

DEMONS DISTRICT FOOTBALL UMPIRING ASSOCIATION

Statement

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan) [5.29 pm]: Mine is perhaps a bit more lighthearted than some of the other ones! I had the pleasure of attending last night the annual awards for the Demons District Football Umpiring Association at Lathlain Park. The DDFUA is a community-based association that provides umpires for junior football in the Demons district and for cross-district games that involve the Demons district. I have been associated with the association through my son, whose involvement began as an umpire in 2015. I have now increased my involvement as a member of Parliament by sponsoring the association's awards night last night. I have always been impressed with the DDFUA; its high level of professionalism, pastoral support and dedication to its young umpires has always been exemplary and very impressive.

As members can imagine, football umpiring is not always a pleasant experience for the young umpires. Unfortunately, a small minority in our community and nationwide feel it is within their rights to abuse, attack and, unfortunately, on occasions assault volunteer umpires. They seem not to appreciate that without the umpires there would be no game. The umpires are simply there to see that the rules are followed and the game is fair. The association goes to great lengths to support these young and developing umpires, including some female umpires; hopefully we will see further young female umpires coming into the game. The association has also had some significant success in bringing talented young umpires into the West Australian Football League and the Australian Football League systems, with perhaps its most famous former charges being AFL umpires Dean Margetts and Brett Rosebury, who continue to be involved with the association.

I would like to congratulate the committee of the DDFUA, particularly retiring president Scott Thompson; secretary, Yash Ghangas; treasurer, Kevin Gibbons; and especially I would like to acknowledge the umpire manager, Daniel Gibbons, who has worked tirelessly to make the organisation what it is.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge and recognise parliamentary colleagues who have also supported the association by each year sponsoring the award that is provided to those umpires who are selected to umpire the grand final. The award is a pewter mug and is presented at the awards night at which the umpires who are umpiring the grand final are announced. As members can imagine, being selected to umpire a grand final is considered to be the peak of junior umpiring and it is reserved for those umpires who have demonstrated consistent high quality in their umpiring. I congratulate the umpires who were selected last night and wish them well for the grand final on the weekend.

I also acknowledge for their support the members who sponsored the award: Hon Kate Doust, MLC; Hon Bill Johnston, MLA; Ms Cassie Rowe, MLA; Mr Steve Irons, MP; and Mr John McGrath, MLA. If they have not done so already, I encourage all members to consider extending their support to their local umpiring associations. They do not always get a lot of love, on or off the field, but they are certainly worth supporting. As I say, not only with football but also with other sports, the games would not happen without the umpires. Again, congratulations to the DDFUA.