

## **BASKETBALL — INDOOR FACILITIES**

### *Grievance*

**DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe)** [10.06 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I thank the minister for taking my grievance and I extend my gratitude for allowing me to shine a light on a matter of significance importance to Western Australians, especially in my electorate. My grievance addresses a crucial issue hindering the increased participation of young Western Australians in basketball, being the lack of suitable indoor facilities. These facilities are pivotal in supporting statewide basketball programs run by dedicated community volunteers in our local basketball associations.

I recently had discussions with key figures, including the CEO of Basketball WA, Mr Evan Stewart, and the president of the Perry Lakes Basketball Association, Ms Jenny Purser. Research carried out by Basketball WA shows a substantial need for indoor basketball courts to support growing demand. Its statistics demonstrate a requirement of one indoor court for every 6 250 residents in a community to allow for adequate programming to cater for 300 to 350 players without exceeding court capacity. AusPlay research indicates that approximately 5.5 per cent of the Australian population regularly engages in basketball. It is estimated that for every 25 000 people in the community, around 1 375 will actively participate in basketball, necessitating at least four courts to meet this demand.

In Western Australia, the demand for competitive basketball is significantly greater than the national average. In 2020, an AusPlay survey demonstrated a substantial increase in the number of Western Australians playing competitive basketball, reflecting a growth of over 50 per cent for juniors and 22 per cent for adults over the past two years. Nationwide, this trend of increasing participation in competitive basketball has seen a rise of more than 2 000 participants, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic over that period. Basketball in Western Australia has solidified its position as the most popular team sport for juniors, with nearly 65 000 children actively playing, more than 55 000 of whom are registered in statewide and metro associations.

My grievance is that the popularity of basketball has resulted in a significant shortfall in court availability. In the western suburbs, for example, in 2022, more than 2 340 individuals engaged in playing basketball and an additional 1 500 were unable to participate due to the lack of court availability. The growth of the sport is being impeded by insufficient facilities, restraining the ability to meet the demands of our increasing population. To ensure efficiency and sustained growth, it is imperative that the metropolitan and large regional associations have access to six to eight basketball court facilities. Centralised venues of this size alleviate the burden on volunteers and can support up to 3 000 members, making them feasible for the implementation of growth strategies and efficient event operations. Crucially, appropriately constructed and managed indoor facilities can cover their own costs, contributing to the wellbeing of the entire local community. This is in stark contrast to other sporting facilities that often rely on ongoing government subsidies.

The lack of investment in indoor basketball facilities over the past two decades has led to critical shortages, creating barriers to participation and growth. I am certain that the minister is all too aware of the importance of sport to children's physical and mental wellbeing. The situation has reached a critical point. All facilities in the western suburbs are at full capacity, with a substantial waiting list at Perry Lakes, indicating that a significant number of children are unable to benefit from community engagement and the associated physical, social and mental care advantages. The Perry Lakes Basketball Association has made efforts to increase court availability, such as allocating bye weeks to 10 per cent of teams, in an effort to accommodate more participants. Unfortunately, this is simply not enough. Basketball participation is "Boomer-ing"—no pun intended! The population is expanding and indoor court facilities are now desperately needed to match this growth.

I understand that Basketball WA and the Perry Lakes Basketball Association are working with the Royal Agricultural Society of WA on a proposal to redevelop some of the display pavilions to a basketball centre that is also suitable at show time. I understand that the minister is aware of these discussions. I believe that this option would be an ideal use for those facilities. Consequently, I implore the minister to explore options available to the WA state government to address the shortage of indoor basketball courts in the western suburbs and throughout our state, including the showground option. It is vital to support Basketball WA to satisfy the increasing demand and provide access to the sport for our community.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation)** [10.11 am]: I thank the member for Cottesloe for his grievance. It is an important issue relating to sport across Western Australia. I have a couple of things I want to say. There is no doubt that there continues to be major demand for access to court space, in particular covered court space. Basketball is an interesting sport. Not that long ago, lots of basketball was played outdoors, certainly during my time when I lived in Three Springs and other places. The reality is that the sport has become far more popular, and more appropriate to be played indoors. In the last couple of decades in particular, the prevalence of larger clusters of covered courts or additions to existing sporting and recreational facilities has seen

the addition of covered courts. Importantly, although basketball is the predominant sport that uses covered courts, they are also important for sports such as badminton, which is seeing an increase in interest, and also indoor netball.

The member is correct; there are increasing pressures on existing facilities throughout the metropolitan area and, indeed, in regional WA. Basketball is a high-participation sport for both girls and boys and young men and women, which means that the responsibilities of local government and even the federal government to fund new and/or enhanced existing venues and court space becomes imperative. The reality is that we could probably build new courts every week for the rest of the year or so and we would probably still not cater for demand because the sport is growing rapidly. I am distressed when I hear about the number of kids who are missing out because they are on waitlists. A number of members, including the member for South Perth, have highlighted to me the number of children who are on waitlists and seeking to get on a team.

I can tell the member for Cottesloe that the state government has been focused on a program to deliver increased infrastructure across the state. I will not go through it in great detail but even under the community sporting and recreation facilities fund, which we have enhanced, bringing its funding up to over \$20 million, has seen some 13 projects delivered that benefit the sport of basketball since 2021–22. A range of grant projects have delivered enhanced court infrastructure to places such as Halls Creek, Bremer Bay and Gosnells, and also to the City of Busselton, the City of Armadale and East Pilbara training. There is a long list. The former Premier opened the facility in Geraldton earlier this year, and of course commitments were made to expand facilities in Kalgoorlie and other places. The reality is that we need more.

I am aware of the showground proposal. I want to congratulate the Perry Lakes Basketball Association and the other association that the member highlighted that are working on this.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Basketball WA.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, Basketball WA—the peak body. I congratulate it for continuing to look at finding solutions, both short and long term. The long-term solution is building more courts. The medium-term solution includes finding spaces that already exist and using them better or, indeed, having access to them. That is why there are active conversations between me and the Minister for Education about expanding joint-use facilities. Not all new or existing schools have covered courts, but some of them do and we should be seeking to access those.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** I think they were looking to redevelop that as a joint-use area.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Is that the showground?

**Dr D.J. Honey:** Yes.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The showground proposal is very interesting. I encourage the showground to continue the conversations that I know it is having with the department because that demonstrates an innovative way of dealing with an immediate demand. The member is probably aware that we are already involved in a number of good joint collaborations with the showground or with the Royal Agricultural Society of WA in the arts. For example, the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre has been relocated to the showground.

I thank all the volunteers. The member knows the volunteers in his electorate well. All of us in our electorates know how much value volunteers bring to delivering community sport, including junior sport. I will ask the department to update me on the progress of the conversations with Basketball WA and the proposal for the showgrounds. I can assure the member that we are also looking at where those pressure points of demand are in the metropolitan area. They are not just in the member's electorate; they are in various electorates in the metropolitan area. We will continue to look at those projects and seek to prioritise available funding for such projects. Ultimately, we want, as does the member, children and young people and young men and women having access to appropriate facilities at the earliest possible stage in their junior sport development because we know the benefits sport has for their mental and physical health and wellbeing in the future. I thank the member for his grievance. It adds to a number of other highlighted issues, particularly the demand for covered courts for basketball in Western Australia. I will keep working very hard to deliver.