

**LORNA MITCHELL SPRING FESTIVAL  
BRAIDS BY SOFIA**

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**HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary)** [8.49 pm]: It is exciting to get up today and talk about the Lorna Mitchell Spring Festival that happened in Kalgoorlie–Boulder over the weekend. It is heavily sponsored and run by the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It is a fantastic event that is held every year in the goldfields. The member for Kalgoorlie, Ali Kent, and I had our big red tent set up there for the day and had a very special visitor, Hon Bill Johnston, who was out there for the day as well. We met thousands of locals and spoke with many people about all the great things that are happening across the goldfields. It was great to see the big red tent there.

The spring fest had over 150 stallholders, including small businesses, not-for-profit organisations, food stalls and kids' games stalls. It was a great mixture. It is always a fantastic festival, but this one felt really big. From the moment it kicked off, we knew it was going to be a big day. I am really proud to say that within the first hour and a half, we had over 4 000 people come through the gate, and by the end of the day, over 9 000 people had attended the event, which is fantastic for the goldfields region.

Last week I spoke about the Kalgoorlie races. The PGA event also happened during the week, which was fantastic. The spring fest was a real culmination of all the small businesses getting another whack into their bank accounts. It was really great to see. I really enjoyed seeing the Rotary Club of Kalgoorlie and the Rotary Club of Boulder out again. They are always out there shaking the tin and fundraising for the community. It was fantastic.

While I was there, I reflected on some comments about my mullet that were made in the chamber by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Dr Steve Thomas. I was very offended. It has been said three or four times in this chamber that I should get a haircut. Luckily enough, I found the perfect small business to bedazzle my mullet. It is called Braids by Sofia. Braids by Sofia is a very special business because it is run by Sofia, who is 14 years old and in year 8 at John Paul College. Her mum, Bianca, has worked hard and passionately to help her daughter, who has a passion for braiding. I will just pull it over my shoulder. As members can see, it is not just a passion. Hansard will notice that I am very good-looking now with the braid Sofia did for me! The business has just received Ocean Wave Braids' custom NAIDOC braids, which is what I am wearing today. I was very proud to sit down and get my hair pulled and combed. I was made very well aware that the dirtier the hair, the better the braid, so I was pretty happy about that!

Sofia's mum, Bianca, does a fantastic job of helping Sofia with this business, which she has been running since she was 11 years old. She learned to braid when she was 11. Her mum has been helping her braid and started advertising the mobile hair-braiding business on Facebook. She has since set up her own braid room at home and gets asked to travel to many community events and around the region. Bianca, Sofia's mum, has been her biggest support in helping her run the business. She takes the bookings, orders the stock, does the social media and assists her when she is braiding. Recently, Sofia has partnered with Ocean Wave Braids and they are doing the NAIDOC braid, which they are taking out to the communities in Leonora and Laverton. Sofia also wants to do community work with her braiding. She wants to take it out into smaller communities like Leonora and Laverton and give all the kids out there the same opportunity that kids in the goldfields get. Sofia says that the most rewarding part of having her own business is getting to meet new people and building relationships, particularly with young girls, and seeing their self-esteem flourish. She also enjoys travelling and she is saving up for her first car. I think she is doing a fantastic job. There is a quote that she wanted me to read out, which I think is fantastic. This is directly from Sofia —

My future plans are to teach other girls how to braid and teach self-love in communities. I want to do workshops and go to schools with my sister involved to maybe teach girls how they can have their own business too. I want to keep braiding and growing my business and travel the world meeting new people and learning more from international braiders. I even met a lady who did Drake's hair and she replied to me from America!

Not only has Drake's hair been done, but also Hon Kyle McGinn's hair! I can tell the people of the goldfields that she is a fantastic young girl who has a great business, heavily supported by her mother. The spring festival was a great success; it showcased some of the fantastic small businesses in the goldfields and brought economic value. I want to give a huge thankyou to Kalgoorlie–Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry for running it and a massive thankyou to Bill Johnston and Ali Kent for sticking it out for the day.