

**MEMBERS EQUITY STADIUM, FUNDING AND EVENTS**

*Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation*

**MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Sport and Recreation)** [12.13 pm]: This house and the wider community have long been strong supporters of major sporting events in this state. Next Saturday night Perth will host another significant sporting event - the Cronulla Sharks and the New Zealand Warriors National Rugby League match at Members Equity Stadium. This is an important event because it will be used by the National Rugby League to test the WA market for the return of rugby league to Perth. I strongly encourage supporters of rugby league and rugby union - in fact, all sports fans - to show the National Rugby League that Perth is a highly viable venue in which to host matches of the 2008 Rugby League World Cup. We already have the runs on the board with the spectacular success of the rugby union Rugby World Cup and I have no doubt that Western Australians will again turn it on for rugby league.

We have shown that Perth can support all codes of football, despite being hamstrung by a serious lack of support from our federal government colleagues. The Gallop government has committed \$25 million to the expansion of Members Equity Stadium not only for the new Western Force rugby union team but also to increase our chances of attracting games for the 2008 Rugby League World Cup and, ultimately, the return of a National Rugby League team to Perth by 2010. The extensions are due to be completed towards the end of 2006. They will mean that Perth has a world-class rectangular stadium with the capacity to host big events.

However, although the Howard government has seen fit to help other states with big election sweeteners and billions of dollars in assistance for sports stadiums, Western Australia had its last major injection for a sporting arena at Perry Lakes back in 1962, when Western Australia hosted the Commonwealth Games. However, the federal government could find \$1.5 billion to give to New South Wales to upgrade and build new stadiums in line with the Sydney Olympic Games. Most recently, Melbourne has received \$300 million as part of its program for the Commonwealth Games. This state's sporting groups have had to rely on the Gallop government to shoulder the bulk of support for sports facilities, to the tune of \$149 million. We have also had to rely very much on the generosity of the Western Australian public. We say it is only fair that taxes paid by our people are returned in the form of infrastructure and services such as new stadiums for the enjoyment of all.

We call upon all major sporting codes and all members opposite to join us in our push to ensure fair and equitable funding and that support is provided for WA stadiums, in the same way that other states have enjoyed federal funding from the Howard federal government.