

BARBAGALLO BALLPARK — RENOVATION

Statement by Member for Southern River

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [12.56 pm]: The home of baseball in Western Australia, Barbagallo Ballpark, despite being the best in Australia, needs a renovation—a “reno” as they say on TV. Upgrades made to Barbagallo baseball park in 2010 included an electronic scoreboard, an enclosed members’ area, numbered seats, an improved playing surface, upgraded corporate boxes, and a new office building. However, baseball is growing especially in Perth, home of the Australian Baseball League champion team, again. Perth Heat has been the champion team four times in the past five years. WA also provided the first Major League Baseball umpire from the Asia-Pacific region, Jon Byrne, the son of a constituent of mine. Baseball is booming in WA and Australia. In fact, the explosive growth of the youth level in the twenty-first century resulted in the number of Little Leagues in our nation rising to about 400, making Australia the largest country in Little League participation outside of North America. We could potentially broadcast ABL games into Asia, the biggest baseball market. However, to make that happen and for international teams to come to Perth, the ballpark needs a further upgrade. If the commonwealth and state governments pitch in, we can put Perth on the baseball map of the world. To help get this for WA, I shall continue to advocate for the needed funding to get the facility up to international standard for such an increasingly popular sport. Western Australia has the opportunity to host one of the four 2016 Baseball World Cup qualifier rounds in March or September 2016. I wish the Western Australian Baseball League every success in seeking funding from Eventscorp for the event.