




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Rockhampton, Racing Facilities

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (6.16 pm): Facilities for female jockeys at Rockhampton's Callaghan Park are receiving a major upgrade as part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to regional and country racing. The \$2.3 million upgrade is well underway and will triple the capacity for female riders. The Rockhampton Jockey Club could only cater for four female jockeys in the current rooms. This investment will take the number up to 15 with improved recovering facilities. The new facilities have supported 23 jobs during construction and are scheduled to be completed in time for the second running of the Archer next May.

Our government understands how important events like the Archer and the Rockhampton Cup are to our city of Rockhampton. This is why our government is delivering a new and sustainable funding model for Racing Queensland which sees all bookmakers pay their fair share no matter where they are based. It will also see improved flood resilience for the administration offices of the jockey club. Sitting beside the Fitzroy River means Callaghan Park will always face some risk of flooding. By moving their offices up to the first floor, they can reduce the impact of future natural disasters and allow the Rockhampton Jockey Club to get on with the job of delivering great events for our region.

The new female change rooms were just the latest improvements at Callaghan Park that have assisted the thoroughbred industry throughout Central Queensland. These new female-friendly facilities and improved flood resilience come after the delivery of 40 new stables and eight feed rooms in March. Central Queensland is an essential part of the racing industry's footprint and this project will deliver enhanced amenities for the club. Rockhampton Jockey Club is one of the busiest racing facilities across the state with close to 40 meetings staged each year. It is the busiest racing club outside the south-east corner and it is a nursery for our young jockeys and aspiring trainers.

Racing plays a key role in Central Queensland. On an annual basis it contributes more than \$55 million to the local economy, providing more than 450 full-time jobs. The Callaghan Park upgrades are fitting of the club's standing as one of Queensland's regional racing centres, catering for the ever-growing number of female riders whilst also providing much needed flood resilience to our club.