




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

ADJOURNMENT

Julia Creek DirtDust Festival

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (6.01 pm): I rise tonight to talk about the Julia Creek DirtDust Festival. It is a three-day festival generating a long-lasting financial benefit for North-West Queensland, according to a new economic impact study released this week. It is an event I am pleased to be involved with. It is bolstered by the triathlon event on the Saturday. I have done that for the last four years.

A study of the economic and tourism value of the Julia Creek DirtDust Festival found some striking facts and showed its value to the outback community. It highlighted the value of the investment by Queensland Tourism. The event attracted 2,400 visitors this year. It generated more than \$1.04 million for outback Queensland. For a town of 6,000 people, that is pretty good. Included in this figure is \$860,000 of new money injected into the region. The town's population increases almost tenfold over the three days of the festival. Members need to bear in mind that this is a pretty remote part of North-West Queensland. People come from as far away as Brisbane for the festival. A lot of people come from Townsville. A lot of the country people from the area also come to the festival.

Once the spend is adjusted to account for the input-output flow of funds, the final economic impact of the festival was found to be \$590,000. That stays in the town of Julia Creek and the McKinlay shire. This equates to 10 full-time jobs in Queensland's economy and means a lot to this modest little town. We have also known for a long time that the festival is good for community spirit and morale. We cannot put a dollar value on that.

Some 2,400 unique visitors attended the 2013 festival. There were a total of 5,026 attendances at the combined dirt and dust events. Of the 2,400 festival visitors, some 2,198 were in the McKinlay shire specifically for the festival. The average festival attendee spends almost three nights within 100 kilometres of the town. Evidently, it is very good for the town.

From its modest beginnings, it celebrated its 19th year in 2013. It started after a conversation in the pub 19 years ago. I think there were about 20 competitors at the first event. I think there were about 300 starters in the triathlon this year.

We welcome the support of the Queensland government. We recently received a grant of \$100,000 to promote the event through marketing. That was money well spent. The people of the McKinlay shire are very grateful for the money from the government and also for the support from BHP Billiton's Cannington mine and the McKinlay shire itself. I think this is money well spent on tourism in the local area. All people in the north-west benefit from it, as can be seen from the economic study that was done on the impact of the event. It is no wonder the festival won the best festival and event in Queensland at the Tourism Queensland Awards in 2009 and has been a finalist in many other years. It is a credit to all those people who still work at the festival and who started it so many years ago.