

**INDIGENOUS PLAYERS ALLIANCE**

*Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation*

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Sport and Recreation)** [2.06 pm]: In the house today we have the chairman of the Indigenous Players Alliance, Des Headland, a former Fremantle Docker and Brisbane Lions premiership player; AFL players Michael O’Loughlin, Gavin Wanganeen, Che Cockatoo-Collins and Kevin Caton; along with historian Dr Sean Gorman. I will read my statement now.

**The SPEAKER:** It is a shame there are no Collingwood players there!

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I think we might have to reset the clock. Nothing like getting a free kick!

I rise today to inform the house of the fantastic work being done by the Indigenous Players Alliance and to express my full support of the group’s objectives. The aim of the alliance is to support current and past Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AFL players with the unique challenges they face before, during and after their AFL and AFLW careers. The IPA is chaired by Des Headland, a former Fremantle Docker and Lions premiership player, with past AFL players Michael O’Loughlin, Gavin Wanganeen, Che Cockatoo-Collins and Kevin Caton, and historian Dr Sean Gorman as interim directors.

The issue of life after sport is something that I am particularly passionate about. I know that professional sportspeople can struggle with retirement, when they find that they need to transition to a completely different life without the sporting career that in many cases has consumed the majority of their lives and played such an important part in who they are. However, the experiences of Indigenous players during their careers and their transition out of the AFL are unique.

The IPA is the peak body supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women both in and beyond football, providing a support network for past players, advocacy, research and financial literacy training for players and their families. The alliance also aims to work collaboratively to improve the AFL’s recruitment, retention and transition processes for Indigenous players, increasing the prospects and agency of players both during and after their football careers.

It was a pleasure to host the Indigenous Players Alliance’s board in Perth today, given the significant history of the contribution of Western Australian Indigenous players to the great game. I commend the work of Des and the board for their advocacy and cultural leadership, and I am honoured to have them in the gallery today. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]