

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA ALL ABILITIES FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

*Statement by Member for Darling Range*

**MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range)** [12.58 pm]: The Western Australia All Abilities Football Association, or WAAFA, provides an opportunity for people with a disability to be involved in footy like any other Australian. WAAFA exists to improve the independence, wellbeing, self-esteem and life skills of people with a disability, which is achieved by facilitating organised footy, supporting clubs to provide an inclusive environment, advocacy and promotion, and raising funds. We know that football is popular, and that being part of a footy club is something that brings people together and attracts people from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly Aboriginal people.

WAAFA has formed many business, community and sporting partnerships and now has 3 130 participants across the state in 14 programs including All Abilities Football, blind AFL, wheelchair football and Kickability in schools. My son Gryff has now played his first season with the Kelmscott All Abilities Football team and has become more active, confident, engaged and has formed friendships. The team has grown from about seven players three years ago to now having a squad of 40 players—both men and women—aged from late teens to late fifties. I am looking at you, Larry!

I give special mention to Hayden Marchetto, the executive officer of WAAFA for his superb relationship building, and to coach Robert Turner of the Kelmscott Bulldogs for being recognised as the national AFL disability inclusion ambassador of the year for displaying exceptional leadership in engaging people with disabilities in football. He knows every player by name! The grand finals were played last Saturday in Willetton. I congratulate Coolbinia for winning the A division flag and Curtin University Wesley Football Club on winning the B division flag. I encourage all sporting codes to embrace all-abilities sport, not only to be inclusive, but also to realise the financial and participation benefit of more members and their families, making clubs more viable, welcoming and increasing the number of volunteers!

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*