

SPORTING GROUPS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting local sporting groups and community organisations. Can the minister outline to the house how the government is ensuring that funding for these grassroots organisations is sustainable and produces the best outcomes for the community?

Mr M.P. MURRAY replied:

Thank you, member, and thank you, Mr Speaker. I had better acknowledge you first and I will talk to members through the Chair. Can I also thank the member for the question and acknowledge the work she is doing in her electorate to make sure that sporting groups in that area get their fair share. We know that the state government contributes millions of dollars towards sporting facilities around this state. At times, some of that funding has been unsustainable. But we must also be reminded that the previous government reduced funding to the community sporting and recreation facilities fund from \$20 million under the previous Labor government to \$8 million. That is absolutely shameful. It was about the only area in the budget that took a cut. Let us get to the real issue of how the sporting fund helps community sporting clubs to attract people by providing current and up-to-date facilities. This is something that we work very hard on. I know that the member for South Perth is very keen to make sure that it happens. I must be doing a reasonable job. Do members remember that old song that goes "on the 14th of February 1966"? I do, because that is when we changed to decimal currency. That was the last time he asked me a question!

Point of Order

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Mr Speaker, on a point of accuracy, I would like you to ask the minister to take back the comment he made that the Liberal Party reduced the amount of money paid into that fund, when we increased it.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I will continue. I stand by my words. The state government, as is well known, has been in a difficult financial position. The TAB account, which funds some of these sporting facilities around the place, is also in decline. We have a shrinkage; people are being more careful with their money. They are not going to the TAB and spending that money and that has a flow-on effect to sporting facilities around the state. To continue funding many of these facilities—in some cases, only one-third of the funding goes to the local government to pick it up—I have now requested the department to ensure that a sinking fund is tied to the funding agreement so that, in the future, we have some money from the clubs that they can put back into their clubs. I will use an example of a club of young people in the northern suburbs who raised \$600 000 for their own sporting facility. That is a great effort. We then contributed to make sure it had a very, very good facility. In the middle of Perth was a club with turf—I will try not to name the club—with a facility that was 12 years old. It had been using the greens for 12 years and had not put away a cent and then requested money off the government. I feel that those young people in the northern suburbs were subsidising that group that have the cheapest beer in town and would not put up the price of its beer and take 5c off the top to put into a fund to renew its facilities. Clubs given grants out of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund will be required to have a sinking fund. I have noticed that most councils and shires have been extremely happy with that, because they are on the other end of it; when the facility runs down, the club asks for a loan or money from the ratepayers as well as the government and does not contribute a great deal in the middle. With great delight, I have been out to many of those councils and they have come back and said, "Good on you." Let us make it very clear. It would be quite simple for some clubs that have the cheapest beer in town to put a sign behind their bar that states, "5c from your drink will go into a sinking fund that will renew your courts". Something like that is simple to sell. It is not a big impost on people themselves.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Does the member think it is too dear?

Ms M.J. Davies: It was already part of the Department of Sport and Recreation's requirements when it provides funding. This is not new. We have just had five minutes on something that was done under a previous government.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Department of Sport and Recreation works very hard with shires such as that. The member knows very, very well what was happening in some of those areas under the previous government. If someone knew someone in the right places, they could get the funding. But if they were in the wrong electorate, they would not get it. I have great pride here to say that I —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! It is an interesting debate, but poor old Hansard cannot hear a thing.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I have great pride in saying without fear or favour that I went out to the Leader of the Opposition's electorate, and do members know what? When I said, "Would you like to come along for the announcement?", he came in through the door that quick, he was like a dog on a slippery floor trying to get into the photo. He almost missed the photo. Behind him came the federal member, panting, "Can I be in the photo too?" We are doing the right thing for sports and we will carry on with it.