

KIDSPORT PROGRAM

782. Mr C.D. HATTON to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

The KidSport program—a great program—reached a big milestone today. Can the minister please provide an update to the house on this very important program?

Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:

I am very pleased to provide the house with an update on this program, and, before I do that, just to put on the record, on behalf of everyone in this Parliament, our congratulations to Aidan Tropiano, who won the Sandover Medal on Monday night—the peak recognition for best and fairest in our West Australian Football League competition. He gave a very good account of himself on the evening, spoke beautifully and recognised the people who had helped him along the journey so far. It was quite a special evening—the first Sandover Medal ceremony that I have attended.

Today is about a special milestone for the KidSport program, which was introduced by this state government. The Premier and I are very pleased to announce that we have reached 50 000 kids involved in this program. Of the 50 000 kids who now have the opportunity to participate in organised club sport, 30 000 have joined a club for the first time. Kids aged from five to 18 years old are eligible, and they get \$200 towards their club membership fees; quite often, they split the \$200 across a summer and a winter sport. We were joined by a number of young kids who have been beneficiaries of that program, including Antoni Grover who works in the Aboriginal development program in the Department of Sport and Recreation. Antoni Grover said that he would have been a KidSport kid had the program been around when he first got involved in sport. He credited his involvement in organised sport as being something that really changed his life and helped him develop and achieve the highs he did in his career and life.

Obviously, we are reaching fever pitch in the state in terms of footy, and we acknowledged that a significant number of kids would access KidSport vouchers to join their local footy club. In fact, 15 000 KidSport kids participate in footy, and 1 400 are young women. These are really exciting times for women's footy in Western Australia, with a 23 per cent increase in participation in women's football across the board. In the state open-age competition this year, the Western Australian women's team beat the Victorians for the first time in 17 years. They, and the people who assisted them in that journey, were rightly acknowledged in that forum on Monday night. The state government continues to support footy to grow not only at an elite level through our support of the West Australian Football Commission and the new stadium, but also through to the grassroots of the sport. We have seen significant investment of around \$50 million in community projects, including new ovals and lighting; we have also provided \$500 club equipment grants to assist clubs to continue to encourage new players. I think in the lead-up to this weekend, and then grand final weekend, we wish both our teams the very best. We hope that our state's investment into the grassroots level of footy will result in us having a very strong footy culture here in WA for a long time.