

WA INSTITUTE OF SPORT, FUNDING

**453. Mr P.B. WATSON to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:**

Can the minister advise the House of any change in the level of government support for the Western Australian Institute of Sport?

**Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:**

I thank the member for his question and his strong support for sporting associations and individuals in his electorate. We can all bask in some of the member's past glory as a former Olympian, as well as in the glory of current athletes.

I am pleased to advise that an extra \$1.6 million has been provided to the Western Australian Institute of Sport, which is otherwise known as WAIS. This funding will be locked into a four-year cycle that is tied to the Olympic cycle. This will ensure that the institute's budget will be up to almost \$4 million by the Beijing 2008 Olympics, which will be an 18 per cent increase on its current levels. The extra funding will ensure that WAIS has the resources, coaches and sports science staff to develop state athletes to their full potential for the future Olympic and Commonwealth Games during that cycle. An overlap occurs with the Commonwealth Games during that cycle. Some approaches made by the member for Albany, and his association with the Olympic movement, ensured that such support could occur. This program highlighted vision on the part of both WAIS and the Department of Sport and Recreation. I was very pleased with the discussions I had with Treasury to ensure that this funding increase could occur.

Sixty-one Western Australians represented our State and nation in a 631 strong team at the Sydney Olympics. I am pleased to advise the House that as a result of the efforts of WAIS, despite the total Australian team at Athens having 150 fewer members than that at Sydney, the team has increased proportional representation from Western Australia; indeed, 54 Western Australian athletes are representing their nation in Athens at the moment. I am sure all members of this House pass on their congratulations to our nation's athletes and wish them well for the rest of the games.