



Speech by

Hon. Kevin Lingard

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard Friday, 8 June 2007

BEAUDESERT ELECTORATE, EQUINE INDUSTRY

Hon. KR LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (7.36 pm): Tonight the Country and Horse Festival starts at Beaudesert. This magnificent week gives the Beaudesert area an opportunity to emphasise the role of the horse industry in Beaudesert. Beaudesert has now seen an influx of children's ponies, polo ponies, quarter horses and, above all, the glorious thoroughbreds. Those horses are transforming the rural landscape from cattle grazing and dairy farms to developed and landscaped horse studs, giving the district a new industry focus and sustaining strong land values in the area. There is nothing more magnificent than to see the construction of a new horse stud worth more than \$30 million.

The equine industry in Australia, including breeding, racing, equestrian and events, net wagering and slaughter, is worth \$8.4 billion and is second only to the grain industry, which is worth \$9.5 billion. The Beaudesert shire has a population of 65,000 people, 5,000 of whom live in the town of Beaudesert. According to the shire council, during the 2003-04 financial year Beaudesert's equine industry totalled about \$46.01 million and the Gold Coast's equine industry totalled \$20.7 million. This is big money coming into a rural district.

At the same time, residents are moving into the region at the rate of about 1,000 a week. They have sustained the strength of the property market. Land values in the area have nearly doubled in the past five years—between \$3 million and \$10 million for some properties. Big grazing properties, which three years ago would have sold for \$2,500 an acre, are now selling for \$4,500 an acre.

Beaudesert's new prosperity is a dramatic contrast to the shire 12 years ago when the meatworks closed down, throwing 1,000 people out of work. It was a terrible time then. There were 33 shops vacant in Beaudesert—that is almost all of the shops. Now there are no vacant shops at all. Even in those dark times some saw the district's potential. People realised that the horse industry needed good spelling and training properties. The district is well suited for breeding, rearing, training and spelling horses, as it has good weather, good rainfall, and it is close to big population centres and their racecourses.

It really took the arrival of the Magic Millions thoroughbred sale and its annual yearling sales to underpin the new equine industry, which has now grown to about 40 studs in our area, and all the associated construction and maintenance industries. Beaudesert forms a golden triangle with Brisbane and the Gold Coast, lying about an hour's drive from each. The equine industry is overall the district's largest economically and has brought strong employment and other new areas to the region, whether they be trainers, strappers, farriers, animal dieticians, saddle makers, saddle cloth makers and vets. It has spawned little industries and recreations like horseriding and pony clubs and brought money and a vibrant economy to the shire.