

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO USE OF STATE FUNDING BY THE WEST AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL COMMISSION



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
FRIDAY, 21 AUGUST 2020**

SESSION ONE

Members

**Dr Tony Buti (Chair)
Mr Dean Nalder (Deputy Chair)
Mr Vincent Catania
Mr Simon Millman
Mrs Lisa O'Malley**

Hearing commenced at 10.14 am

Mr DUNCAN ORD

Director General, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, examined:

Ms KIM ELLWOOD

Executive Director, Sport and Recreation, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, examined:

Mr STEVEN KEVIN HUMFREY

Director, Sport and Recreation Development, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, examined:

The CHAIR: Thanks very much for coming to this hearing. I just have an opening statement, as I am sure you would understand. Thank you for appearing today to provide evidence relating to the committee's inquiry into the use of state funding by the Western Australian Football Commission. My name is Tony Buti; I am the committee Chair and member for Armadale; to my left is the Deputy Chair, Mr Dean Nalder, who is also the member for Bateman; to his left is Mrs Lisa O'Malley, member for Bickton; and to my right is Simon Millman, member for Mount Lawley. We have an apology today from Mr Vince Catania, member for North West Central. It is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of this committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. While your evidence is protected by parliamentary privilege, this privilege does not apply to anything that you may say outside of today's proceedings. I would also like to advise that today's hearing will be broadcast live over the parliamentary website. Do you have any questions about your attendance today?

The WITNESSES: No.

The CHAIR: Would you like to start with a brief opening statement?

Mr ORD: Yes, thank you, Chair, and thanks for the invitation to appear before the committee; I appreciate that. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is the administrator of the Perth Stadium agreement. We have course have been a long-term supporter of AFL in the state in our role of supporting state sporting associations, and in that capacity we see WA Football Commission as a state sporting association. Our relationship is multifaceted, from working with the football commission on football development around the state, particularly in areas of priority, for example, increasing participation of Indigenous people in football, football in remote communities and, of course, of late, the very strong movement to encourage women in playing the AFL code. Our relationship also extends to our administration of the community sport and recreation fund, where we invest in sporting infrastructure, and particularly infrastructure that enables the community to play AFL right around the state. We enjoy an ongoing and deep relationship with the commission and, of course, are involved in their accountability under the agreement. We do see the agreement, which is in its first full year of operation, as providing us with an opportunity to see how the football commission is transitioning from their former role in support of administering Subiaco Oval to a new role in expanding the broader management of football across the state and, of course, managing in this current context the difficult impact from COVID-19. I would now like to hand back to you for questions.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. You talked about your relationship with the commission. Is that role, the relationship you have with the commission, very different than your roles with other state sporting associations? Could you maybe elaborate on that?

Mr ORD: I would say it is consistent with our role. We, of course, have a framework approach to how we work with all state sporting associations, and we regularly assess the effectiveness of that framework and the principles under which the state supplies or provides additional financial support to what is otherwise largely a community funding of sport in the state. In the case of the football commission and football generally, there are two unique aspects, one that is considered a self-funding sport, largely, in which case assistance from ourselves is more limited than we might do with other associations that do not have the revenue streams that football has. We also, of course, principally target areas of market failure and where without state assistance football would not develop to the same extent that it might otherwise do. Our relationship to that extent is different.

Also, of course, football is different in that it does not have an international component, where many of the sports that we support have an ultimate destiny for elite players going to international competitions, so the way in which we deal with what is a very broad based and uniquely Australian sport is different, but consistent in broad principle, with what we do with any other sport association.

[10.20 am]

The CHAIR: I just have two questions before I hand over to Mr Nalder. Is your relationship with the commission more hands-off than it is with other state sporting associations? Maybe answer that question first.

Mr ORD: I might refer the question to my executive director.

Ms ELLWOOD: No, we work with them closely on all aspects of their governance, of their game participation. We have a consultant that works with them directly. We signed all 88 sports with a consultant within our team, and then along with Steve and myself, we have regular ongoing conversations with the chief executive officer and the president, or chair, of the footy commission. So we have a strong relationship. Funding-wise, because they are a commercial sport, it is only a minimal amount of funding that we give them, but our support around other opportunities we work with them on is a lot stronger. In particular, for example, with their targets for the board and commission as far as women in leadership quotas, they have been a really strong advocate in helping us working with opportunities to ensure that happens. We work with them really closely, but we do that with all 88 sports.

The CHAIR: In regard to working with them closely, though, you said they are basically self-funding. Do you believe that the state does have some responsibility in regard to football in Western Australia?

Ms ELLWOOD: We would like to talk about sport managing sport. That is probably our fundamental principle: that we work with all our state sporting associations. We absolutely guide and work with them very closely across all our sports, though, in relation to their governance, but we do not necessarily investigate what they do every day. That is not our role as government. We always provide support where they require.

The CHAIR: Just this question before I hand over: under the funding agreement between the state and the commission—the roughly \$11 million that is handed over—under clause 6.2 of that agreement it talks about the Western Australian footy commission must spend the funding for an approved purpose, that being development of community level participation and also a talent development pathway. What do you consider those two things mean?

Mr ORD: I might refer that back to Ms Ellwood or Mr Humfrey, who manages the agreement specifically. Perhaps he can give you the mechanics.

Mr HUMFREY: In the broader sense, the aspect of talent development pathways is a reflection of the sport. I will use a football example but then I will use a sport that has an international pathways component. The intent of the pathway is not only for the athlete, but also for the officials, the coaches and administrators. We look at sport in a holistic sense. From a playing pathway aspect, it is a case of having a wider participation base to then form a membership base, and within that membership base there will be certain individuals that have a set of talents to be able to progress through a pathway to develop into a district level and then into a state representation team. For AFL, the pinnacle is representing, essentially, a state-based team in a national competition. That is as it relates to AFL, or Australian Rules football. Sorry, with the AFL, it is the brand of the Australian Football League versus Australian Rules football as the sport. That is as opposed to, say, basketball, where it has a similar structure. There is a club competition where you have a participation base, so people might not actually be members of a club, but there is a transition between being a participant to a member and then progressing through a membership to representing an association, into the SBL, which is roughly, we would view, a state league equivalent of WAFL in that it is that tier of event at a state level. Then from there, to represent the state at a national competition, and then, with basketball as an Olympic sport, there is an Australian selection to then represent into an international competition. Within the breadth of the 88 sports that we have relationships with, roughly 23 have an Olympic focus and then there is a large number that do not have an Olympic level. It is really separating what is a talent pathway in terms of an individual progressing to their aspiration, and then having the adequate support so that not only their physical skills are developed, but also making sure that their social, mental and basic ability to be part of a team is developed. That also presents a different challenge in talent pathways for individual sports, because they do not have a team basis to be able to support. Again, on a sport basis, it depends on whether it is a team or an individual from an athlete perspective.

Sport in itself is not anything without the support of the volunteers—administrators, coaches and officials. So from a talent pathway development, it is also about having a sport have its own processes to be able to identify coaches and officials that have talent and to be able to develop them to be able to coach and officiate at a corresponding level, whether that is at a local community level or to district, to state, to national, to international. That is as it relates to pathway development and achievement.

Then in terms of community participation, it is really looking at providing Western Australians with the opportunity to participate in the sport or activity of their choice. What that means is that some sports and some opportunities are not quite there. Obviously, if we are having winter-based sports, the ability to do downhill skiing and ice skating may be a little bit different based on our environment than, say, in other spaces, but it is looking to provide those opportunities. So we still work with ice sports, as an example, so that there is the opportunity for Western Australians to participate as they wish. What it comes to, though, is that a participation base is almost the base level of the iceberg. You will have a number of people that wish to come, either through a school environment or a community recreation centre, to try a sport, and then there is a commitment to be a member. What we look at in our community participation rate through the industry investment program is separating out what is a participation program and a participant versus a member. To me, the reason for that is that there is a roughly two-to-one or a three-to-one ratio, depending on the sport, between a participant and a member. Then, in terms of how that person progresses as a participant, it depends on whether they are comfortable or their aspiration is just to have a social experience as

a community level member. Again, if they have an aspiration and talent, then they may be identified through a pathway.

The CHAIR: I just have a couple of questions. Let us for now just focus on football. In regard to the talent development, you did mention that you need to look at other issues, rather than just their playing ability. What work have you done or you have done in consultation with the commission in regard to looking after footballers that aspire to the AFL and maybe do not make it? What are you, as a state government department, doing in regard to the welfare of the players, or the commission is doing in regard to the welfare of players? Secondly, in regard to community participation, what about the drop-off from school participation to club participation, as children move from junior sport to senior sport?

Mr ORD: I might just kick off, Chair, with that. The department maintains a strong policy development focus. We obviously have to apply that on a broader sport area, but we do assess trends nationally and internationally. Of course, we pick up on a lot of research which is undertaken on some of the matters you refer to, and we work with the sporting associations on a whole range of best-practice guidelines, I suppose, on how to take into account the trajectory of players into elite sports. We of course support the Western Australian Institute of Sport, which itself is a centre of excellence on a number of these matters and so on. We do not see ourselves and we do not have programs for direct intervention, but through a number of programs, which you would be aware of—True Sport and so on—we are able to involve ourselves on a whole-of-sport basis around how the wellbeing of an athlete, be they a footballer or others, should be developed through the set of clubs and organisations in which they work. We do not have an interventionist capacity in the department, but we do have policy development and a very active program of disseminating that policy by way of workshops. Our centre out at Leederville, where sport and rec is headquartered, is also a development centre with training rooms and all that. We do have a regular program of engaging with sport around those matters.

[10.30 am]

The CHAIR: What about regular engagement with the footy commission?

Mr ORD: The footy commission has got vastly more capacity than the department, of course, to run its own series of programs. We have certainly been very active in looking at trends in football in Western Australia. We are aware that historically there have been changes in the way school sports, for instance, have been organised, and how that has flowed on to the participation rates of people between, say, the ages of 18 and 24. There has been a decline, for instance, in the sort of Colts competitions that used to be associated with WAFL and so on.

The CHAIR: My question, I suppose, then is if there is a decline, granted that the commission is responsible overall for football in Western Australia, if you have identified that, is the department having any dialogue or any conversation with the commission in regard to the drop-off in participation rates, or what we do with players who do not make the AFL?

Mr ORD: Certainly, even at my level, I have been engaged with meetings, and the minister has been heavily engaged as well in discussions with senior people at the commission with interested parties. We get representations from individual sporting clubs. We get representations from parties that are closely associated with football, for instance, Clontarf Football Academy, which will be really interested in the trajectory of young Aboriginal players through the football system. We take on board all of that sort of more informal contact and try to get the dialogues moving around these things. There is a lot of competition for young people in sports, and there has been enormous growth, whether it is basketball, or the huge growth in—I know they call it football; I call it soccer. There is competition for young people, and they are making a lot more choices to do a diversity of

sports. So, what might have been the case back in the time I was at school when we had choices that were a bit more limited, it is understandable that Australian Rules Football is in a sense in competition as well for talent and is very active in looking at ways to develop pathways for that talent, hence the enormous growth of Auskick and other programs at the bottom to increase the base. Every sport is trying to increase community participation in their base to help go through.

But there are structural issues that are not solely the responsibility of AFL or the football commission that are tied up with the broader community issues around transition from school into more organised sporting activities. Certainly, as director general, I am very keen that we take on and address that, and we do see it as part of our responsibility to take up the cause, if you like.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I just want to come back a couple of steps, because we are getting into detail a little bit. We are talking specifically about football, and from my perspective, from a department, it is probably the same principle across all the sports. While this question comes from some of the comments that Kim made earlier and may be directed there, I will come through you as the director general initially. What are the objectives of the department when it comes to football? What are the outcomes that you would like to see and the outcomes that you are trying to achieve from a Western Australian perspective, and are they articulated somewhere?

Mr ORD: Thanks, member, for your questions, and I will certainly get Kim to address some of the broader departmental objectives. We are very much as a department focused on the wellbeing of the Western Australian community, and we see active participation in sport as delivering on that objective. Of course we have sub-objectives that people can reach their full potential, and therefore that we have a culture of development of excellence in the state regardless of your personal means, so people who have limited economic opportunity are still not denied the opportunity to reach their full potential as a player of a sport. It is a career. We are very mindful that we want to be a successful sporting state. I think that reflects well on our broader community aspirations as Western Australians. The sport and recreation sector is, of course, a really significant industry that feeds off all layers of the spectrum, from community participation for children in their early development right through to the success of the Eagles or Dockers. We clearly see our responsibility as planning for infrastructure as an agency, whether it is development, as I said, of policies that are often quite at the cutting edge worldwide in terms of player safety, around player mental health, around post-career options for players and so on. I think we have done policy work in every dimension of sport in recent years. I might ask Kim if she could give you a bit more specifics on our program objectives.

Ms ELLWOOD: I guess from the sport and recreation service area part of the department, our broad role, and what we are trying to achieve, is to ensure that there are safe and inclusive practices and opportunities for participation across all of Western Australia. We like to view our role as making sure there are participation opportunities for everyone. The football commission comes right in with that; that is what they do as well. It is about participation.

We can talk regional. We have nine regional offices, of which the football commission is based in those offices as well. We work very closely at making sure that there are programs and opportunities for regional-based athletes, and children. When I use the term “athlete”, it does not necessarily have to be from a high performance perspective. We can be talking about a child playing Auskick all the way through, and then ensuring that their parents are also involved, which is really important to ensure the broader vision of the game. We also want to talk about ensuring the football commission has got safe practices, working with children checks, which all of their coaches and officials need to make sure that they have got. That is a huge role with that many clubs, ensuring that everyone is providing a safe opportunity for that child that is participating in that sport.

We can move into inclusion. The football commission obviously does that really well and is very strong in that, based around Aboriginal inclusion to ensure that kids from disadvantaged backgrounds have the opportunity, and they implement our program through KidSport to ensure that the cost of football is not the issue for these children to participate in football, along to people from culturally and linguistically diverse programs to ensure they are able to participate in football. They even run some programs through the English language centres where kids with non-English speaking backgrounds have an option to learn what we call the national sport. They align very closely to the participation opportunities that we as a department look for. The football commission, though, provides us with their strategic plan, and we work with them along their outcomes and what they would like for their sport. So we will drive our key government priorities that we have, and they align to the sport, and they drive their own strategic initiatives and strategic priorities.

Mr D.C. NALDER: The reason why I asked that is that I picked up a sense of the strategic elements that then sit under the objectives, so you have got inclusion. The director general said a fair bit about the career paths and the Eagles and professional athletes and so forth, but it is nice to hear that there are other strategic elements that come in. You did mention mental health and this whole sense of belonging. What is your view on how well football is doing with regard to those broader elements, not just being AFL-centric, but the broader elements of a community sense of belonging, inclusion and those sorts of things?

Mr ORD: Again, I am happy to take the lead. Prior to coming into this department, I was in Aboriginal Affairs, so I actually had quite a significant engagement with football as an intervention strategy around education, so I was very close to Gerard Neesham in the early days of Clontarf academy and so on. I was absolutely committed to a concept that they brought up around how you could transform a child's life, particularly a child that might have an absence of a male role model in their life, and where a child needed a sense of an independent other who believed in them, and that sporting clubs can become not even just clubs, but just an environment of being with your mates and doing something. You can find an avenue for an independent person to build someone up, and there was enormous power if we harnessed this to transform their engagement with education, using football as a proxy—not just a proxy of it is good to come to school and kick a footy around, but a proxy around commitment and around the focus on self-regulation around actually just thinking of the mathematics of football and turning that into why do I need to learn things.

It is quite extraordinary what has come out of Western Australia—we should be immensely proud. We have become leaders in the world, not just in Australia, at actually using sport in this way. Of course, many other sporting codes followed, but there is no doubt that football in this state, and, uniquely, our WA football culture, has embraced the most disadvantaged in our community. It is very powerful to see the testimony of the stolen generation, around how many of those—your Pollys and so on—got a leg into life because they were actually welcomed by people in our community and in our football community. Those people that did that, who played alongside the Barry Cables and so on, are the leaders of the football commission today, and in football today, they are still around and they are still as passionate about social justice and development, so I actually do rate them extremely highly.

I also understand that sport is under an enormous amount of pressure to change in our society, and the structure of sport. Who would have imagined 20 years ago what cricket would look like today—now, internationally, the different forms of cricket. It was considered the most traditional sport you could almost find and it has been entirely up-ended ethnically and totally up-ended in terms of format of the game. Football—Aussie Rules is going through the same metamorphosis. So we are at a point where I am sure you will see the evolution of the WAFL into different forms and ways of engaging the community, in the same way as I think the broad engagement of kids—there has never

been more kids at a lower age being involved in organised sporting activity in this state and that augurs well. I think the football commission has been an innovator in that space and a great champion of women in sports, as I said earlier. So I am very comfortable with the general direction. I know they gave testimony earlier that no-one considers that any of the sporting associations are perfect, but they are certainly extremely well-intentioned and are, I think, really understanding the challenges before them.

[10.40 am]

Mr D.C. NALDER: Given you are supportive of where football is at and given that inclusion and safety are major strategic elements, and mental health is, what is the measurement that the department is doing to assess the number of footballers that are actually drafted, never play a game of league football, then left and lost to football altogether? What is the percentage that are lost to football altogether?

Mr ORD: I might refer to Mr Humfrey if he has got that sort of data available.

Mr HUMFREY: Thank you, Mr Ord. It is a very good question, but it is also, again, needing to look at the context of sport in WA and Australia generally. So whilst that is an issue specific to football, we are also dealing with WA Olympians that have had to do a similar experience in terms of the postponement of Tokyo 2020–21. Within that cohort of Western Australians, there are a number of athletes that have geared their whole life towards representing Australia at the Olympics —

Mr D.C. NALDER: And I agree with that, but we are here to talk about football for a specific reason, so I want to bring it back to football. Can you provide me the data as to the number of footballers that are drafted, that do not play an AFL game and then do not ever play football again?

Mr HUMFREY: Through the Chair, just to specify, are you talking those that have been drafted into an AFL squad —

Mr D.C. NALDER: To an AFL club —

Mr HUMFREY: Yes. That information —

Mr D.C. NALDER: —from Western Australia, part of the talent path program and development, a key strategic element, which you have acknowledged, of the department. So I would like to understand what happens to those footballers and how many of them are lost to the game and why they are lost to the game.

Mr HUMFREY: Through the Chair, that is a metric we do not capture—as we come back to the football commission, as an incorporated body, it is responsible for the management of sport.

Mr D.C. NALDER: But the department has just told me that a key objective is the inclusion and belonging—the key strategic elements—as well as the career path and professional development of these footballers. Surely for care and inclusion, you would want to understand that the football world is not only looking after these young men and young women that are coming into the system, but there are processes and programs in place to ensure that they still have a sense of belonging and feel that they are valued and can have an important role to play in our community post their football careers—that they are not absolutely forgotten.

Mr ORD: Member Nalder, I think I can answer by saying in our reporting requirements we have with our state sporting associations, we do ask them to prepare comprehensive reports on their activities, including, obviously, a range of the type of matters you allude to. We do not, as Mr Humfrey said, have asked to track numerical numbers. If that is a matter that the committee would recommend on later that we should, if you like, be able to collate that sort of information, then it is not within our means to do so as a requirement of the funding agreements, because we can put

conditions. We try to be reasonable for the sum that we give sporting associations, not to overburden them with, you know, requirements. But if there is considered a major risk in the area you allude to, then that would be a matter we would certainly take on board. Equally, we could seek the information you require by way of us providing supplementary information, in which case we would work with the commission.

Mr D.C. NALDER: The biggest concern I get from the community—and it is not just the AFL clubs; there are kids through the development programs that do not make it that far and then they feel like they do not belong, they are not good enough, and we have got to stop that mentality: “You’re not good enough.” We highlight the very successful outcomes, and it is great, but the people that do not make it are still fantastic people. They are still fantastic footballers or sportspeople or whatever—they have not made it, but they get lost. They are no longer wanted. They do not feel like they belong. So all of that inclusion and that belonging and all of that that we promote goes out the window on these career paths, and I would have thought that the department would have care and concern about that as far as any sport, not just football, as to the development of our young people.

The other thing that I get pushed is things like the drafting age being as young as it is, is not assisting that. We have kids that are turning 18 that are still finishing school that have been drafted thinking, “I’ve made it. I don’t need to worry about my school.” When, on average, the average player in the AFL lasts 30 games—one and a half seasons; 50 per cent do not ever play a game. I am worried about these aspects from the development of our young people for the state’s future and I think that the department would have the responsibility, or within its objectives, would be really concerned about that, and if you are not looking at that at this point, then yes, I would be concerned why you are not looking at it.

Mr ORD: I certainly believe we are concerned about those matters; it is why we support an ecosystem for sport. The WAFL competition, which has expanded in recent years, the strong amateur competitions—a lot of players who have either played elite or aspire to elite do, of course, continue to play.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Sorry, director general: is that anecdotal or do you have evidence of that?

Mr ORD: Yes, there is evidence of the teams coming in. You are asking whether we keep empirical evidence in the department on player trajectory and I have said we do not do that across the 88 sports. That is an enormous task to, if you like, try to monitor the pathways of individual athletes. We could ask for specific reporting from sports on some of those matters. At this stage, within the sums that we provide, which are generally administrative support or otherwise voluntary-run organisations, we have been limited in what we have wanted to ask them to do, which would be seen to be a burden beyond reason. But if this is a care-risk that you have identified, then we would certainly review it.

Mrs L.M. O’MALLEY: Further to my colleague’s questions along those lines, in your opening statement, director general, you talked about the fairly unique relationship that you have with the football commission based partly—maybe predominantly—on the commerciality aspects that they are a mostly self-funded body. So my questions are: Does that in any way limit your ability to seek information, particularly around things like reporting? Because it sounds that although the objectives certainly align—you have acknowledged that the general directions are aligned and that you are seeing signs that the football commission are definitely working in that direction—following on from Mr Nalder’s questions, how do we know that to be a fact? And is that relationship that you have through this commerciality aspect a limiting factor in achieving the answers to those questions?

[10.50 am]

Mr ORD: No, in fact, I think the stadium agreement has actually significantly enhanced our ability to have an informed relationship with the football commission. Previously, they had the 99-year lease at Subiaco and revenues they were generating there were not directed through a department through a funding agreement, of course, and the moneys they were spending on football was not accountable to the department or government at all. Through the stadium agreement, the way it has been structured, the appropriation for that comes through the department. As a consequence, we are the administrator of the agreement and there are reporting requirements under that agreement, which are quite comprehensive. We get an annual report on operations. We are, as I indicated earlier, only in the first cycle of that, so the ability to further gain information there is quite readily available. I think it has significantly improved our understanding of the overall ecology of football funding. I think it has enabled us to develop a good relationship with the football commission on reporting parameters. Given there is a very long term funding arrangement with regular review periods, the objectives of how the funding develops football in Western Australia can be further fine-tuned over those reporting time lines and review periods.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Further to that, having had the commission here and talking about participation as a major measure of how they are achieving their objectives, the flip side of that—I do not know if this is a word—the “de-participation”, so the dropout. Whilst they are measuring participation, they are currently not measuring, from what we can gather, the loss, like who is no longer participating.

The CHAIR: The retention rate.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: Thank you, Chair—retention rate. That is an important aspect to follow on from the player welfare. I understand that the task before yourselves as the department is very broad. You have got lots of different sports and associations that you are overseeing, if you like. The commission is focused on football, and what we are inquiring about is specifically around football, so the ability to seek greater accountability on the delivering of those programs is something that we are particularly focused on. From what I gather, you are saying that there is opportunity to engage in further levels of reporting or seeking those levels of reporting through the commission?

Mr ORD: Yes. I mean, certainly the outcome of inquiries such as this, I am sure for the football commission and ourselves would be educative, and certainly there is an opportunity in relationship to our regular interface over the annual reporting cycle. I think the next one is due in November to engage and see if the critical issue is around the pathways program and the wellbeing of players through that, then I am sure that is an area that we could engage with the commission to get some learnings from. They are uniquely positioned in the structure of their sport and the resource they have available to be a sport leader in the state, and I think they are a sport leader in the state. One thing I have noticed that I would like to see a bit more in the arts is how much sport does actually work as a team across the whole state. They are very generous at sharing their knowledge, whether that is around how athletes are developed, around sport marketing or community participation. There is a great generosity in doing that. Australian rules football could definitely be a leader in research around retention and the wellbeing of athletes who seek to aspire to elite performance and that transition from elite performance into the broader community and ensure we do not see a manifestation of the concerns that member Nalder did outline.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: To finish on that, the pathway is not just up, it is potentially back down again, so that interface between community —

Mr ORD: That investment is doubly so if they have had that experience because they are then able to bring that back into the community.

Mr D.C. NALDER: One of the things that I am aware of is the AFL has done a lot of work. I think most in the public understand the Kenny Hunter issues that happened back in the 80s. The AFL has done a lot to look after long-term footballers and their transition out, but there is a lot of others that have fallen by the wayside in that process that are not being looked at, and it is a concern. The broader community of football, you want those people involved and engaged in it and I think because of the age in which they are being pulled through and then discarded has something to do with that, but that is only my assumption. It concerns me that nobody is really exploring this issue.

Mr HUMFREY: Just to elaborate on the comments I was making earlier, with the AFL, as the Australian Football League, in terms of its obligations through the AFL Players Association, it has, as an employer, whether a player is listed in a squad and does not realise games or they win the Brownlow Medal, there is an obligation under their employment contract as the AFL as an employment entity. What I was trying to allude to as a point of difference between Australian rules football and other sports is that in other sports, there is a governance link between the state sport association and the national body. Australian rules football has a point of difference in that the AFL as an entertainment product is a business that has recognition of the WA Football Commission as a controlling body for football in the state. Therefore, the relationship between the football commission as the governing body of sport in the state to the AFL is not under a constitutional arrangement; it is under a contractual arrangement. I will need to qualify that. My understanding of the contractual arrangement is through the West Coast Eagles and the Fremantle Dockers as the AFL licence holders that the football commission is the owner of. Whilst the question that you have asked is a reasonable one, in terms of the contractual arrangements and the obligations between the AFL as an employer in its own right and how it has responsibility for its employees post—their contract as employment is a factor as well. In terms of what is the contractual obligation between the AFL and the football commission, it becomes less clear quickly. There is an issue in terms of once a player in the AFL, whether they are based in a WA team or South Australia or on the east coast, how they return to the community is then part back to the obligation of the volunteer clubs to make sure that as the players return to their community, how they are embraced by their club. That is a different relationship in answer to what is the football commission's obligation as the controlling body to then have a relationship through its associations to its districts to its clubs to connect to that player.

Mr D.C. NALDER: But you have a contractual obligation between the government and the WA Football Commission and there are obligations that have to operate between the state and the WA Football Commission, which as the responsible department, your obligation is to ensure that they are fulfilled.

Mr HUMFREY: Yes, sorry. I was just trying to provide context in terms of the answer to the question about the AFL. So, for a player that has been in the AFL and they return to WA, there are different aspects in terms of the ecosystem of football as to what is a direct responsibility to the commission to the WAFL to the association to the affiliate to the club.

Mr D.C. NALDER: But I still believe that as part of the career path, which a lot of those players have gone through, when we provide funding to the football and you have a contract with the WA Football Commission, a lot of these people do not actually make it—they are not drafted—as well as those who are drafted. It is not just the people that make it; there are these kids that have actually got their dreams and they get smashed on the way through. I am looking at a whole football issue here and wanting to understand the objectives of the department and what role you might have in thinking about this issue and, therefore, working with the sporting bodies to ensure that that is being considered because we want that better community outcome.

Mr ORD: I will ask Kim to say a word in a minute. I absolutely embrace, member, your philosophical point on this. I think there is no doubt that if we are a department for sport and recreation, we are very much a department for the people who are doing it and we take on a duty of care and wellbeing for how they do that within the limits of our statutory responsibilities.

[11.00 am]

But we always look to seek, through our funding relationships with all sporting bodies, for ongoing improvement. It is a natural setting to say that we do not simply go, “Well, you got funded last year, so here you go again.” We do really regular assessments of the public value in funding and how we can use public resources to in fact improve society, and the sort of issues that might be raised in any particular sport around player or athlete wellbeing would be ones that we would absolutely take on as priorities in any funding review. But I might ask Kim if she can give you a greater point as she heads up this area.

Ms ELLWOOD: I might just talk a bit more about retention. That is obviously an issue. I can talk with football in the back of my mind, with what they do, because they do this well, but it is the same as all the sports. So, the fundamental philosophy is it is much easier to retain a member than it is to get a new one, and that is done through all our clubs as well, which are all predominantly volunteer based. They want to retain their members where they are, and we are talking more at a participation level than the sub-elite, but for them to maintain the kids that keep playing, coming in each week, retain them so they progress through from Auskick to the next level, all the way through, that is what they want to do. They do not want to see kids dropping out.

We have invested, over numerous years, in different programs, but it is not going to solve it for everyone. I mean, we are talking huge numbers of people, but we do do targeted programs to ensure, where we have seen programs drop off or where we have seen athletes fall away, broadly, where we can get them back in, and that is done a lot in the regions. We have had some great programs at a regional level where programs have been done where these kids have gone off—you know, “youth at risk” we like to call them—have had issues, where they were playing in a sport before, and then how do we get them back in? How do you get them back into that club structure; how do you get them back into volunteering and being part of the club as you go through?

We have tracked some metrics across kids’ sport with an extensive evaluation so we could see which kids, over a five-year period from when they started, are still playing, which ones are still participating. We are not talking at the WAFL level; I am talking more at that younger level, the younger participation level with the kids, and why they are not coming back to play, and, you know, we have had those. So we have got some anecdotal evidence through our extensive evaluation, that we talked about why these people have not come back, or did they come back, or what were the reasons or the barriers for them not returning to sport. And then we are doing some work through WA justice, through the prisons, where the kids have entered the prison system, and we are doing quite a bit of work around ensuring these kids can then re-enter and get connected to sport. They tend to choose football. Football and basketball are the sports they tend to go to, so I know football is really involved in this, and the football commission, I know, go into the prisons at the moment. They go into Banksia Hill. They work with those kids. They try to get them so that when they enter back into society, they have got a group to go to, because we know, with some of the kids, if they do not have a safe home to go to, the only safe place is through their coach or through their club, and that is heavily reliant on volunteers. But I would say that is one of their strengths.

I cannot talk on behalf of the football commission with the collection of data once they have finished at the WAFL level where they drop off, but that will be the same as all the sports as far as athletes that go through to that level and then do not choose to participate anymore. But I can tell you from

a parent, as well, I have seen where they have now tried to get me back to volunteer in my child's sport, because I used to be an athlete; I no longer play: "Oh, you should join back in." So that is what sports want to do. But could they improve? Absolutely, as we probably all could improve in those areas.

The CHAIR: I believe it is the West Australian Football Commission that should be collecting this data, but, you know, there is an onus on the department to put that to them, I think, as the state department. If there is any sport in WA that has the capacity to do it, it is football. It is the sport that has the most money. Now, of course, during COVID, there is a reduction in money; I understand that. But we have two generally profitable AFL clubs. One is probably the richest in Australia, probably—the Eagles—or near enough. So there is capacity for the West Australian Football Commission, either through the state funding that is provided or through the money that is collected by the two AFL clubs, to ensure that data is collected.

Mr Nalder is right: unless you have the data, you cannot actually then know what you need to do, and that data should be collected, so, yes, maybe at the junior level, the Auskick, you might be doing some stuff. But I think a lot of the stuff that Mr Nalder is talking about is those teenage kids that do not make the AFL, or do make the AFL and never play, or only play for a couple of years, and for our society, it is very important that we ensure that they can still develop as human beings. So that is just a statement I make. If there is any sport in WA that can collect this data, it is definitely football and the West Australian Football Commission.

The other issue in regard to development and looking after these young people is the role of the West Australian Football League clubs. Now, would you see them as the community clubs, as the pinnacle of community football? Of course, you have the other affiliates, but would you see the West Australian Football League clubs as community clubs? I mean, the AFL clubs are not community clubs; they are elite businesses. So, do you see the West Australian Football League clubs as very integral to the development of community sport or community football in Western Australia?

Mr ORD: Yes, Mr Chair, undoubtedly. I mean, historically, they played, of course, as the elite in Western Australia up until the creation of the national competition. But their roots were always community. Of course, they have, as you know, long-established geographical connections to regional Western Australia and metro areas and so on, and those connections, I know, are still enormously powerful. That said, the rise of amateur leagues, community leagues, and how strong the regional competitions are, and, of course, the development of women's football is, you know, acting as a strong motivation for a significant amount of change in our community. I think the football commission recognises that, you know, WAFL as a competition will need to evolve to capture as many people of the community to come and watch the games and so on. It is really important for the development of the players themselves and the maintenance and the history of those teams and so on that we keep active participation in watching it. And there are some really exciting ideas coming forward about how to do that and how to get the best synergies between what is an enormously powerful football culture in the state, with the Dockers and Eagles at the top, but retaining the sense of community identity with the local WAFL clubs and then the connection of those WAFL clubs with the amateur leagues and so on below them.

As I said, the change has been really phenomenally quick for what are essentially volunteer organisations to adapt to, and I think that by getting the stadium, the stadium agreement, the resources now available, while we are at the early stage of this transformation, I am very optimistic that the resources are in place to really make the most out of what the WAFL can do, what the amateur leagues can do, what the regional competitions can do. And COVID has really shown the importance of maintaining this ecosystem in our society, absolutely. So, for us, I think it will be

around teasing out how far this transition has gone to the degree that the commission requires of us, and we wish to be active participants in how that change takes place.

The CHAIR: But the changes that the West Australian Football Commission has put in place have removed the role that the WAFL clubs had played as a geographical club, for a metropolitan district and also for regional. The West Australian Football Commission now has taken over talent development; they have these regional development councils now. The WAFL Colts competition, while you still have the South Fremantle Colts et cetera, is run under the direction of the Western Australian footie commission, so you have moved now from the WAFL clubs as being the geographical location or the local club for a metropolitan region and a country region to a lot of that role being taken over by the commission, so the WAFL now is just a competition, and they have territorial ownership of players, but that connection has been lost. Do you see that as a problem in the development of community-level sport?

Mr ORD: The commission is, of course, a creature of the WAFL, the other teams, and so on, so it is a self-organising group. So one assumes that where functions have been reallocated within the model, that is a decision in which the WAFL clubs have participated by way of their representation on the commission.

[11.10 am]

The CHAIR: As you very well know, Mr Ord, the commission has a lot of power because they control the purse strings. I think there was a lot of opposition to the introduction of an Eagles-based WAFL team, so I think to say that the WAFL clubs have equal power with the commission in deciding the future of football in WA is probably not actually part of reality.

Mr ORD: It is an ecosystem of governance that they participate in through their representation on the commission.

The CHAIR: Can I just go to that. In regard to that, the commission constitution is made up of ordinary members, which are the commissioners; then you have the nominee members, which are the two AFL clubs—Indian Pacific, which is the Eagles, and the Fremantle Football Club; and then the nine WAFL clubs. Then you have the affiliates, the affiliates not being members, which is amazing when you look at the affiliates—which include the Metro Football League, the Perth Football League, which are the amateurs et cetera; the West Australian Country Football League, the WA Women's Football League, the masters football league. They are not actually members of the WA Football Commission, but they do have a 10 per cent voting right for the commissioners. West Coast has 20 per cent voting right to appoint the commissioners. Fremantle Football Club is at 20 per cent. The commissioners have 20 per cent. Therefore, the two AFL clubs and the commissioners have a 60 per cent voting bloc for the appointment of commissioners. It is a bit hard to say that the WAFL clubs have an equal say and, even worse, that the affiliates have much say at all.

Mr ORD: I certainly was not alluding to they had an equal say. I was saying they were represented on the governance council of football and the constitution is—obviously, they are an independent organisation. It would be up to them to review whether it is appropriate representation and balance across all the different interests.

The CHAIR: They would, but they do receive state funding and, as you know, the state government has made comments in regard to representation on boards—for instance, gender diversity. What work is your department doing in improving gender diversity in regard to the West Australian Football Commission board, which is the commissioners?

Ms ELLWOOD: Steve is going to take this one, but we can answer that.

Mr HUMFREY: If I may speak on sport generally and then I will focus on football, for instance.

The CHAIR: Could we just maybe talk about football?

Mr HUMFREY: Okay. With all sports that receive industry investment program funding, of which the football commission is one, they have until 30 June 2022 to achieve their 50 per cent target. We have given all sports three years to achieve that. Depending on the level of funding, there is a consequence that if you do not achieve the 50 per cent, you will receive a reduction in funding. For the football commission and WACA, as the two self-sustaining sports, that represents a 50 per cent cut in the funding that we provide them. That is linked to the industry investment program. For smaller sports it is commensurate with the funding they get. They will go down to the next level, so it is a proportionate response. That is in terms of the women in leadership target specifically.

In terms of governance as a point of topic, within the 2019 year report that we received from the football commission, they are identifying that governance reform is one of their key operational projects. What we do as the department is that we work with our other jurisdictions—our colleagues in other states, as well as Sport Australia. Governance reform nationwide is an issue in that it needs to come back to the values, the roles and responsibilities, and then the structure to fall out of that. The football commission at this point is recognising a need to change. We need to work with them to help make those changes in the time frame—give them as much experience and our learnings as possible to contribute. The aspect that it comes back to is the separation of the funding requirements and the obligations under that versus the power and the representation of the members to effect change. The constitution as currently structured outlines their voting bloc, which raises the issue, as you raised, Mr Chair. What it then comes to is that there is a process to initiate a change to the constitution, but that involves stakeholder engagement. But before you do stakeholder engagement, it is a clear understanding of what are the reforms that you wish to have in place, which the starting point is the wider representation, I would imagine, of the affiliates and the WAFL clubs.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Thanks for that. The problem with that is that it is going to be hard to have a 60 per cent voting bloc yield any of its power as part of an organisational reform. That is the first problem. That is not a question; that is just a statement.

The question is this: if they lose 50 per cent of their funding, what steps will the department take to ensure that the remaining 50 per cent of funding is allocated consistent with the department's objectives?

Mr HUMFREY: The aspect then comes back to how we set the key results schedule. What we are talking about is the funding that we provide through the industry investment program, and that is linked to outcomes in terms of participation, regional reach, community programming, governance planning and the like. What we do as part of all our agreements is have objectives against all of those, including policies for low participation groups, women in leadership, as well as member protection—a range of child safeguarding. That is where the focus of the agreement would be should they not meet those targets.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: You mentioned the AFL Players Association collective agreement with the AFL before and the obligations that that imposes on the AFL as an employer. There is not something equivalent to that with the WAFL, is there?

Mr HUMFREY: That would be a matter we would need to take up with the commission as they would then have employment obligations as the relationship to the WAFL underneath that.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes. I am just thinking about player welfare, that Dean was talking about before. It seems to me that the Western Australian footy commission and the two AFL clubs are motivated to pursue talent development. The WAFL clubs are motivated to pursue community participation. I

am just trying to identify where the motivation would be to deal with player welfare—where the obligation is to deal with player welfare. It sounds to me like the AFL has an obligation, but that arises out of the contract of employment. Where is the commensurate obligation at lower levels—at the WAFL, the Colts and the amateurs.

Mr HUMFREY: That then comes back to what are the values of the club in terms of is there an employment condition, because in most instances, players play and may receive a small honorarium. That is whether that triggers that particular aspect. That is different between the WAFL as a predominantly metro-based competition versus what happens in regional WA, such as the wheatbelt versus great southern, where the clubs themselves, as their own entities, have different financial means, through cropping or other aspects, to pay players. It comes back to there is no one-size-fits-all answer for football because each competition is different. In breaking down the entirety of the football map, it is then going from a WAFL perspective—are there WAFL players sufficient to be deemed employment and then there is an employment agreement under that aspect? If it is not employment, it is then what is the obligation for member protection? There is an obligation in terms of you being a member of a sport and a club, whether that is a WAFL club or your community football club, as to have a reasonable expectation of a safe environment that is supportive and is looking after your collective health.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: The reason I put it as an emphasis is because Mr Ord used a good expression at the start of the presentation about how the department comes in in circumstances of market failure, which I think is a good role for governments generally. It seems that the footy commission and the AFL clubs are clearly motivated to deal with talent development, so you do not have to worry about investing time, effort or energy in that, because they are obviously motivated in that direction. The WAFL clubs are motivated in community participation. If you go to Leederville Oval to watch the Royals, they want to get as many people from Mt Lawley and East Perth and my neighbourhood coming along to those games as they can, so they are clearly motivated in community participation. But where it seems to me the market failure takes place and the obligation for the department to step in is in player welfare. There does not appear to me to be a market-based incentive for the footy commission or the AFL clubs to pay attention to player welfare of the guys who are coming up through the Colts and junior footy, who are close to being drafted but not quite making it, who need to get that support and encouragement along the way through.

Mr ORD: Thanks, member. I think the culture of the football commission is that they have sought to build capacity as an organisation to take a whole-of-football approach across the state, with the idea that they would develop the capabilities along that good industry practice, which is a requirement under the agreement. To address all the issues that the panel has raised with me today, I certainly know from discussions with people like Trevor Nisbett that the Eagles are not solely focused on a grand final and making lots of money; they are enormously interested in their players and the impact they have on the ecosystem of which they are at the pinnacle. I know they are always very conscious of what they could do as a member of the football commission to embed great values. I think we have all admired the stand the Eagles took around racism issues. I think they were the first club in Australia where you saw the white and black players stand up against it, with the Liam Ryan incident a few years ago.

[11.20 am]

The CHAIR: Excuse me, let us look at history. It does not really matter, but, Essendon, I think might have been a few decades before, but anyway, let us continue.

Mr ORD: There are a range of incidents but I think what you saw was a whole club banding together and discussing it with their members and with the community. The point I am making is that there

is a really informed debate going on within football and I think the commission is doing a good job in incubating that around the wellbeing of everyone in the football ecology, including people who come along and watch the game, to get the best community outcomes from what AFL or Australian rules football can offer the community. I do think that the commission is developing that capacity. As I said at my opening address, it is a huge change for an organisation to move from administering a sports facility where their focus was on commerciality around attracting rock concerts and so on, and a lot of that stuff into a new organisation where their future focus will be on many of the issues that you have alluded to, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of football from the grassroots up. I am confident they are well across the challenges and up for doing things about it. As I said, our engagement with them is contractual and contracts can have aspirational goals associated with them or other measures we might want to incorporate.

The CHAIR: The commission was set up in 1989, if I remember rightly, by Minister Graham Edwards—around 1989—so it has been in existence now for, how many years is that?

Mr ORD: Thirty years.

The CHAIR: Thirty years, so now it is developing, you say, this approach, to maybe welfare of players. You said this is a new system. It is a new commercial arrangement but the Western Australian Footy Commission was not involved in just looking after Subiaco Oval. They have had the responsibility for running football in WA since 1989, not just the stadium.

Mr ORD: I did not say it was solely their focus, I said it was a big part of what they had to do.

The CHAIR: That was so they could receive a revenue source. The Western Australian Footy Commission was not set up to be an events organiser; it was set up to run WA football, so to say that has been a massive change and now they are looking at development and welfare; in 30-odd years, I would have thought—we know the issues players have had with football at the elite level and they have gone off the rails. There are players that do not even make the elite level and it looks like there is a real disconnect here. Mr Millman raises maybe this market failure where if there is not a contractual relationship to look after the welfare, no-one worries about it. That is a real worry if that is the case. I do not believe it is necessarily saying it is your responsibility. I think it is your responsibility, but I am not asking you to do it. I think the Western Australian footy commission should be doing it but you as the government organisation may be needs to be more proactive in ensuring that the Western Australian footy commission does this welfare management, which it has the resources to do.

Mr D.C. NALDER: I just want to clarify. I am a big believer in the importance of sport in our communities and I love the game of footy and believe that they —

The CHAIR: You played for the greatest WAFL club.

Mr D.C. NALDER: We do not need to go there, the mighty red V. Anyway, I think football has done a lot of good things in our community. It was interesting the other day when the footy commission indicated that they believed the drafting age is too young. Does the department hold a view at all on that process and therefore the drafting age of Western Australians into the AFL system?

Mr ORD: My colleague is an elite athlete herself; I might ask her to respond to that.

Ms ELLWOOD: I think I cannot talk specifically on the drafting age in football, because that is their ability to comment, but I can talk generally thought that we have these conversations across junior sport and what age is too much, and gymnastics is the classic example about the age that you need to recruit to become an elite gymnast. It is a common thing that has crossed every sport. The luxury of football is that you might get drafted at an early age but you can stay within Australia. You may get drafted to an AFL club but have to go interstate but your ability of your parents and your support

network is very easy. With other sports they are required, as soon as they get drafted or to move into it, they are moving overseas to train or to pursue that pathway so player welfare at that level is definitely considered across every sport. The WA Institute of Sport work on that a lot and that is one of the key principles. I cannot talk—I do not work for the football commission but I know that is something they talk about a lot and how we make sure we support these young athletes so they are not put in a situation. Also when they come out the other end they know how to financially plan for themselves because they go in thinking they are going to be an athlete, as you mentioned before and they come out and they have no education; they have no career; they have no university degree to continue on afterwards. It is something they do consider and all sports talk about regularly.

Mr D.C. NALDER: My question is not based on it being better for football or the football development of an individual, but more that wellbeing of an individual. There is a difference with football to others because it is a professional sport. If you get drafted, you have the propensity to develop an income stream that becomes a professional and so forth.

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: If I could just jump in on the player welfare thing. I think we recognise that player welfare responsibility rests with everyone at every level, whether you are the coach. My daughter was in the national pathway for gymnastics for a time. She dropped out at the ripe old age of 11 because it was 15 to 18 hours a week of training. It was difficult. She now plays football. I am very much part of the community sport. I understand some of the pathway. Absolutely we all recognise that player welfare rests with everyone, with all of us. I guess the question is: who is responsible for ensuring that the player welfare management is being undertaken appropriately? I think that comes back to —

Mr D.C. NALDER: Can I add to that? Given that the WA Football Commission has expressed to us that they believe it is too young, is there a role that the department can play, or the state can play, in working with the football commission to actually work with the broader AFL on that issue? If they believe it is not in player interest or not in football interest or not in Western Australia's interest, should there be a role that the department plays with the WA Football Commission in lobbying the AFL around that issue.

Mr ORD: Thanks for the question, member. As I indicated earlier, the department keeps an active research program around all sorts of issues in our community affecting sport and recreation. This area of discourse we have had this morning is certainly an area that the department would have the capacity to engage with—football, if it was specific to football—and get the actual facts out. I think it is researchable as an issue and I think there are metrics that could be applied to it that would determine whether there are significant problems through appropriate research methodologies. We have got outstanding researchers in Western Australia and our universities are more than capable of doing something national lead nothing this space, so we do have the capacity. Within my Department, of course, we also have the combat sports commission. When Parliament in the past identified significant welfare risk around combat sports, we have a regulatory agency component of the department that does have powers and legislation and, of course, is engaged in those sports in a regulatory role, not a funding role as we are here. I am not suggesting a similar body for football, but certainly the kind of research you might do into the wellbeing of emerging athletes in the transition phases if you have identified that could later lead to information that we have provided through the minister to Parliament more generally on what the regulatory or funding mechanisms should be to ensure the best outcomes from not only our investment, but in broad community interests going forward. We certainly have the capacity to engage in the way you described.

[11.30 am]

Mr D.C. NALDER: A lot of sportspeople that raise and discuss these types of issues with me often refer to the NBA and the college system versus the professional system. We talked about this broader community aspect of volunteers and ongoing, and we all have that concern because we need those structures to develop our children and so forth. Is there a potential as part of that research to determine whether you get greater player retention because they have had a system where they may belong in development clubs—being the WAFL or the SANFL or VFL and so forth—such that if they come out the other end, they still belong? At the moment there is a question about where they belong on the way through the system and then get lost out of it. So, I am just encouraging that aspect from a thinking perspective if you believe there is a role that you could play alongside the commission on this issue.

Mr ORD: Of course, as I said, we do support the WA Institute of Sport and that is a really significant Western Australian entity that has actually, again, world-leading capabilities in understanding the development of elite athletes. From all that, WAIS is not directly linked to Australian Rules Football. The learnings from their engagement and research on all measures of the development of athletes would be a useful place for us to go in partnering. I certainly believe we have got quite a lot of capacity in the state to do informed research in the areas you have raised with us today.

The CHAIR: Could I just change tack for a minute. In regards to monitoring and scrutiny and oversight of the commission, under 7.3 of the state funding agreement it has an obligation for the commission to provide the scope of annual report in respect of each funding year on or before 28 February.

In respect to that, they do not seem to provide details in regards to specified employment expenses. They have this catch-all payment to suppliers and employees of \$30 million. That is not broken down, from my understanding, into various components. The fact that they are receive over \$30 million per annum in overall revenue from sponsorship—Eagles, Dockers, state funding et cetera; and a third of that is revenue from the state—do you think that is sufficient detail for you to have proper oversight as a state department?

Mr ORD: I might refer to Mr Humfrey in terms of giving you an insight, as the administrator of the reporting; what he is able to access. I am also aware of course that in the agreement we do have the power to audit. That is of course a reserve power if we have a concern around how aggregated areas expenses might raise matters for further investigation.

Mr HUMFREY: What we are working through at the moment is the structure of the financial years under the funding agreement to 31 October, and then the new agreement takes effect as of 1 November. The reporting requirements of the budget ends; the operational plans are due on 15 September. That is one matter that we are exploring with the Football Commission to make sure that we have that level of breakdown and information relating to some of those matters. That is something that the Football Commission identified in its response where there needs to be a further breakdown in terms of the cross-subsidy between the administration, the corporate and the general marketing costs. Again, it is separating out; whilst they have grouped them together, how much of that is apportioned to the WAFL, how much of that is apportioned to general expenses and how much of that is apportioned to affiliates and community football?

The CHAIR: So you are in consultation with the commission now in what detail you are requiring?

Mr HUMFREY: Yes. The way that the funding agreement is scheduled is that there are two reporting aspects: one is the requirement in terms of their submission for 15 September; and then the report required for 28 February coming. The challenge for the February report, which will be a focus, is to look at what is the impact of their plan aspects that they indicated in the November 2019 report as to the realisation because, with the impacts of COVID, things that they had planned may not be achieved. We need to have a degree of reasonableness to understand the explanations that they

may have targeted to do these projects or these initiatives. That may have a time delay. It is a live process at the moment.

The CHAIR: This is because of COVID, right? If we did not have COVID, under normal function or normal arrangements, are you satisfied that you have sufficient oversight and ability to comment on proposed expenditure of the West Australian Football Commission?

Mr HUMFREY: As the way the agreement is currently structured, we receive the information and we have the ability through our relationship with the Football Commission under other funding agreements to be able to get the explanation and to be able to link that to key result schedules.

The CHAIR: I think we might have come to the end. Thank you for the evidence presented today before the committee. We will forward a copy of this hearing to you for corrections of transcription errors. Please make these corrections and return the transcript within 10 working days of receipt. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be introduced via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Once again, thanks very much for coming in today.

Hearing concluded at 11.35 am
