

## Question on Notice

No. 555

Asked on 17 April 2008

MRS KIERNAN ASKED THE TREASURER (MR FRASER)—

Will he outline what this Government has done to support country racing in Queensland?

ANSWER:

Through the provisions of the *Racing Act 2002* (the Racing Act), the Government has provided a firm basis for country racing. We are supportive of a strong and viable country racing industry, and the legislative safeguards of the Racing Act.

The Queensland Government does not decide on the allocation of prize money or race dates. However, there are safeguards built into the Racing Act that protect the level of race meetings conducted by non-TAB (country) clubs. If agreement cannot be reached between the control body, Queensland Racing Limited (QRL), and the Queensland Country Racing Committee, the number of race dates allocated for non-TAB racing during a year must not be less than the number of days on which non-TAB races were held in the previous year.

The Racing Act requires QRL to allocate at least seven per cent of its net UNiTAB product fee each year as prize money for non-TAB race meetings conducted by non-TAB clubs. The amount of money for country racing cannot fall below the legislated seven per cent. Those funds must continue to be spent on country racing. I have confirmed that the seven per cent minimum will continue to be enshrined in legislation.

If QRL is successful in growing product fee revenue through improvements to its wagering calendar, country racing automatically benefits through its fixed share of that revenue. Due to the success of QRL's racing and wagering program, there was a record level of prize money allocated for country racing last year.

In addition, the Government has provided approximately \$400,000 each year to non-TAB race clubs under the Training Track Subsidy Scheme.

Grant payments made under the Training Track Subsidy Scheme help those country clubs with training facilities to defray the significant annual costs incurred in maintaining their facilities and represent a tangible demonstration of the Queensland Government's commitment to country racing. Some of the non-TAB clubs which received grant payments in 2006-07 included Mount Isa Race Club (\$8,994); Cloncurry Turf Club (\$2,427); Julia Creek (\$1,369) and Winton North Gregory (\$1,384).

The Queensland Community Racing Scheme is also an initiative of the Queensland Government that assists communities, which are not a part of the professional racing industry, to hold annual race meetings. QRL administers the Queensland Community Racing Scheme on behalf of the Queensland Government.

The scheme remains open to any non-TAB club, but particularly those with only one or two meets per year. Eligible clubs are able to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 for the conduct of their race day and other associated activities. To qualify, clubs must provide a minimum of \$2,500 for each race day covered by the application. This may be provided through club funds or provided through other sources such as sponsorship.

Ten race meetings were approved by QRL during 2006-07 under the Queensland Community Racing Scheme. Government financial assistance totalled \$52,653 with the clubs that benefited being Tower Hill, Sedan Dip, Oakley, Western Picnic, Eromanga and Noccundra.

The Government provided a \$20 million assistance package for Queenslanders whose livelihoods were affected by the outbreak of equine influenza.

The \$20 million assistance package comprised:

- a Queensland Commercial Horse Small Business Interest Subsidy scheme providing subsidies of up to 50 per cent on existing and new loans for businesses which were facing financial hardship due to the crisis at an estimated cost of up to \$10M;
  - a personal support and hardship package administered by the Department of Communities at an estimated cost of \$5M including \$2M in emergency relief payments to individuals based on Natural Disaster Relief Assistance guidelines and \$1M to fund non-Government service providers to deliver the assistance;
  - requests were made to the Australian Bankers Association for banks to provide short term relief for people facing difficulty in meeting mortgage or loan repayments; and
  - a \$5M program to assist employment retention within the Queensland equine industry during the equine influenza outbreak and to assist with marketing.
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