

NATIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE GAME, KALGOORLIE

1231. Mr J.J.M. BOWLER to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

The Gallop Government has a strong commitment to supporting regional Western Australia. There is no doubt about that. Can the minister tell the House about his latest initiative that demonstrates this type of commitment?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for Eyre for his interest in this issue and also for the tremendous job he does for the sporting teams in the Eyre electorate, as well as for those in Kalgoorlie. I am delighted to announce that, with the assistance of one of our best local members, particularly our best local member in the goldfields -

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: There is only one other, member for Kalgoorlie. I am delighted to announce that the first ever National Basketball League game will be played in Kalgoorlie on 23 February 2004, featuring Western Australia's Wildcats.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the member for Warren-Blackwood for the third time, and the member for Kalgoorlie.

Mr J.N. Hyde interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call to order the member for Perth for the first time.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: This is an excellent story for the regions and an excellent use of the country sport enrichment scheme, which is designed to give people in the regions access to top quality sport. Under this scheme the first ever National Basketball League game will be played in Kalgoorlie on 23 February 2004 between Western Australia's own Wildcats and the Hunter Pirates. A preview will be played tomorrow night, for people who are interested, when the same two teams play in Newcastle for the first time.

I congratulate Andrew Vlahov and the Wildcat's coach, Mike Ellis, and all the people involved from Kalgoorlie, including the member for Kalgoorlie. No doubt all the people in the goldfields love their support. This is a real tribute to the people of Kalgoorlie who have responded to this initiative to make sure the Wildcats go to Kalgoorlie. I applaud the enthusiasm of Andrew Vlahov and Mike Ellis for taking sport to the regions.

I am more than happy to table an article from the *Kimberley Echo* this week about the efforts of a similar group of people in Wyndham and Carol Martin, the member for Kimberley. Andrew Vlahov was available to participate in the opening of the centre and to provide a coaching clinic for local children and youth. He also participated in a similar clinic in Kununurra on Friday for more than 30 young people. It is an excellent example of participation by premier sportsmen under the auspices of this government program. I invite people on both sides of the House to make sure they help bring sport to their regions through this excellent program. It will be great for the kids of Kalgoorlie and the goldfields to watch some of our premier sportspeople. I congratulate all the people in the goldfields for getting behind this initiative.

[See paper No 1644.]