

## **KIMBERLEY GIRL**

### *Statement*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.20 pm]: I would like to bring to the house's attention an event that annually happens in Broome—that is, Kimberley Girl. The program was introduced in the Kimberley in 2004 by Goolarri Media Enterprises, an excellent enterprise. The valuable initiative is aimed at young Indigenous women in the age group of 16 to 25 years. The girls come from places all over the Kimberley, including Kalumburu, Halls Creek, Derby and Broome. The heats are run in various communities and the finalists from each heat end up in semifinals in Broome. A separate program in the Pilbara started last year, so there is now also a Pilbara Girl. Each of these events is preceded by a training program by professional staff. The program delivers knowledge in areas such as deportment, make-up, hair and of course public speaking. This gives all participants confidence and self-esteem and prepares them for such things as job interviews and their directions in life. It encourages them to be leaders and thus role models for others.

As a community sponsor of this event since 2005, I have watched it grow. The finals were on last week and some 800 people attended the largest ever Kimberley Girl event. I am also pleased to see its recognition has attracted a greater distribution from a wide number of sponsors. The federal government put in some \$166 000, which was matched by the state through the Department of Indigenous Affairs and the Mental Health Commission. There are also local supporters such as hotels, airlines, small business and individuals. I congratulate all those people who have donated to help this worthwhile organisation run the program.

In 2011 Goolarri Media Enterprises commissioned an organisation to evaluate the program's value. The program evaluation shows that since 2004, Kimberley Girl has provided some 219 young Indigenous girls with personal development training. Over 90 per cent of past participants from 2004 to 2010 said they have benefited from the experience and skills acquired. Half said that their life is better now than it was before they did Kimberley Girl. When asked "What was the best thing about the course?", over 60 per cent stated that it was the personal development and the confidence-building aspects that they found the most beneficial.

I guess what I am alluding to is that the dollars spent certainly have a positive return for the future. They reach far into the communities and the economy and thus no doubt deliver a positive return to all those who invest in this program. As I said, I was able to attend the finals night in Broome last Friday and that was an excellent evening. It was well run and presented to an audience of some 800 people. The winner on the night was a young Broome girl, 18-year-old Jacqueline Yu. She was interviewed in the *Broome Advertiser*, and I would like to quote what she said. As a young girl growing up in Broome she had watched the program and thought, "I'm going to do that one day". She said —

... it was great to finally be enjoying the make-up, photo shoots and the catwalk.

...

"I had been going through some hardships with family and didn't know how to deal with things," she said.

"Through the workshops I've grown so much as a person—they taught me, if someone puts you down, to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and get on with your life, and not let what someone else says bring you down."

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"Everyone is a leader, in negative and positive ways. It is easy to be a negative role model. But along with being in the Kimberley Girl, and winning, comes a great responsibility to be a good leader," she said.

"It brings out the best in you and helps you realise how much influence you have on other girls ... they watch what I do. Sometimes it's the small things that count—picking up a bit of rubbish, helping someone cross the road."

Ms Yu is just finishing year 12 and hopes to find employment in Broome, or what she would really like to do is move to Melbourne to study criminal psychology. I congratulate Jacqueline on her win and I am sure she will be an excellent role model for the young Indigenous girls in the Kimberley.

I take the opportunity to congratulate all the participants in the event in not only the Kimberley, but also the Pilbara. I am sure that all the participants have gained some immense experience from this program. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Goolarri Media and its volunteers. In particular, I acknowledge Kira Fong, whose idea this was and who has given it direction since 2004. She has guided the program and taken it right

through to the size it is today. Once again, I congratulate all the girls, particularly Jacqueline. I am sure that in the next year she will be a great ambassador as a role model for Kimberley Girl.