

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 15TH MAY 2012

MATT GOLINSKI FUNDRAISER

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:25): I want to talk to the house today about a fundraising event held on 4 May in Pinnaroo for Matt Golinski, the *ReadySteady Cook* chef who, sadly, lost his family on Boxing Day last year. Instead of Spudfest 2012, which celebrates the area's potato harvest, the organising committee in Pinnaroo held this year's event under the Plates for Mates banner in order to raise funds for Matt Golinski, who had been involved with Spudfest over the past four years. Matt was due to appear at the Spudfest for the fifth consecutive year this year but, on Boxing Day last year, a house fire tragically killed Matt's wife and three daughters in Noosa, Queensland. Matt himself was severely burnt and, although facing a long rehabilitation, he was released from hospital on 30 April.

The cooking competition, which is usually a staple of the Spudfest event, was this year replaced by a televised *Ready Steady Cook*-like event, with locals randomly selected to help the celebrities cook with local produce. The black tie event on 4 May was attended by 300 people. *Ready Steady Cook* chef, Dominique Rizzo, and Justin Miles, chef and owner of Windy Point Restaurant, cooked for the guests.

Entertainers and celebrity chefs for the evening included Manu Feildel (French celebrity chef of *My Kitchen Rules*, *MasterChef* and *Ready Steady Cook*); Chooka (*Australia's Got Talent* contestant 2011); Tom Price (*Australia's Got Talent* contestant 2011); Peter Everett (television presenter and past presenter of *Ready Steady Cook*); and Janelle Bloom (chef, author and most notable for appearances on *Ready Steady Cook*). Sponsors for the evening included Parilla Premium Potatoes and Zerella Holdings. Many thousands of dollars were raised on the night to assist Matt into the future.

A *Courier-Mail* article of 30 April headed 'Brave TV chef Matt Golinski is ready to start rebuilding' states:

Matt Golinski is looking forward to re-experiencing the 'simple pleasures in life' after being released from hospital, four months after the fire that claimed the lives of his wife and daughters. Mr Golinski was discharged from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital on Friday but will need ongoing treatment for up to five years, his burns specialist says.

His father Keith said it was likely to be some time before the celebrity chef was able to venture back into a commercial kitchen, or work out how he was going to move forward with his life.

'He's looking forward to experiencing the simple pleasures of life, such as preparing his own meals and picking herbs and vegetables from the garden,' Keith said.

'After four harrowing months we are obviously delighted Matt has left hospital, although of course it is also incredibly sad as we remember that Rachel and the girls are no longer with him. It's been a rollercoaster of emotions.'

Matt's wife, Rachel, and daughters Starlia, 10, and 12-year old twins Sage and Willow, died in a Boxing Day fire at the family's Tewantin home, on the Sunshine Coast.

On the advice of his specialist medical team, the Golinskis have requested privacy for Matt so he can focus on his physical and emotional healing.

Keith said Matt, who turned 40 in hospital last week, was 'progressing well' after receiving burns to 40 per cent of his body in the fire but was still coming to terms with his loss.

'It's surreal to think that only seven weeks ago, Matt awoke from his medically induced coma,' he said.

...acting head [of the burns unit] Michael Muller said although Matt had been released from hospital, he faced further surgery and would undergo extensive rehabilitation with teams of health professionals in Brisbane and on the Sunshine Coast.

'This is like training for the Olympics because it is a Herculean task to maximise recovery,' he said. 'He will be stretching and strengthening and massaging his body all day, every day—no weekends off, no slackening off.'

We know he can do it, and we are delighted to be part of it.'

Associate Professor Muller said Matt's journey so far had been a painful one. 'He was really very, very sick but has pulled through and his wonderful attitude will make all the difference in his recovery,' he said. Six of Matt's celebrity chef mates, Manu Feildel, George Calombaris, Damian Heads, Janelle Bloom, Gary Mehigan and Alastair McLeod, have joined forces to raise funds for his recovery and for burns research.

It was a great event held at Pinnaroo the other night. My wife and I attended and everyone had a lot of fun. I must say Manu reported to the Pinnaroo Bakery the next morning that he thought he had never been to such a wild function, and that the Mallee women were quite aggressive, but I guess they do not often see a French chef. It was a very enjoyable evening, and we left about midnight, but I know that it went until at least 2.30am, but let us never forget why the event was held. It was such a tragic event for Matt and his family, and our thoughts certainly go to Matt.

