

RACING — WESTERN TRILOGY

Statement by Minister for Racing and Gaming

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [12.48 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the Western Trilogy, the richest weekend in Western Australian racing history, which took place over 24-hours in mid-April. Each race has a name that is strongly Western Australian—the Quokka, the Nullarbor and the Sandgroper. It was the world’s first tri-code slot racing event, with races run at Ascot Racecourse, Gloucester Park and Greyhounds WA in Cannington. It was a bold and innovative concept that attracted the best equine and canine talent from across Australia.

The \$5.5 million prize money attracted high-quality local and interstate runners, which truly put WA on the national racing map. The \$5.5 million prize pool for the Sandgroper was the largest in WA greyhound racing history and the joint fifth richest in Australia. Western Australians have long been called Sandgropers, a name that echoes our beach lifestyle and was embraced as part of our action-packed racing weekend. The Sandgroper recorded the highest turnover on a greyhound race in WA history. Some of the best pacers competed for \$1 million as part of the Nullarbor, the joint second-richest harness race in Australia. The more than 2 500-metre race carries the title of “Nullarbor” in honour of the great plain that connects the east coast of Australia to the west. The Nullarbor recorded a turnover equal to the highest earning harness race in the 2023 financial year and is in the top 10 highest turnover races in Western Australian harness history. The Quokka was the richest thoroughbred race ever held in Western Australia, with \$4 million in prize money, making it the ninth-richest race in Australia. The race was named for Western Australia’s beloved quokka, known as the world’s happiest animal and a favourite for holiday selfies.

History was made when Western Australian stars took on interstate contenders over 1 200 metres at Ascot Racecourse. The Quokka recorded the highest turnover for any individual WA race in history—by almost 40 per cent; an incredible result—and it was not just locally that the Western Trilogy was grabbing attention. More than 100 newsprint articles occupying space valued at \$650 000 ran all over the country, in addition to social media, Sky Racing, radio and television stories. Prime time television coverage of the Quokka on Channel Seven was broadcast Australia-wide. A full independent economic and social impact report of the Western Trilogy is underway and will be available later in the year. There is little doubt that by attracting some of the biggest names in racing and punters from all around Western Australia and the rest of the country, we successfully showcased Perth and injected a financial shot in the arm to our economy.