

**EAST FREMANTLE OVAL PRECINCT — REDEVELOPMENT**

*Grievance*

**MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton)** [9.53 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I thank him for hearing this grievance, which is about the East Fremantle Oval precinct redevelopment. Located between Moss and Allen Streets in East Fremantle, the oval and surrounding infrastructure has residential homes on three sides and is bordered by Marmion Street to the south. Much of the area is deemed an A-class reserve. East Fremantle Oval, known more commonly as “Shark Park”, was opened in 1906. Prior to this time, the area was used as a traditional camping ground for the local Whadjuk people. To add context to my grievance, I would like to provide some historic background to illustrate the significance of the site.

The East Fremantle football ground makes up the largest portion of the precinct, with the East Fremantle Football Club holding the title of most successful club in West Australian Football League history, winning 29 premierships since its entry into the competition in 1898.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** What about South Fremantle?

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** I hear a little bit of murmuring from some South Fremantle supporters in the chamber. This is about the Sharks today, members. Go the mighty Sharks!

The ground underwent its only significant upgrade —

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** Acting Speaker, I believe we do not take interjections during grievances. I seek your protection.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** You are quite right, member—even against East Fremantle supporters, we do not!

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** I repeat: go the mighty Sharks!

The ground underwent its only significant upgrade in 1953, which increased its total capacity to 15 000. Football is appropriately the focus of activity at “Shark Park”, but there has been, and can be again, so much more, as in 1988 when Pink Floyd played to a crowd of 26 000 as part of its A Momentary Lapse of Reason tour.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** The East Fremantle Oval precinct is greatly valued by all who live nearby or play and recreate there, and although the precinct's current mix of football, sporting and passive recreation open space is acknowledged and supported, so, too, is the pressing need for an upgrade and increased community accessibility to the site. That is why there was such excitement when, on Sunday, 25 July 2021, I joined the Premier to announce our commitment of \$20 million of state funding towards a redevelopment. Together with funding of \$6 million to be provided by the Town of East Fremantle, the oval precinct redevelopment was assured. It was fully funded and fully costed. However, this project, like so many others, has been severely impacted by the overheated construction environment caused by two years of global pandemic and, despite meticulous planning and intensive value engineering, is currently in jeopardy. Both historic and significant, the proposed redevelopment of the East Fremantle Oval precinct represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the entire community of East Fremantle and will provide many benefits for the electorate of Bicton and beyond.

The precinct is home to men's and women's WAFL football, bowls, croquet and a gym fitness centre, as well as providing a venue for many community programs, including Auskick and Starkick all abilities football. The adjacent Sumpton Green Community Centre's playgroup provides wonderful support for young families in the area and the entire precinct is popular with dog walkers. The East Fremantle Oval precinct is an important community asset, but the current facilities lack cohesion, do not support accessibility and are out of step with community expectations of equitable distribution of resource, particularly with the extraordinary growth and development of female participation in AFL.

For these and other reasons, the Town of East Fremantle committed to the task of seeking community support and raising funds required for the redevelopment of the precinct. The town's first two attempts, in 2008 and 2012, failed to achieve broad community support, but, undeterred, the town pushed on and, proving the truth of the saying “third time lucky”, a new approach, with community engagement a strong and enduring feature, was commenced in 2018. A vision plan that gained the support of the community and the endorsement of council followed, and the hard work to achieve funding for the East Fremantle Oval precinct development began in earnest. All that work came to fruition with the re-election of the McGowan government in 2021, and in normal times the redevelopment would have been greatly progressed by now.

The East Fremantle precinct redevelopment will feature many firsts, including being the first WAFL club to have equally matched and appointed female and male change rooms, with permanent lockers for the men's and women's league teams. This will be the first facility of its kind in WA to have no permanent perimeter fencing, creating an

open and welcoming community environment, plus universal access-enabling features, with dedicated wheelchair viewing points at both ground and elevated levels. The East Fremantle Oval precinct will become a fully integrated, innovative and sustainable complex with a sinking fund and a comprehensive and well-funded business plan. The East Fremantle Oval precinct redevelopment also represents an opportunity to enhance professional pathways both on and off the field, particularly for women; create greater community connectivity and vibrancy; and support the local economy and jobs.

This is a great project. I acknowledge and congratulate the Town of East Fremantle and the project team on the vigorous design process they have undertaken, with value engineering opportunities being applied to the design at every possible opportunity. I therefore ask that additional funds be allocated to the East Fremantle Oval precinct redevelopment. I note in making this request that the Town of East Fremantle has undertaken a commitment to raise further funds on top of those it is already providing. I thank the minister for listening to my grievance today and I respectfully ask for his support on this matter.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation)** [10.00 am]: I acknowledge the member for Bicton for her very passionate appeal for this project to be delivered. Throughout her time in this place and during this project, she has demonstrated what a magnificent member of Parliament she is. She is in touch with her community. She knows her community very well and she is engaging with it constantly. She is also tenacious and passionate about the aspirations for her community.

The electorate of Bicton is a great place. I think this is a great example of how local members understand why certain projects can make a huge difference to the aspirations of the population that lives and works in an electorate and how facilities deliver much more when they are enhanced and upgraded. That is one of the messages the member has given me this morning. The precinct in East Fremantle has great history, right from its early Aboriginal significance. Over the years, it has provided some magnificent opportunities, but, of course, times change, structures change and new ways forward need to be found. I think that is what the member has stressed to me this morning. Another thing the member has stressed to me is the important issue that with the tremendous upheaval of female participation in a range of codes, our facilities need to be fit for purpose and equitable and provide for not only existing populations, but also future populations as a result of growth.

I thank the member because she invited me down to East Fremantle just over two weeks ago to meet with her, the mayor, the designers and senior staff from the Town of East Fremantle, because she wanted me to hear firsthand the history of this project and the work that has been done up to this point to ensure that the project has reached the stage at which the first shovel should be in the ground. I was very impressed in that meeting by not only the member's sincere advocacy, but also the work that has been done by the town to try to make sure that this project fits within the original budget proposal. Some tremendous work has been done. The member mentioned the value engineering aspects and the deep dive into the project to look at how it could be not only within budget, but also a model for other such ventures into the future. I think there is a great opportunity there.

As the member highlighted, this master plan and business plan will provide an integrated community and sporting precinct. But it will deliver much more than football, bowls and croquet; it will be a place for the community to gather, recreate and participate. The McGowan government's focus, whether it be on culture and the arts or on sport and recreation, is all about ensuring that we continue to extend participation so that the kids and adults who are participating now have an opportunity to participate singularly or as a family. I think that is really, really important. The member for Bicton's electorate is one that has many new families and families who need those opportunities. This site is perfect for redevelopment and a project such as this. I know that the member mentioned that the scope of the project will allow people to exercise their dogs, and it will have unisex change rooms, a gymnasium, community gardens and an escape zone. It will be a focus for a range of opportunities and activities.

I was impressed by the absolute commitment by the Mayor of the Town of East Fremantle and the council to this project. As the member has highlighted, it is also a great example of very intense consultation with the community. This is a project that is really backed in very strongly by the broader community and it has been championed so brilliantly by the member for Bicton. I think the member should take some credit for that, because it is the advocacy of members such as her that convinces ministers for certain portfolios to not only understand the importance of projects, but also become advocates for them. I assure the member that the project team has demonstrated the absolute worthwhile nature of the project. The community is strongly behind it. I know the team has now made a formal request for the additional \$5 million from the state government. As I have said to the member, I will make sure that that plea is heard at the highest level, because the member has convinced me very strongly—I have had the portfolio of sport and rec for only six months—why this project must proceed and needs to be delivered and the tremendous impact it will have on the community. The member should be proud of what she has done. She is a great example of how a tenacious and passionate local member of Parliament can achieve great things for her community. She is in touch with her community, and I hope that we can ensure and support this project going forward so that the people of East Fremantle and the people of the wider community in her electorate will have a magnificent facility to enjoy into the future.

