



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNELL**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2021

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Cairns Amateurs Racing Carnival; Country Racing Program**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.48 am): We know racing plays a critical role in regional Queensland—

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Treasurer, you are warned under the standing orders. I have just called the House to order. Direct your comments through the chair. That will be my final warning to members today.

**Ms GRACE:** We know racing plays a critical role in regional Queensland, contributing to economic and social wellbeing, as well as providing an important meeting place. Cairns certainly knows how to put on a successful race day. I was track side on the weekend at the Cairns Amateurs Racing Carnival—Mr Speaker, I know you were present—with local Cairns MP, Michael Healy. It was the first time since 2019 that the amateurs had been held. I can report that the atmosphere at Cannon Park was absolutely fantastic during the two days of racing. Why did it proceed? It proceeded because we have kept Queensland safe.

Congratulations to Cairns Amateurs Carnival Committee President, David Goodman, and committee members on a job well done. Thousands of locals and visitors turned out in safe Queensland for the carnival, pumping money into the Far North Queensland economy. A big shout-out to Bullion Wolf and connections for taking out the Amateurs Cup on Saturday. The member for Cairns and I can certainly attest that they celebrated well.

In a state the size of Queensland, it is not just about the big events. As many in this House know firsthand, racing at our small rural and regional tracks is a big part of the social and economic fabric of regional Queensland, and that is why the Palaszczuk government continues to support country racing. The Country Racing Program has a focus on assisting regional and rural racing clubs that, without this funding, would struggle to maintain their clubs and facilities. That is why we have committed more than \$105 million since 2017 to support country racing, including \$2.6 million per year in infrastructure grants to assist with repairs and maintenance and construction of new facilities right throughout Queensland.

I am pleased to advise that expressions of interest for the next and fourth round of the Country Racing Program infrastructure grants open today. These grants continue to pay dividends, with more than 220 infrastructure projects having been awarded to 85 of our smallest thoroughbred racing clubs in regional and remote Queensland. Importantly, other benefits of this program include improved safety measures and creating much needed local jobs for apprentices and tradies right across our wonderful country areas of Queensland. These very successful grants are another example of the Palaszczuk government supporting our regional communities and Queensland's exciting country racing program. If people have an opportunity they should get out and support our country racing clubs.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I extend to you an invitation to Gordonvale races to be held on 2 October. They are a beneficiary of the Country Racing Program.

