

*Margaret River CowParade — Adjournment Debate*

**HON COL HOLT (South West)** [10.10 pm]: I thank Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; she is a hard act to follow, I have to say. I feel a bit like Barry White; I have to just bring it down a bit!

I want to talk about the much-maligned Margaret River CowParade. The government is often criticised about funding priorities and asked why it is spending funds on fibreglass cows instead of other funding priorities.

**Hon Kate Doust** interjected.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**Hon COL HOLT:** I noticed recently in a WA Police Union magazine the opposition spokesperson for police, Margaret Quirk, also gave the Margaret River CowParade a bit of a ribbing and asked why we were funding that when there were other priorities such as police work.

The CowParade is an international arts event that has been run in cities such as Paris, Tokyo, London and New York. For the first time ever, out of 50 destinations in the world, it is being run in a regional centre. Margaret River has done tremendously well to attract that international arts event to that part of the region. It is a \$1.2 million project, of which \$50 000 came from royalties for regions. We have spoken about royalties for regions a lot and there has been a lot of criticism about it. However, I also note that the federal government, through the TQUAL Grants scheme and the Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson, put \$112 000 into that project. The federal government, therefore, obviously saw some benefit in investing in the Margaret River CowParade, just as we in this government did. Perhaps we should take up with our federal counterparts the question that we have been asked; that is, why they see it as a funding priority rather than putting the funds into other essential services.

It was a \$1.2 million project, most of which was raised locally through sponsorship from local companies and local businesses. They obviously invested their own money because they foresaw the benefit that would come to the region from making that investment. It is a great thing that this government helped the project in a small way to get off the ground.

I was at the launch of the project about 10 days ago. I know that the President of the house was there. I do not know whether other members managed to get to Margaret River for what really was a fantastic event. There were more than 500 people there and more than 80 cows in that CowParade in that one location, including, I have to say, a very famous house cow, which was based on our President of the house.

**Hon Ljiljana Ravlich** Lucky you!

**Hon COL HOLT:** The President featured fairly and squarely in that house cow. Already there has been plenty of feedback in the press locally about what a fantastic event it is. Those cows now are all out around the regions. There is a good map that people should get hold of. They should travel there, have a look and see what I am talking about. I certainly invite all members to go there and have a look.

The expectation is that the return on the investment of that \$1.2 million project will be around \$25 million. If we consider the \$50 000 that was put into that project by this government, a return of 20 to one sounds like a pretty good investment to me. If all government spending returned 20 to one, it would be fantastic! That \$25 million has already been earmarked for a number of local charities including the State Emergency Service locally to help perform its duties there. Some of the funding will go to Telethon and also into regional tourism infrastructure attractions in the area. A \$50 000 investment from this government and a \$112 000 investment from the federal government for a \$25 million return sounds to me like a great project and something that we should be proud to invest in. Again, I invite all members to have a look before the CowParade closes in June to see what we have been talking about and to appreciate that a local community can bring a project of that magnitude, which is a recognised international arts event, to good old regional Western Australia and that we should be trying to do that. Good on Margaret River!