

ALCOHOL — CHANGING ATTITUDES THROUGH SPORT INITIATIVE

**171. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:**

I share the minister's view that sport and sporting clubs can be excellent drivers of positive social changes in our communities. Can the minister please outline to the house details of the Changing Attitudes to Alcohol through Sport initiative that the minister launched on 28 April?

**Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:**

I thank the member for Swan Hills for his question. This is a very important topic that the government has a very carefully considered position on. As members know, I have been involved in sport and sporting clubs throughout my life. I have witnessed firsthand the influence that sporting clubs can have on not only the people involved with the sporting clubs, but also the community. When I managed the Western Australian Country Football League, we promoted the Belt Up campaign just through utilising our wide network of football clubs across Western Australia, because of the too many youngsters in particular who were not wearing seatbelts. That program has had a great effect, just as sporting clubs can have in many other areas. We want to utilise the great networks of our approximately 7 000 sporting clubs to change people's behaviour regarding the management, consumption and attitude generally towards alcohol consumption. The other day I announced a program to provide \$1 million over three years to partner with sport to change people's attitude and behaviour relating to alcohol. I make the point that this program is not reliant so much on the funding as it is on the people and the networks that we have. The funding is not the main purpose here.

An opposition member interjected.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** The member made a comment, but he does not understand what is actually happening here, so I am happy to explain to him later how it will work. To begin with, the government will partner seven of our major sports. Seven major sports are already committed, as are the WA Sports Federation and the Luke Adams Foundation. Others will obviously come on board. Those seven major sports make up about 50 per cent of our 7 000 clubs. We are utilising that network of 7 000 clubs to drive a culture change from the grassroots level up to target the culture within those clubs by utilising mentors. They can be local mentors—existing leaders or figures. I think those mentors are in every sporting club in every country town and suburb. It is about utilising those people in making the change. For example, Peter Bell, as most members probably know, is an extremely good footballer. I saw through his sport and leadership that Peter had great influence in the country town of Kojonup where I come from. He changed the habits of youngsters in that town through his leadership. That is what it is about. We will utilise that grassroots level and we will make a change. We have appointed a full-time project officer.

**Mr M.P. Murray** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Collie–Preston, I formally call you to order for the second time today.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** Knowing that the member for Collie–Preston knows sporting clubs as well as I do, I think he would support this program. The program will tap into the network of existing resources. We have expanded the club development officer system to more than 40-odd, including all the officers from the sports themselves. It is about supporting sport and working statewide. I think if we can make a change in the majority of those 7 000 clubs, it will benefit the clubs, it will benefit the local communities and suburbs, and it will be of great benefit to our society. Once again, it is about this government utilising sport and making sure it is not just a matter of sport for sport's sake, but for achieving other things. We are backing that up and we have made a commitment to develop safer sport and recreational environments. The amount of \$20 million allocated for the Sport 4 All program shows that. It is critical that when those youngsters who become involved graduate, we want them to go to safer and better clubs. I think it is a terrific program. I thank the WA Sports Federation and the Luke Adams Foundation for their support, which is important. I am sure this initiative will create significant change to the culture relating to alcohol within Western Australia.