




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2018

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Central West Rugby League

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.25 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will take your advice. Although the drought in Western Queensland has not broken and the people there face their seventh year without a wet season, the Rugby League premiership drought has broken for the mighty Blackall Magpies. Last Saturday night a crowd of well over 1,000 Western Queenslanders descended on the Ilfracombe sports oval where the Blackall Magpies Rugby League team won the Central West Rugby League grand final, breaking a 30-year drought on the football field for the town. The Blackall Magpies defeated last year's grand finalists, the Ilfracombe Scorpions, 22-8.

Although the drought has been constant and a never-ending natural disaster for the people of Western Queensland, Rugby League and their passion for the game is still strong. The quality of the game was good and as good as any game played down here in South-East Queensland. The game flowed, there were very few penalties given, there were great hard hit-ups and hard tackles and, when it comes to Rugby League, it was a great showcase of the brilliant talent that we have in the west.

The Blackall Magpies and the Ilfracombe Scorpions should be very proud of their great display of Rugby League. It was great to be there to witness that fantastic game that night. At the sounding of the final siren, there was no stopping hundreds of Blackall Magpies supporters running on to the ground to embrace their players and claim the Blackall Magpies' first premiership for 30 years. Some of those people were members of the last victorious Blackall Magpies team in 1988. They had travelled from all over Queensland to lend their support and witness this historic occasion.

The drought has taken its toll on sport in Western Queensland. For the first time we saw the mighty Winton Diamantina Devils not being able to field a team. When it comes to Rugby League in Western Queensland, many members know the passion of the late, great Butch Lenton. The ongoing drought and the loss of people from the west have seen many sporting clubs struggle. We hope to see them and the Aramac Bush Pigs field a team next year. We will also see another great season next year when the Blackall Magpies defend their title against the great Ilfracombe Scorpions, the Longreach Tigers and the Barcaldine Sand Goannas.

Rugby League has not finished this year in Western Queensland; it is only the finish of the regular season. Western Queensland has the Arthur Beetson Outback Carnival on 16 June. I encourage all members and their families to go to Barcaldine to watch a great display of Rugby League. We have the Bedourie Rugby League Nines in the Channel Country later in the year. That is another great display of Rugby League.

It was fantastic to be there to watch the Blackall Magpies win their first grand final in 30 years. For members to understand how long that has been, they last won their grand final when I left high school. It has been a long time. They played well and I wish them all the best in the future.