

## **GRIEVANCE DEBATE - 29 March 07** **MURRAYLANDS FESTIVALS**

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond):** Today I wish to comment on a couple of functions held recently in the Murraylands, which were run by Rotary clubs: the Murraylands Music Festival and the Rotary Murraylands Cultural Festival. During the weekend of 24-25 March, the people of Tailem Bend played host to the 13th Murraylands Music Festival.

This three-day event provided a stage for musicians who played a variety of styles, including country music, jazz, rock and roll, blues, folk and gospel music. Artists of all ages came from far and wide to this year's festival, and for three days kept the large audiences well entertained. In true country spirit, organisers acknowledged the hardship brought about by the current drought and made Sunday's event free, courtesy of sponsorship from Primary Industries and Resources SA, which I certainly acknowledge.

Local people, including students from Tailem Bend Primary School, pitched in to man the various catering stalls needed to keep the happy and appreciative audiences well fed. Well-known band The Borderers and high profile artist Greg Champion made guest appearances, headlining some of the nation's top music acts and an impressive list of other performers.

Words of praise for the event came from visitors, musicians and volunteers, demonstrating what a happy event it was, and their promises to return for next year's event augur well for 2008.

One of the most entertaining and keenly supported parts of the festival was the talent quest. With a \$1 000 prize money on the table, aspiring musicians of all ages performed keenly, their enthusiasm and talent plain to see. No doubt, many of them will become familiar faces on stages and screens around the country in coming years.

Another recent significant event in my electorate was the Rotary Murraylands Cultural Arts Festival, held at Sturt Reserve in Murray Bridge earlier in March. Over the two days, the community was treated to 36 acts, presenting the most diverse program of entertainment ever seen in the region. The acts assembled featured traditional performances from many countries, including China, Africa and the Philippines. These acts were full of colour and movement, with music to match.

Demonstrating the power and perseverance of traditional dance, which preserves so much of a culture's history and heritage, was a performance from Afghanistan. During the years of the Taliban's repressive reign, instrumental music and public performances were banned, but the traditions and music have survived and they added something special to the festival.

The colour and pageantry of other cultures provided a perfect backdrop for the launch of the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, which took place on Sunday. This organisation will help build bridges of interest and understanding between the many diverse cultures now among us and help new arrivals assimilate and contribute more to the Australian way of life. The event received great support from the local business community as well as the general public, and offers future benefits for the whole community. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the Rotary Clubs of Mobilong, Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend for their fine efforts in hosting these events in the last month or so.