




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 6 September 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Birdsville Races

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.01 am): Every September on the edge of the Simpson Desert the population of the Queensland outback town of Birdsville swells from around 200 to many thousands. Visitors come from far and wide to enjoy the fantastic spectacle of the Birdsville Races, a historic event dating back some 136 years.

This year's carnival was attended by around 6,000 people and for the very first time the two-day race card was broadcast nationally on Sky Racing. Punters from across the country were able to place a bet on the races and in doing so they were supporting Queensland's drought affected farmers. Racing Queensland committed to donating half its wagering revenue from the two-day meeting to the Queensland Drought Appeal. As the Premier said earlier this week, this has resulted in at least \$50,000 being raised for the Queensland Drought Appeal—a fantastic result for our farmers.

I want to thank Racing Queensland for partnering with Sky Racing and Tabcorp to make this broadcast possible. It is a great win for country racing and for drought affected communities throughout Queensland. I also want to congratulate the husband and wife team, Bevan and Mel Johnson from Miles, who had the Birdsville Cup winner Blue Jest trained to the minute to repel several challengers in an epic finish to the race.

The Birdsville Cup carnival is a great driver of income and visitation to outback Queensland. This first ever national broadcast of the iconic event will further promote Queensland as a home of unique tourism experiences and adventures. Country racing is the lifeblood of many of the communities in outback Queensland and other regional parts of the state. Even in times of drought, racing brings people together in remote towns like few other things do.

The Palaszczuk government is a great supporter of country racing. Our four-year, \$70 million country racing package supports literally dozens of race clubs throughout Queensland, including Birdsville. The 2018 Birdsville Cup will always hold a special place in the history of this great event. It gave Australians from around the nation a chance to support Queensland farmers, and long may that continue.