

PERTH STADIUM — OPENING

40. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

Can the minister please explain to the house why an Ashes test will not be able to open the new Perth Stadium?

Mr M.P. MURRAY replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield. Welcome to the house. I also congratulate the Speaker today. I am finding it very difficult not to call him “Watto” after being his roommate for six and a half years! Congratulations on your efforts, Mr Speaker.

On the question of why we cannot have a test match at Perth Stadium, it was never, ever possible, and that has been borne out by press releases from the former Minister for Sport and Recreation and many others. Of course, at that time we were running into an election and it was a government that was short of ideas and it thought: Let us have a test match; it will resound and resonate with some people within the community. Of course, the then Premier trotted out a press release that stated that there would be a test match at the stadium. The stadium has always had an opening time of early March for the first games of the AFL. I have had a tour of this stadium and I must say that, although I do not agree with where it has been placed, it is an excellent facility that will serve the people of Western Australia for a long time—at a huge cost, of course.

We can look at why it will not happen. There are a couple of things missing. The bridge is not there, but do not worry; there was a rumour from the Liberal Party that a heap of barges will be brought in and the people will be barged across because there will not be enough room for them to walk to the stadium. In saying that, I do not want people to go to the stadium and have a bad experience first-up, because then work will have to be done to encourage them back. Let us make the first experience a very memorable one. Certainly, there was some talk about a certain singer whom I had not heard of, but now I have. I had a look at him the other night because I got a text message from my daughter stating, “Dad, have a look at Channel Seven; Ed Sheeran’s on.” I did that and he looks a bit like Elton John with red hair. I do know who he is.

The SPEAKER: Minister, can you get back to the question, please.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Sales for that event are going through the roof. It is quite possible that he may do two concerts. We will see what happens. Let us be honest about what is going to happen out there. When we open it, it will be ready to be used. It will be a great experience. We will let members know when we are going to open it.