

**ASTRO ROCKS FESTIVAL  
OLLIE GEORGE**

*Statement*

**HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral)** [6.20 pm]: I rise to make a brief statement about a festival I recently attended in Mt Magnet called the Astro Rocks Festival on 25 and 26 August. Mt Magnet is about 550 kilometres from Perth. It was quite an interesting event; the town really showed up for it. Unfortunately, a big darts competition was being held in Geraldton on the same day, and that meant a lot of people went to the darts competition—thank you, Hon Darren West!

The purpose of the event is to showcase and celebrate geological heritage and astronomical wonders of Australia. One thing Mt Magnet has going for it is its very clear skies and the ability to see well into the stars. I am not normally someone who gazes into stars, but it was quite interesting to see what was at the event. The event was funded by the regional events scheme and showed how critical it is to fund these types of events because they bring in tourism. There were caravans all over Mt Magnet that day. They stayed overnight specifically to see the event. Scitech was there blowing things up, which the kids enjoyed. There were sausage sizzles, telescopes and a lot of enthusiasts showed up. I was blown away by how much money people spend on telescopes. Equipment worth probably \$10 000 to \$15 000 was spent on a hobby, which is quite extravagant. An earth exhibition was held with local rocks. I have forgotten the gentleman's name, but a gentleman who lived at Mt Magnet for many years, donated his entire rock collection to the visitors' centre. No price tag could be put on those rocks. It displayed many rocks that could be found around Australia and the world—it was massive. In the visitors' centre there was a full display where all the tourists were looking at it. It was really well accepted.

We were welcomed by shire president, Jorgen Jensen. It was good to get our head around some of the issues they face in Mt Magnet and to speak with the locals and get to know some of the issues out there. It was quite confronting going into the town. It is one of those typical towns with a mine in operation. During the 1980s and 1990s, there was no fly in, fly out employment but as soon as the mine switched to FIFO employment all the money went out of the town. We could tell that the people who were there had toughed it out and made sure they would stay there for the rest of their lives. A lot of seniors were there also.

We finished the event by looking at Jupiter. During the event, the international space station moved across the sky. It looked like a satellite would collide with it because from the ground they look as though they are on the same level in the sky but they are actually thousands of miles apart. The crowd thought it was quite entertaining.

On the Saturday I had the honour of launching a book for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee Elder of the Year, Ollie George. The book is called, *Nganang Badimaya Wangga: Yarns with Gami Ollie George*. I am holding it up for Hansard. This man is a true inspiration and leader in Indigenous culture. He is the last fluent speaker of the Badimaya language. He worked very hard with many people but Brendon Penza is one to mention for putting together an exhibition and a book and recording all the Badimaya language. They have recorded that language, which would have been lost if that had not been done. Many, many years of work have been put into this. Ollie is quite a character, I have to say. I will read the foreword to the book because it really sums up what we need to do better in the Indigenous space because if we do not help them protect their culture, it will be lost. The foreword states —

Ollie George has had a fascinating and extraordinary life. He was born on Pullagaroo Station, near Paynes Find, to Sydney George/George Mulga and Clara George (Bilguwi), in 1934, one of 13 children. Growing up on his barna, Ollie learned all there was to know about Badimaya language, culture and country. He worked the pastoral stations of Badimaya country from a young age, living on country and speaking his mother tongue Badimaya with his dear Nanna Dinah and Poppa Nugget. This kind of experience is rare now, and has been for many years. Ollie was one of the last of even his generation to grow up speaking language, and we are so lucky and grateful for his upbringing now. Without Ollie, and the work of other old Badimaya people in the past, we and subsequent future generations would no longer have our language.

What strikes me about this book is that Ollie not only did all this work, but also used some new technology, which I have not yet seen working. For Hansard's sake I am holding up a microphone. Throughout the book, Ollie tells stories about his life. If I put the microphone to the little depictions of sound, we can hear Ollie speak Badimaya language. He has not only recorded it all, but also made it possible for us all to hear what that language sounded like. I will attempt something. When I say "attempt", I am not 100 per cent sure whether this will work but I promised Ollie I would have his language heard. I cannot read it so we will try this method. This is a story about his dad being bucked off a horse. He says —

Nganangu mamanggulu nguud ride-im and around the house Wydgee nguud-ga balunha manu warning bucked him off. Cos Dad, he couldn't ride, and when I was a little fella I'd wish I could get on it. Probably would've done the same with me.

As members can tell, he is a very funny guy and has quite a laugh. The story basically is —

Dad was a big fella, but he used to make me sorry, used to get bucked off a horse. And I was a young fella, and I used to go, "oh wish I could get on for you there." I always used to have a go at that horse, but I were too young. Yeah I'll give it a go.

Ollie was about six or seven years old when he first rode a horse, or maybe a bit younger. He would canter around the sheep and bring them back. He would canter along, and then next minute he would drop off but the horse kept going! This is at the heart of Ollie's character. A lot of people in the town respect him and he has worked very hard on his culture. It is an absolute honour to launch this book that they worked very hard on. Hopefully, I will have a few more copies for people to look at. It is a good way to show that in this space people work hard and look at innovative ways.

The only other place I will mention that shows similar innovation is the Martu arts centre in Newman and what it is doing with its art. The artists have created 3D art. They computerise their artwork and turn it into a full story. A lot of exciting things are happening in Indigenous art. I say to Mt Magnet, thank you for welcoming me there and I say to Ollie, keep doing the good work.