

## **BARBAGALLO RACEWAY, WANNEROO**

### *Grievance*

**MRS D.J. GUISE** (Wanneroo - Deputy Speaker) [9.26 am]: My grievance is directed towards the Minister for Sport and Recreation and concerns the Barbagallo Raceway in Wanneroo. The raceway has been a significant part of the community in Wanneroo since its construction in 1969. The track was constructed with money raised by the WA Sporting Car Club and the land was granted as a class A reserve from the City of Wanneroo, which remains a significant supporter of the club and the raceway to this day. From the time of its construction, racing has thrived at the track. It was well utilised throughout the 1970s, and in 1979 the venue hosted the Australian Grand Prix.

Throughout this period, the raceway has changed and developed. In my younger days I worked in the timing team and even served for a short time as sports secretary of the Motorcycle Racing Club of WA, whilst my husband pursued his passion for motorcycle road racing. The raceway and the facilities have changed considerably from then to now. It was pretty archaic back in those days, but we managed somehow. As with all sporting venues of its type, the Barbagallo Raceway has had its ups and downs - its glory days and its quieter years. It has been home to, and has hosted, many of our nation's motorsport champions - indeed, motorcycle world champions Wayne Gardiner and Mick Doohan spent many hours honing their skills on the Wanneroo track. From its inception, the Wanneroo Raceway has been managed and maintained solely by the WA Sporting Car Club, with significant financial assistance from the sponsors of the raceway. The WA Sporting Car Club is basically a voluntary organisation. The organisation can trace its history back to 1927, and it was first incorporated in 1931. The fact that Barbagallo Raceway in Wanneroo is consistently judged one of the best circuits in Australia is testimony to the tens of thousands of voluntary hours put into the development and maintenance of the complex by club members. It is significant, also, that any profits generated by the club are ploughed back into the circuit to improve conditions for competitors and spectators.

The raceway, as I have said, is something of an icon in my state seat of Wanneroo and each year it brings many thousands of visitors to the area, creating significant spin-offs for local tourism and business. Since building the short track in 1993, the raceway has undergone a significant period of growth and investment. The club has established an eight-stage plan for the development and refurbishment of the site in order to expand the current racing program and to continue to attract racing events of national and international significance.

Currently, the jewel in the crown of the Wanneroo Raceway is its participation in the national V8 Supercar Championship. This event attracts crowds in excess of 50 000 over the course of the weekend and gives Western Australia, and Wanneroo, significant national television exposure through the broadcast of the race. I am aware that many naysayers and prophets of doom have been forecasting the loss of this significant racing event from the Wanneroo raceway in recent years. I am, therefore, enormously pleased by the recent announcement that the V8 Supercar Championship race has been secured at the Barbagallo Raceway, Wanneroo until 2006. This is a significant announcement, as it will enable the car club to plan for the next three years, and it provides an element of certainty about the future of motor racing at the Wanneroo complex. I am also advised that EventsCorp will include for the first time the Wanneroo round of the V8 Supercar Championships in its *Best on Earth in Perth* calendar, which is fantastic news for the car club, the sport and Wanneroo. However, I understand that it is a condition of the contract extension that the WA Sporting Car Club must continue to undertake improvements to the track and its environs to ensure that they are suitable for the V8 championship. Bringing the V8s to Perth costs a significant amount of money and the upgrading of the track and facilities is an expensive business. There is, however, a significant financial benefit in holding this event in Western Australia, both in terms of attracting tourists to Wanneroo and the northern suburbs and the national exposure that the raceway and the region receives from television coverage of the race. More than just my region benefits from those people coming to WA. Losing the race would be a significant blow to the club and the State. However, it would also be an embarrassment to the national competition. No sport can truly be regarded as national if its events are confined to the eastern seaboard.

Racing fans in Western Australia - I am a long-time supporter of motor racing - want to see top class racing. They deserve top class facilities in which to see those races. Every year Western Australian motor racing fans turn up in their thousands to see the V8s in action at Wanneroo. As I have said, I am advised that the eight-stage redevelopment plan is proceeding at a good pace and that the facilities have been significantly improved in the past few years. I am also aware that the State Government has contributed to the refurbishment of these facilities through grants from the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. I also understand that preparing the raceway to meet the conditions for the V8 supercars will cost approximately \$400 000. Although I acknowledge the significant contribution to the raceway redevelopment that the State Government has already made through the CSRFF program, I and all other motor sport fans in Western Australia would dearly love to see the facilities improved further and for the V8s to be guaranteed a future in Western Australia.

My grievance this morning to the minister is on the state of play for this complex. I believe that we were sold out somewhat in a previous deal, which to date we are still tipping money into. I ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation to inform the House whether it is possible to provide further state government assistance to the WA Sporting Car Club for the resurfacing of the track at Barbagallo Raceway to ensure that it meets the standards required by the V8 supercars and to help ensure that this premier motor racing event stays in Western Australia in future years.

**MR R.C. KUCERA** (Yokine - Minister for Sport and Recreation) [9.32 am]: Firstly, I thank the member for Wanneroo for her enormous interest in this racetrack over many years. She is a woman of many skills. I understand that at times of extreme pressure she also doubled as a barmaid at the club.

Mrs D.J. Guise: That would be right!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: The issue that the member has raised is indeed significant. The Western Australian round of the V8 Supercar Series is indeed a premier event for motor racing and it is important that we retain it in this State. As the member said, the Government is currently negotiating through EventsCorp to make sure that it is placed at the head of the operation.

I will speak quickly about this complex in the light of the need for state sporting facilities generally. The Government has completed a plan for the refurbishment of state sporting facilities, which includes developing athletics programs in both the member's area and in other areas of the city and State. The AK reserve in the Town of Cambridge will undergo a significant development. The Government is hoping to move on that after Christmas, when the council will begin working towards making sure that Perry Lakes Stadium can be moved.

This event is essential for motor sport. There is an air of optimism about the current development of motor sport across the State. A motorplex is being developed in Collie. I was pleased to visit that area. The Government was able to give considerable financial support to that development through the efforts of the member for Collie. Through the efforts of the member for Bunbury, the Government is currently looking at associated planning for a Formula One or Nippon circuit in Bunbury. I have some fond memories of learning to ride motorbikes and undertaking pursuit training at the Wanneroo racetrack when I was in the Police Service. I was somewhat disappointed with the remarks of the member for Mitchell yesterday about my commitment to the motorcycle fraternity of this State. There is only one part of the motorcycle fraternity in this State that I have an aversion to. I think we all have an aversion to that group, particularly after this week's issues.

The WA Sporting Car Club has an eight-stage development plan to enhance the Wanneroo raceway. The club has completed stages 1 to 3. The State Government has contributed a total of \$202 651 to that development. The member is correct; this State has secured the V8 supercar races until 2006. A condition of that contract to stage the V8 supercar races is that the WA Sporting Car Club must continue to undertake improvements to facilities around the raceway. In particular, the WA Sporting Car Club needs to resurface the track to ensure that it continues to meet V8 supercar standards. The member is right; the cost of the resurfacing is expected to be approximately \$400 000. The important thing from my point of view as Minister for Sport and Recreation is that if the resurfacing goes ahead, it will make it a state-level facility. Wherever possible we are now trying to commit funding to make sure that we have a complete range of state sporting facilities, including this one.

Mr A.D. Marshall: We must have international venues.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Of course, but I am sure the member for Dawesville would agree that as important as it is for local facilities to be maintained, we also need a complete range of state sporting facilities that can support national and international events. The requirements of the V8 Supercar Series will be satisfied. The resurfacing work would go a long way towards ensuring the longevity of the event at Wanneroo.

A review of the current projects relating to the state sporting facilities plan has been completed. The last round of the CSRFF has identified a number of key opportunities. Again, I refer to some of the major state sporting facilities that require replacement, such as Perry Lakes Stadium. I am happy to announce that I can give in-principle support to the WA Sporting Car Club as a result of that review. There is the potential for the Government to provide in-principle support and to make an offer of \$200 000 towards the cost of resurfacing the raceway, provided the WA Sporting Car Club can match this offer and make available the remaining \$200 000. I understand that there have been some preliminary talks between the Department of Sport and Recreation and the club. I will now work towards ensuring that firm negotiations are undertaken between the WA Sporting Car Club and the Department of Sport and Recreation. Now that the Government has confirmed that \$200 000 can be made available, it is essential that the department work with the WA Sporting Car Club to make sure that this great facility is maintained.

While I am on that subject, the member was right about the impact of the eastern States on Western Australia. At the last sporting minister's conference, I raised the issue of fare equalisation. As a result, the federal minister agreed, together with the other States, to start working towards trying to maintain a level of sporting excellence

in this State to make sure that our young people can go forward in areas such as motor racing. I congratulate the WA Sporting Car Club for its efforts in putting and keeping Western Australia on the national map, whether it be in motorcycle, car or V8 supercar racing. I am pleased to say that the Government is now progressing those kinds of things. However, there is an issue.

The sporting facilities supplied for the recent Olympic Games held in Sydney are second to none. The Commonwealth Games will do the same for Melbourne. Unfortunately, yet again, Western Australia will be left behind somewhat by the federal Government in terms of funding for sporting facilities. I assure the member that the Government will ensure that negotiations will go ahead, based on the firm commitment that there is a potential for it to supply \$200 000 of the \$400 000 required for the resurfacing of the track. I thank the member for her persistence in this matter and for the great support she and her husband give to this sport.