]: I am really excited to get up today to talk about regional horse racing in Western Australia. The Kalgoorlie Cup was held in Kalgoorlie on Saturday, and it was fantastic. What an absolute turn-out for Kalgoorlie. Well done to the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Racing Club for putting on a fantastic racing round. As members would be aware, we have many regional racing events that happen across our electorate. Even events that involve just one horse race a year bring so much income, work and highlights to the region. When I lived in Karratha, I loved going to the Roebourne races. It was a very good weekend. I even managed to get out to the Marble Bar races once. I did not race in the last race. Members would be aware that Marble Bar has a very unique last race, which I believe has got a little more PG as time has gone on.

However, I talk today about the Kalgoorlie Cup. The Kalgoorlie race round was spectacular. When I was out in my electorate last week, I sat on the main street and saw the amount of tourism in town; it was absolutely amazing. People from all over Australia—Perth particularly—came out for the week of festivities, and a week of festivities is what it was. One of the really cool things was Ladies Da. I am not a fashionista by any means—I lay that out there very clearly on the record that I am not a fashionable person. Members will see me in my shorts, thongs and holey union shirt. That is probably about it. Spectacular fashions on the field events are held right across regional WA at the races, culminating in a competition in Perth and a winning finalist. Ladies Day in Kalgoorlie this years was taken out by Hayley Selleck.

Hon Jackie Jarvis: You were robbed!

Hon KYLE MCGINN: I was not robbed, thank you, minister!

It was very heavily competitive. I know that all the fashion salons in Kalgoorlie were slammed for the week, because it is a race round. There is not just the Kalgoorlie Cup on the Saturday, but also Ladies Day and Barefoot on the Greens, in which 700 women in white go along and celebrate the race round by walking on the grass with no shoes on. It is a really good event. I heard from the member for Kalgoorlie that it was spectacular this year. There was also the Calcutta. I am still not quite around how that works. All I know is that the pub was heaving and a lot of fun was had.

I give a big shout-out to Racing and Wagering Western Australia. It did a spectacular job of coming out and really showing the importance of what this race round means to the goldfields. Horse racing et cetera has often been the subject of debate and I know that gets around a lot, but the economic impact cannot be taken for granted. Some of the figures RWWA provided me with were quite phenomenal. It did a study, and just in the Kalgoorlie electorate alone, the economic value of horse racing and the KBRC is \$51.9 million a year. That is massive. There are over 396 full-time jobs, with more than 1 621 workers and volunteers participating, and five tracks. We have seen over 20 900 people attend racing in the last 12 months in the Kalgoorlie electorate at 47 race meets and 306 races. In the Mining and Pastoral electorate alone, \$128 million from racing goes into the electorate. There are some very passionate people in the racing industry who do a lot to ensure that they get their horses, jockeys and everyone out to the races.

On the day, at the Kalgoorlie Cup, I did dress up. Surprise, surprise—I had shorts on and a slouch hat. It was quite hot—about 37 degrees. It was really good to see that everyone was having a great time. I will admit that there have been some hard years for the KBRC. The COVID-19 period was severely tough. There were some issues with the operation of the bar. I remember one year there was a line almost out the gate of people trying to get to the bar. We have been in the news before. I do not know if members remember, but I think last year or the year before they invented the chair snake. Instead of empty cups, someone stacked up all the chairs in the middle of the racetrack and it got to about 15 metres in the air. That went viral.

The prize for the running of the Kalgoorlie Cup was \$150 000 for the winner, and it was quite a story for the winner. Be Optimistic was the horse that won the cup. I will read an article from the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, because it was quite special for the family and the people involved with the horse that won this cup. The article, headed “Famous cup victory honours the late Bronte Stewart”, states —

Sue Stewart reckons her late husband, Bronte, “would still be celebrating” after Be Optimistic produced a stunning run to win Saturday’s \$150,000 XXXX Kalgoorlie Cup (2300m) that was five years in the making.

Mrs Stewart, who is among the mare’s ownership syndicate that includes her sons Luke and Zach, said Bronte’s long association with Goldfields racing was centred on one day lifting a Kalgoorlie Cup.

He died in 2018 with that goal unfilled but Mrs Stewart said his spirit shone brightly over the tense final stages of the race when Be Optimistic, ridden by Clint Johnston-Porter, held off Recalled by a short-head.

Johnston-Porter was wearing the colours of Bronte’s beloved Adelaide Crows—blue and red, with yellow that was depicted by gold nuggets.

The win sparked off a big night of celebrations.

“When (trainer) Luke (Ferne) first went to Perth, I told him, ‘just find us a stayer—something that can win a cup,” Mrs Stewart said.

“Luke eventually found this horse, asked if we’d like to be in it (as owners) and we were all fortunate enough to say, ‘yes’.

“It was decided he would race in Bronte’s colours and that’s why it was so special.

“Because he loved his prospecting, that’s where the gold nuggets come into it, and he guided us over the line yesterday (Saturday)—he was with us and watching over us, definitely.”

She said her anxiety levels during the race’s final stages were off the charts.

“Where I was standing, with Mrs Bayliss who is one of the breeders, we couldn’t accurately see (the finishing post) so I was too frightened to look up,” Mrs Stewart said.

“Once those (winning) numbers went up we were all yelling and screaming, jumping up and down like idiots and just so fortunate that we had so many locals come up to congratulate us.

“They knew how involved Bronte was in racing and what it would have meant to him and it has carried over to me and the boys.

“We celebrated at the Fernie stables, where people were popping in and out and we were drinking out of the cup—along with some bits and pieces of champagne, scotch and whatever else.”

It was a really touching moment when the cup was lifted, and it was really good for the local racing identities to be acknowledged. It was good to see that locals were involved in winning the \$150 000 prize money. I think that is spectacular. A big shout-out to the Minister for Racing and Gaming, Reece Whitby, who was out there for the day. He really engages closely with the racing clubs. He gets out there and makes sure he gets along. I know that RWWA, the racing club and everyone was happy to have him out there. I think local member Ali Kent went to five events in four or five days. She is a really big supporter of the local racing industry. A big shout-out to the CEO of RWWA, Ian Edwards and to Shelbie Owen, Zach Relph and Nicole Ward-Beaver, who have done a fantastic job putting it together, and a fantastic job advocating for regional racing. I look forward to next year being even bigger and better than this year.