

PERTH MAJOR SPORTS STADIUM — AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE CLUBS

575. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

As has already been mentioned here today everyone is aware that Fremantle Dockers are playing in their first Australian Football League grand final this weekend, which is fantastic. Can the minister please update the house on how Perth's new stadium will assist Western Australian-based clubs to remain at the forefront of the AFL?

Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for the question. It is a good question, because the new multipurpose Perth Stadium will be crucial to the future of our two AFL clubs to make sure they remain competitive into the future, both on and off the field, and it will also be a great boost for other sports. Everyone has acknowledged that this week. We can see what happens when one of our AFL sides has great success. It has had a huge effect across the state—as well as the euphoria it creates. It is really important to the state. I will talk a little about that in a moment. Members will remember that the stadium has a fan-first philosophy. The new stadium will be transformational in attracting people to sporting events, including the football and other events that will be held there. Yesterday I met with James Sutherland from Cricket Australia, who made the point to me about the need for an upgraded stadium to attract people to cricket.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Did you mention the test?

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I did, member for Girrawheen. The main reason Perth missed out on the test is simple: we do not have the right facilities. If we had the stadium, we would have the right facility.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: The other great advantage for our two AFL clubs and other sports with the new stadium will come from having 13-plus different ticket types with areas from suites to standing areas, and all the different levels for them to utilise, which will give them a great deal more opportunity to grow their clubs and the game and to support football throughout Western Australia. It really is important.

The other point is that it is not just AFL football; having a multipurpose stadium will give us the ability to attract things like the Bledisloe Cup, world championship athletics and the Commonwealth Games. This stadium will transform the sporting experience in WA.

I thank the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, who acknowledged the Dockers, but as Minister for Sport and Recreation I want to place on the record the government's and this Parliament's best wishes to Fremantle Football Club in its quest for the holy grail this Saturday. A win against Hawthorn will be absolutely fantastic not just for football and sport, but for boosting Western Australia. The interest has been huge. It shows us the real power of sport. I often talk about the value and power of sport. What we have seen this week emphasises that it is a great thing. Thousands of fans will be going over to Victoria and I wish them all the best. On behalf of the government and the Parliament, I extend best wishes to Fremantle footy club's chairman, Steve Harris; CEO, Steve Rosich; head coach, Ross Lyon; captain, Matthew Pavlich; and all the other players, staff and personnel involved in the club's preparation. Good luck, and go the Dockers!