

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Swan Valley Nyungah Community Sports Education Program

HON BARRY HOUSE (South West) [9.27 pm]: I want to report briefly on two events in recent days that reflect positively on the link between sport and education outcomes with indigenous students in Western Australia. Last Friday morning it was my pleasure to attend Balga Senior High School for the presentation and launch of the evaluation report of the Swan Valley Nyungah Community sports education program. The program was launched by Hon John Kobelke. Many dignitaries and many of the students involved in the program were there. The program at Balga Senior High School involves indigenous students in football for the boys and netball for the girls. It is a terrific partnership between the Swan Valley Nyungah Community, Balga Senior High School and, in particular, the Smith Family. The partnership has been operating since 2002, but others contribute significantly, such as Newmont Mining Corporation, which provides jobs and placements for many of the students who go through the program and get an enormous amount out of it. I mentioned that football and netball were the focus activities. They produce very positive attitudes among the students not only towards education but also life in general. Those activities are linked to their school attendance and their other studies and there has been a terrific increase in not only retention rates but also educational outcomes overall.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Mr Hammond is a great principal, isn't he?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Yes, I am going to mention Mr Hammond in a minute.

The program has its stars, and one star emerging from that program is a young lad in year 11 called Jarrod Oakley-Nicholls. He has actually played two games of league football with East Perth and I believe he kicked a goal with his first kick in league footy. He is touted as a possible Australian Football League draftee down the track. In addition to the results of its high-profile kids, the program is producing great results for many others. I congratulate Merv Hammond, the Principal of Balga Senior High School, and the staff involved in that program. I was interested to talk to Mr Harris, who is one of the teachers closely involved in the program. It seems that we have something in common, because we were both youth education officers in high schools. I was a youth education officer a couple of years before Mr Harris was. Regrettably, that role has been made redundant in high schools in the sense that it is shared by people who perform other roles. I was the youth education officer in Busselton from 1979 to 1983. Many of the things that I and many others in high schools throughout Western Australia did with kids at that time could not be done today because of the threat of litigation. Regrettably, many of the student leadership activities and courses we pursued with kids at risk - career education, work experience and driver education courses - are no longer available. We must move back to commonsense in these matters, because kids should be allowed to take a few risks. Indeed, there are outcomes with that.

Some of the boys involved with the Nyungah dancers performed on the morning of the opening of the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations conference, which both I and the Minister for Education and Training attended. It is terrific to see them doing things in the community.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: It is good that there is a sense of pride in these students.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It is very encouraging.

Clontarf Aboriginal College

Hon BARRY HOUSE: On Monday, I joined Brendan Nelson, the federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, on a visit to Clontarf Aboriginal College. Dr Nelson handed over a cheque for \$1.9 million to the Gerard Neesham Football Academy to acknowledge not only the efforts and successes that have been racked up by that program, but also to ensure its continuing success. A football match was in progress during our visit. The best of the kids did not play in that match because they were in Melbourne playing a game against Assumption College. They displayed fantastic skills, which is what Aboriginal boys do. They too have their high-profile successes and have produced Australian Football League draftees, including Andrew Krakouer and Mark Williams. There are potentially a couple of others in the course. The boys in the course come from all over Western Australia. Indeed, four centres now operate in Western Australia. Gerard Neesham has done an outstanding job ensuring that sport acts as the hook that entices indigenous kids to improve their educational outcomes. That program has been applauded by everyone involved. It is supported by the federal and state governments and by private industry and the community. There is plenty of scope for expansion. Gerard acknowledges that there is increasing interest in what he is doing from people in not only Western Australia - he would like to expand in a couple of other areas in Western Australia, including the great southern - but also interstate. I encourage him and wish him well. There is the future possibility of a girls' program in basketball. Ricky Grace is getting involved in that aspect and, equally, is doing a terrific job.

The visit also gave me the opportunity to meet Principal Donella Brown and some of the staff at Clontarf Aboriginal College. It gave me a better understanding of not only the history of Clontarf, but also its needs for

the future and its potential. It is potentially a magnificent place. It has a great site. Some of the buildings are terrific in a sense, but they need a lot of maintenance and upkeep. Money is needed for a library, a pool and a residential college for the football program and the girls' program. I spoke to Mr Doug Scott, the vocational education and training coordinator. His ballpark estimate is that the place needs about \$7 million just to bring it up to scratch. From looking at the buildings, it is easy to see that it needs that injection of money. That is probably beyond the resources of the Catholic education system. I hope that governments around Australia will look seriously at that issue, because some good work is happening at the college. I congratulate everybody involved at Clontarf, particularly Gerard Neesham and his group. They are producing terrific education outcomes.

Hon Kim Chance: Hear, hear!

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I know that that term has been bandied around in another sense, but it is easy to see the outcomes of those efforts at both Balga Senior High School and Clontarf Aboriginal College. If we really want to talk about outcomes-based education in a non-confusing way, it is easy to identify that very positive -

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: It was a great Labor initiative.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It is not a political situation there.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Yes, but Alan Carpenter supported it.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: The government has supported it. Other governments have supported it. Frankly, I do not think the minister will find anyone who does not support it. It is a terrific program. We should encourage the use of sport, art and music in particular with indigenous kids and in indigenous communities to promote better outcomes both in education and in life.

House adjourned at 9.37 pm
