

COMMONWEALTH GAMES - WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ATHLETES

**50. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:**

Will the minister inform the house of the performance of Western Australian athletes at the 2006 Commonwealth Games held in Melbourne, including the performance of Kobie McGurk from Collie, who was part of the gold-medal-winning hockey team?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:**

I thank the member for this question and for his interest in sport. The strength in the south west was reflected in the performance of the Australian Commonwealth Games team. We must congratulate Melbourne and the Bracks government for putting on a fantastic Commonwealth Games, which was supported across the community. I was pleased to attend the games for a few days. We must congratulate all our athletes, who performed in an outstanding manner. They produced 84 gold, 69 silver and 68 bronze medals. Western Australia provided a record number of 35 athletes to participate in the Commonwealth Games across 12 different sports. In addition, 20 of the Australian team's support staff in Melbourne were from Western Australia. This was the best ever result for Western Australia at a Commonwealth Games. Western Australian athletes contributed to 24 medals across nine different sports out of a total Australian medal tally of 221 medals. Although Western Australian athletes represented only 8.2 per cent of the total team, they contributed 10.9 per cent of Australia's total medal tally.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** That is statistically significant!

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** It shows that Western Australia is pulling its weight. We acknowledge that and congratulate our athletes.

**Mr T.R. Buswell** interjected.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** It is interesting that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should interject. He is a clear medal-winning member of the other side! His medal would have a face on both sides!

Ryan Bayley, who is an outstanding cyclist, won two gold medals. Kym Howe won a gold medal in the pole vault with a jump of 4.26 metres, which is a new Commonwealth Games record. John Steffensen won a gold medal in not only the men's 400-metre individual event, but also the 4 x 400-metre relay. John Steffensen's gold medal win in the 400-metre individual event meant that he became the first Western Australian to win a gold medal in a track and field event at the Commonwealth Games since Dixie Willis in the 880-yards sprint in 1962. We can be very proud of our athletes. We acknowledge the commitment they made and the hard work they put in. The Western Australian athletes' achievements reflect also on the local community clubs that supported and nurtured them and on the structures that are in place to provide opportunities for our sportspeople right through to the elite level. We can be very proud of the success of our athletes.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** How did we go at shooting?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** Members of the opposition are biased in the sports in which they participate. Clearly they have certain skills in shooting and backstabbing, but they do not do very well in any other event.