

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT AWARDS

Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [9.13 am]: I rise to inform the house of the Western Australian Institute of Sport Awards that were announced last Saturday night. The evening was a wonderful showcase of past and present athletes in Western Australia. Caitlin Bassett and Melissa Hoskins were announced the joint winners of the prestigious WAIS Athlete of the Year award for 2015 in a demonstration of Western Australia's female athletic excellence. West Coast Fever goal-shooter Caitlin Bassett was the first netballer to win the award, while Melissa Hoskins was the first female cyclist to claim the honour. Caitlin shot an incredible 48 goals from 51 attempts to spearhead Australia to a third straight World Cup triumph in the final in Sydney earlier in the year. Melissa helped Australia to a drought-breaking gold medal success in the women's team pursuit at the 2015 Union Cycliste Internationale Track World Championships in France. Swimmer Tamsin Cook was named WAIS Junior Athlete of the Year after leading the Australian women's 4 x 200-metre relay team to a gold medal and championship record, winning gold in the individual 400-metre freestyle and silver in the 200-metre butterfly at the Junior World Championships. She is part of the WAIS program of the year at the HBF Stadium swimming podium training centre under the tutelage of WAIS Coach of the Year Michael Palfrey. After some lean years, swimming in WA, with names such as Brianna Throssell, Tamsin Cook and Damian Fyfe, is ready to return to its glory days. It was pleasing to hear Queenslander Michael Palfrey speak glowingly about the facilities and training environment provided by WAIS right here in WA and his desire to remain long term and develop a great program.

I am pleased that this government has been able to contribute \$33 million towards the WAIS high-performance training centre and close to \$30 million in operational funding to WAIS during the four-year Rio Olympics cycle to provide our athletes with the greatest opportunity to achieve their best and represent their country. A highlight of the WAIS awards evening is always the introduction of new athletes to the WA Sports Hall of Champions. This year was no exception, with the induction of one of Australia's pioneers in showcasing our soccer talents on the world stage, Stan Lazaridis, who carved out a long and distinguished career in the English Premier League and represented the Socceroos at four World Cups. Of course, recognised as the world's greatest ever wicketkeeper-batsman, Adam Gilchrist took his rightful place in the Hall of Champions. He is a modern champion of the game who has changed the face of cricket in Australia. Triple gold medallist Rechelle Hawkes was the seventh person to be elevated to "Legend" in the Hall of Champions. Rechelle is a magnificent role model, with a career that culminated in reading the athlete oath and winning a gold medal at her home Olympics in Sydney in 2000. She is the first product of the WAIS era to officially become a "Legend" and there is no better face for the role that WAIS performs in our community than Rechelle herself. The government wishes all those Olympians and Paralympians striving to reach Rio over the coming 12 months all the very best.