

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): I stand here today proud to address the house as the elected member for Hammond, now the home of two remarkable and significant events. The Rural City of Murray Bridge, in which my electorate office is situated, last weekend hosted a world record breaking event—the 25th Australian International Pedal Prix. This is the 10th time the event has been conducted in Murray Bridge and it attracted a world record field of 220 entries, including 3 000 competitors. Between them all during the 24 hour event, continuously circuiting the special course at Murray Bridge's award winning Sturt Reserve, they circumnavigated the world at speeds of up to 70 km/h. I am told that at 3 o'clock in the morning, the eerie sight of over 200 whispering vehicles, their lights barely penetrating the night's river mist as they hurtled silently around the track, is a truly spectacular experience.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, I was sleeping. This year's three-day event attracted a crowd estimated at 30 000. An economic impact survey conducted by council in 2004 calculated that this event injected some \$3 million into the local economy through direct and indirect investment, as well as commercial activity. The excitement and pageantry of this year's pedal prix was kicked off in grand style, with an opening performance full of colour and fanfare. With the 200-plus competitors assembled on the start grid, the Murray Bridge callisthenics club performed a brilliant display for the crowd and the cameras. This was followed by a march of students from the local Unity College carrying a huge Australian flag. They marched past the assembled competitors, holding a huge flag above them.

This spectacularly choreographed opening was made possible through the hours of arrangement and practice of the local clubs and schools who are to be congratulated for their contribution. The real achievement this year lies in the signing of an agreement in principle for the Rural City of Murray Bridge to host this major event for the next 10 years. This is a wonderful testament to the commitment, foresight and cooperative spirit of the local council and the community. Australian International Pedal Prix Board Chairman, Andrew McLachlan, said that the committee's decision to continue their partnership with Murray Bridge was borne of many factors: the ideal venue; the town's capacity to host a major event; climate; location; the enthusiastic participation of schools in the region; and, above all, the willing and growing support of the whole community, council, corporate, business and institutional, as well as the general public.

I applaud the organisers and the host city on their excellent event, which encourages innovation, conservation, participation and, most importantly, inspires youth to create and achieve. As Murray Bridge basks in the glow of this success, comes the news that the town has secured another major national event. On the Australia Day long weekend 2007, Sturt Reserve will again become 'the place to be', this time for thousands of motor enthusiasts from around the country for the SpringNat Car Show. To be known as the Murray Bridge Autofest, this popular event is expected to draw a crowd of at least 10 000. In announcing the coup, Rural City of Murray Bridge Mayor, Allan Arbon, said that similar events in Shepparton and Albury have attracted up to 50 000 fans. Part of the appeal is that it is promoted as a family-oriented and alcohol-free event and is expected to have the close support of the SA Police.

Previous events have drawn high praise from within the host communities and Murray Bridge is to be congratulated on the success of its entrepreneurial activities. These major events promote not just the town and the region but the whole state as a centre for innovation and a destination for national and international tourists. One blight on the pedal prix was a team cutting down limbs from a tree in Sturt Reserve. Let us hope stupidity like this does not happen again. In closing, the government needs to get right behind the pedal prix and similar events.