



Speech By  
**Michael Healy**


**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Cairns Electorate, Racing**

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.59 pm): I want to bring to the House's attention some fantastic racing events in Cairns. Last weekend was the Cairns Cup and in the next couple of weeks we will have the Cairns Amateurs Racing Carnival. Racing is a large and significant contributor to the state economy. In 2015-16 it contributed \$1.2 billion to the Queensland economy. A significant percentage of that—47 per cent—comes from regional communities.

Nearly 42,000 individuals are involved in the Queensland racing industry. It is their passion and commitment that delivers on average four race meetings each day in Queensland across the three codes—thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing. Queenslanders have a strong connection to the racing industry. The first official race was close to 175 years ago. Since then, it has built a rich, cultural heritage and social significance across our vast state. Queensland has also provided Australia with a number of recognised national racing icons, including Bruce McLachlan, Mick Dittman and George Moore to name a few. Champion horses like Bernborough, Gunsynd, Strawberry Road and Buffering are also entrenched in the hearts and minds of Australians.

The social value is absolutely vital, and this can be seen in the Cairns Amateurs. The social value in country and regional parts is very clear. Race clubs share facilities with other community organisations. They bring together families and friends for a special experience and support the local economy. Over 585,000 people attended a regional race meeting in 2015-16.

The racing industry is wider than just the race meetings. Nearly 90 per cent of Queensland racing animals are produced and trained in regional Queensland. This government recognises the important contribution that racing makes to the individuals and communities throughout this great state. In November 2017, the government set out in its election campaign to provide security and continuity to the racing industry by promising a four-year \$70 million funding program. This is to provide security and certainty to participants and clubs that government funding for non-TAB will continue at its current levels for the next four years. The funding will maintain existing prize money levels and also cover jockey riding fees, superannuation and, more importantly, WorkCover expenses.

The fund also includes \$10 million available for racing club infrastructure across the state as assessed on a needs basis by Racing Queensland. The funding will enable Racing Queensland to continue its transformation so the industry can become more sustainable. The important thing is that this process is underway. It is accepted by the racing industry and it is having a very positive impact. I would like to finish by inviting everybody up to the Cairns Amateurs.