

COLLIE MOTORPLEX

Grievance

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [9.36 am]: My grievance on Collie Motorplex is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. As some members may know, Collie Motorplex, run by the not-for-profit group Motoring South West, recently hosted the Historic Road Racing National Championships. The four-day event drew motorcycle enthusiasts from all over Australia to watch the finest historic motorcycle racers battle it out for the honour of becoming Australian champions. The national championships in September drew 4 000 to 5 000 people to Collie, all spending money on accommodation, meals and businesses in Collie. In fact, Collie accommodation was completely booked out. Upgrades to the Collie Motorplex track have increased its track length from 1.6 to 2.55 kilometres, resulting in it now being recognised as of a national standard. The track has also been sanctioned for racing by the Confederation of Australian Motorsport and Motorcycling Australia, arguably making it Western Australia's premier track for motorsport. However, Collie motorsport is being stymied by the lack of investment that is holding back this key driver to the local economy. We might say that this economic driver is being left on the starting grid!

As I said, Collie is recognised as Western Australia's premier motorsport destination, but it desperately needs investment on infrastructure to improve the track and pit areas, as well as much-needed improvements to spectator amenities. Surely some of the \$60 million earmarked for Collie in Labor's failed biomass and solar energy projects could be diverted to a proven economic driver for the region. A revamped motorplex would benefit Collie by attracting major motorsport events, bringing thousands of motorsport enthusiasts and their families to stay in Collie and shop at local businesses. We are hearing loud and clear from people in Collie that they are frustrated that such an obvious, well-planned project with proven economic results for Collie and the south west is being ignored. The government seems happy to invest in planning and talkfests about diversifying the economy, but it baulks at actual investment that would set up Collie as a motorsport leader now and into the future.

There has been enough talk from the minister: it is time to invest in Collie Motorplex. Labor committed to diversifying the economy and generating jobs in Collie. However, Hon Colin Holt's recent questioning of Minister MacTiernan in the Legislative Council brought to light that not even one new job has been created yet—zero new jobs. Every weekend, the motorplex brings people to the town of Collie—people who stay in local accommodation, eat out, buy groceries, browse and buy from the local shops. It seems almost unbelievable that the local member, who is also the Minister for Sport and Recreation, is standing in the way of such an obvious boost to the Collie economy. This facility is clearly a significant economic driver and has the potential to become even more significant now that it is on the radar nationally.

I am interested to know whether the minister will commit to funding the improvements detailed in the WA motorsport strategy. We now have a track with the potential to attract national, or even international, events. We need a commitment from the minister to support future upgrades of the facility. The amenities are not up to scratch. The old kitchen, canteen, toilet and ablution facilities were there 40 years ago, and bringing in more portaloos is only a bandaaid solution. There needs to be a dedicated pit lane, and the pit area needs resurfacing. Significant power improvements are needed to ensure a safe, reliable source for competitors, and car parking is also needed. This has the potential to be a significant economic driver of the regional economy. This is exactly what we need to bring a new, diversified income stream to Collie, so why is it not happening? There are so many opportunities to continue to grow this fantastic regional asset if it is completed to a reasonable standard—superbikes, historic cars, motorsport tourism opportunities, training and even international events. It just needs to be finished.

It was recently stated in the *South Western Times* that the government had generously provided the motorplex with \$700 000 for the purpose of securing events like Gazzanats. It was discovered, from the answer to a question without notice in the upper house, that only \$314 000 had been provided for track improvements by the government. Funding for the stage 1 upgrade was provided by the former state government, and the current stage 2 upgrade has been predominantly funded by Bendigo Bank and the commonwealth government, through the Building Better Regions fund. I think the minister might need to retract that statement, taking credit for the full \$700 000.

In summary, I would say that, with the local member for Collie–Preston also being the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the people at the Collie Motorplex would think that they had a reasonable chance of some good support. We have the \$20 million Collie Futures Fund, and the \$60 million renewables fund, but not one job has been provided. Where is the minister? I look forward to his response, telling the people of the Collie Motorplex where he is and how he is going to support them into the future and provide a great economic benefit for the people of Collie and the south west.

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [9.43 am]: This is a classic case of an ill-informed member of Parliament who breezes through the south west once in a while, and will not travel to places such as Esperance because he is too frightened of those areas, coming up with a grievance that is totally out of order. It is obvious that National Party members do not talk to each other, because, in answer to questions

without notice 626 and 982 in the upper house, I reminded the Nationals and Hon Colin Holt, and I now remind the member for Roe as well, that there have been no applications for funding from that group. For Christ's sake, man, listen! Where has the member been? He has been wandering through like a drifter in the desert.

For goodness sake, the real issue is that the group there is dysfunctional. All its members want to do is play political games, and not work with us. I offered the group the opportunity of having prisoners from Bunbury come up and do the work, but it said it would rather pay for it. Even though it was broke, the group did not want to take funding to bring up the prisoners to do the work. I then had to fight extremely hard to get an Aboriginal work group out there for training. Fifteen people went out there with machinery and the whole lot for training, and the group out there did not want them there, saying that they might not turn up because they are Aboriginal. What a disgrace that group is! It is about time the members came out, stopped playing politics and put in a few grant applications, and then we will listen to them. The group has not acquitted the two grants it has received. The shire council is also holding back \$50 000 of the grant, because the group cannot acquit it. It has not got the book work right. Right at this moment, an inquiry is taking place into the group's book work, and the auditor is in all sorts of bother.

That is the kind of rubbish the member is bringing in here. It is absolute rubbish, and the Nationals are trying to play politics in this region. It shows that the National Party is at a loss in country areas. Only the people who live in the towns know the issues, not the National Party—those pseudo-city people who wander around with country badges on their shoulders, not listening to the people of the community. Motorsport has never had so much attention from the sport and recreation portfolio as it has had since the Labor Party came into office. We have fixed up the Wanneroo problem, where the motorbikes could not race for two years. We made that facility safe. We have given money to Albany to purchase land for motorsport in that area. We have given money to Kalgoorlie to have a look at exactly what is going on there, and we have flown up there and had meetings with the motorsport group. Where is the Collie group? Its members are sitting on their bums and not applying for the grants they should be applying for. The funding is there—put in the grant applications, show us your bona fides, and tell us what you want to do.

I must agree with some of what the member said. There is no argument that this is a great boost to the Collie economy, but only because races could not be held there until we put in the \$314 000 to upgrade the safety of the facility. Otherwise it would not have received its licence. The motorsport group came in through the door, and within weeks it had that \$314 000, with the help of Minister MacTiernan in the upper house, under the regional development portfolio. We gave that money straight away, but the group did not use it. It was put out there to try to get extra funding from the federal government. I was told absolute lies—I was going to use some other words—about the way forward. The group is dishonest in what it is representing to the National Party, and the member for Roe is being dishonest by bringing it into the Parliament. That is the member's problem—he has listened only to the gossip and scuttlebutt that is out there. The motorsport group has split in two because of the member's meddling. He can get out his National Party members; there are only three of them in Collie, so it is not hard to have a National Party meeting there. All three of them will come out, but they do not produce anything. They do not listen to what has already been put to Hon Colin Holt in the upper house. It is there in black and white. I have some glasses here, if the member wants to borrow them so he can read what is in *Hansard*, because it is obvious he has not done his homework on this issue.

I am absolutely disgusted with the motorsport group itself. I have offered to go and meet with the group. The member mentioned the Gazzanats, but the motorsport group in Collie declined to have the Gazzanats there, because it did not want to have rubber on the track for when the motorbikes came out. We provided \$15 000 to help promote the historic motorcycle races, but the group did not use it. I have seen one ad on television in Perth. We did not get the 4 000 the member is talking about—the numbers were inflated. I was there. Where was the member for Roe? He was probably down in Victoria Park or somewhere having a coffee, but I was down there. There were 200 bikes in the car park that had been ridden from Perth, but there should have been 500. They were not there, because half the people did not know about it. We provided another \$100 000 for promotion of that area but it has not been used, and yet the member is in here saying we are not funding the group. The member should get his facts right, and get back to that group and tell its members to get off their bums and start working.