

## **KIMBERLEY GIRL**

### *Statement*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.26 pm]: I rise tonight to bring to the attention of the house a function that I was able to attend, and have attended over the years, the Kimberley Girl final, which was held in Broome last Friday night. I have been a supporter of that event since I joined Parliament in 2005. About 400 to 500 people turned out for the event at Goolarri Media, which is a training venue that has a catwalk and stage. I have spoken before about this in this place, but for the benefit of new members, I will give a quick overview of what Kimberley Girl is all about.

Kimberley Girl was introduced to the Kimberley region in 2004 as an initiative targeting young Indigenous women between the ages of 16 and 25. Young women are selected from the community and attend structured workshops and showcase events. They come from all over the north, including the Pilbara and right throughout Kununurra, Balgo and places like that. The program tackles all kinds of issues that young women have to deal with and equips them with important life skills that they can use in pursuit of employment, as well as family and community life. Since 2004 the program has grown in stature and recognition around the state. There has been a Pilbara Girl event since 2011, and this year the program was rolled out in Kalgoorlie, with the inaugural Goldfields Girl winner announced as Breanna Taylor. This year's winners of the Pilbara and Kimberley events were Shianne Bin-Sali from the Pilbara and Montana Ah-Won from Kununurra, who took out the Kimberley Girl.

The Kimberley event this year included 32 Kimberley entrants, with 16 making their way to the finals. The aim of this initiative is to leave participants with an increased awareness. They are exposed to new and different lifestyles and opportunities, returning to their community as positive role models among their peers and family members. Kimberley and Pilbara participants have gone on to be involved in major events such as Australian Fashion Week, New York Fashion Week and G'Day USA in Los Angeles. They have also been selected to join youth leadership programs throughout Australia and overseas, and social media campaigns targeted at Indigenous youth. Some have also won state and national awards for the mentorship and leadership roles they play in their community. Researchers from RMIT University in Melbourne have studied the outcomes of the program and have estimated their ongoing benefits to the community at approximately \$37 000 per participant. Based on a cost of \$7 000 per participant to facilitate the Kimberley Girl series of events, this is an excellent return on the funding required to run the program.

I would like to congratulate all this year's participants, finalists and overall winners. I also congratulate the program's founder, Kira Fong, who has directed this project successfully from its humble beginnings in 2004 to the widely recognised and respected event it is today. Some 470 girls have benefited from the program so far. I urge members, if they are in Broome on one of the nights that a heat is being held, to attend it. It is a worthwhile event. I also thank all the sponsors. This has grown over time, and the state government is also a sponsor, as of the year before last. It is a fantastic event that is kicking along nicely, and the girls' self-esteem increases immensely.