

SPORTS COOPERATION, GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Sport and Recreation) [9.13 am]: I rise to advise the House that I will be travelling overseas next week to sign a memorandum of understanding on sports cooperation with the Government of the Republic of India.

In November 2003, India was awarded the right to host the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi. This will be the first occasion on which India has hosted the Commonwealth Games.

In January of this year, the Western Australian Department of Sport and Recreation was invited to assist in the preparation of a framework for the establishment of the Indian national sports plan. I commend the department on its efforts in this area, particularly Hallam Pereira and the current director general, Mr Ron Alexander.

Subsequent to this, the Indian Government extended an invitation to the Department of Sport and Recreation to send a delegation of staff to facilitate a series of workshops regarding governance in sport, club development, women in sport, sports facilities, sports coaching and sports science. This was agreed to, and I announced approval for the delegation to travel to India for this purpose with the assistance of the Indian and Australian Governments. I commend the federal Government on its assistance in this regard.

In partnership with the Australian High Commission, a memorandum of understanding has been negotiated that will specify agreement on areas of cooperation, including training of athletes, training of coaches and officials, sports science, and cooperation on infrastructure and the exchange of technology.

I anticipate that the visit will lead to further opportunities for Western Australians who work within sport administration, sports science and infrastructure development. The signing of the MOU will provide the basis on which significant commercial opportunities in these fields could develop, which would mean more jobs for young Western Australians.

In addition to assisting to explore these commercial opportunities, the MOU will also serve to highlight the importance of the close cultural and sporting ties that have grown between Australia and India. I look forward to travelling to India and learning first-hand about the ways in which our two countries can build on these ties, and I assure the House that I will champion Western Australia as the centre for sporting excellence for the Indian Ocean rim.