




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Racing Industry

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.06 am): There is no greater supporter of country racing than the Palaszczuk government.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. You have made your point.

Ms GRACE: We are a government that governs for all of Queensland and we will always support communities in rural and remote parts of the state. That is why we have allocated \$21 million for a Country Racing Support Program—a four-year package that is designed to ensure that racing in the regions continues. I met with representatives from the Queensland Country Racing Committee to brief them on this package, which offsets the amended prize money structure that was in the sustainability report. This means that country racing prize money and race meetings will remain at current levels at least for the next two years and beyond 1 July 2016. The package also includes funding for country race clubs to develop new business models and explore alternative funding sources along with funding for staff training and enhancements to visitor infrastructure.

This is a government that listens. We have listened to country racing stakeholders. We are providing this additional funding because we recognise the important role that racing plays in many Queensland communities. Racing provides owners, trainers and jockeys with valuable income while generating important economic activity for hotels, retailers, accommodation providers and other businesses. Country race days are also great social occasions, bringing together local residents in what for many towns throughout the state is one of the biggest days of the year.

Last month, I was pleased to join the member for Mirani, the member for Dalrymple and several hundred other racegoers at just such an occasion—Moranbah Race Club's annual Australia Day race meeting. It was a great day's racing and a credit to the Moranbah Race Club. Clubs such as the Moranbah Race Club are the heart and soul of country racing. I want to thank the President of the Moranbah Race Club, Brett Sparks, and the club secretary, Kay Juhas, for giving us such a warm welcome. Also in January I attended the Sunshine Coast Turf Club Coastline BMW 2yo Classic Raceday luncheon at Corbould Park with the member for Gladstone. I believe that one of his racehorses ran in that race. I think maybe next time it could do better.

The previous evening I attended the Sunshine Coast Summer Carnival Gala Ball to present Graham Rewald, the Eastern Downs Racing Association chairman, with an award in recognition of his services to country racing. I have met Graham and his wonderful wife on about three or four occasions since that time. They are the heart and soul of that country racing club. Since becoming racing minister

I have also visited the Gladstone and Townsville racecourses, meeting with club representatives to discuss their exciting plans for the future. I look forward to visiting other country race clubs in the coming months.

Earlier this month I was also pleased to see that the local breeding industry has welcomed Racing Queensland's decision to retain the key features of the Queensland Thoroughbred Incentive Scheme, or QTIS. QTIS provides country breeders, owners and trainers with an important financial incentive to breed to Queensland based stallions and to support the local racing industry. Queensland Thoroughbred Breeders Association president Basil Nolan has hailed the revised QTIS scheme as a major win for the Queensland racing and breeding industry. Steve Morley, the manager of Queensland's largest stud, Glenlogan Park, who I have met on a couple of occasions and spoken to on the phone, said—

Everyone can now go to the March sale with confidence knowing that the QTIS bonuses are set in concrete and are the best in Australia.

This is another boost for country racing. I have signed the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the Queensland racing industry. This is an industry that will thrive under this government and I am determined to see it happen.