

EVENTS — TICKET RESALE

658. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how people attending events at WA's sporting and entertainment venues are being stung by ticket scalpers?
- (2) With the AFL finals underway, can the minister advise what is the message of both VenuesWest and this government to those who do not purchase their tickets directly from an authorised primary seller?

Mr M.P. MURRAY replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for this question on this very important issue that affects many, many people. To highlight that, I will read out a few snapshots of what has happened in the last year. In 14 events last financial year, 354 unsuspecting fans were turned away from RAC Arena due to the presentation of invalid tickets at the box office. I am sure that the shock that those 354 people got is still insurmountable. We saw that very sad story the other day about visitors to our town who were also turned away from the footy.

Of those refusals, 245, or 69 per cent, were for tickets purchased from Viagogo, a Geneva-based ticket reseller that the state does not have powers over. Those tickets were sold from outside the country, back into the country, and people then can be scammed. We do not have power over that. Of the 354 refusals, 98 were for tickets purchased from Ticketmaster Resale, amounting to 27 per cent of the refusals. Ticketmaster Resale is also a problem. There is not a great deal of comfort for people buying resales from some of these websites. On top of the high risk of these tickets being invalid, tickets to Jerry Seinfeld, for example, were priced three and a half times higher than the average original ticket price—that is, \$518 versus \$145.30 on the Ticketmaster Resale site. Three times as much is just beyond the pale. I know some people are desperate to go, but when they turn up and their tickets are refused, it is just terrible. We need to work with all the departments to make sure that, with the finals coming up, we do not have people out there buying tickets and then being refused at the gate. It is a bit different from days gone by when the member for South Perth used to get in under the fence and then sit in someone else's seat!

The price increase on Viagogo was even higher, at 3.7 times that of the original ticket price—that is, \$538 versus \$145. That is a really big mark-up. I understand the desperation at times when people want to see a particular event. At any given RAC Arena event, around 300 to 500 tickets have been scalped; that is, at any event, 300 to 500 people have been turned away. It is widespread. People take the risk when they buy those tickets. There comes a time when we have to do something about it. VenuesWest has zero tolerance on scalped tickets and so do many promoters and primary ticket sellers, so there is a movement.

VenuesWest pleads with the public not to be scammed and not to grab tickets that may be dishonoured at the gate. There would be nothing worse than for someone to get to the gate with their bride and some friends and then be turned away. Not only would they not have enough money for a beer, but also they would not see the show!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! He cannot hear you anyway.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: So when tickets are dishonoured, fans miss out and, as we know, if someone purchases a ticket from a secondary ticket seller, they risk being ripped off and refused entry to the event.

Several members interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will say that again. I am trying to. I understand why it is very important with the finals coming up. Tickets for the next final in Western Australia will be flying around and I know that many Eagles fans will be desperate to be at their last game—at Optus Stadium, I must say; it might not be their last game. We are working very closely with the consumer areas on making sure that people do not get ripped off in the future. It is a problem at the moment. I am bringing this to the attention of the house to make sure that we do not have the same report that was in *The West Australian* last week about those visitors to Australia who went away with a very sour taste in their mouth.