

AFL GRAND FINAL — OPTUS STADIUM

551. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to Western Australia's efforts in keeping the state safe and free of COVID-19, which has led to Perth being chosen to host an historic AFL grand final at Optus Stadium. Can the minister advise the house how this event was secured and outline what arrangements are in place with regard to the attendance of sponsors?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

Thank you very much to the member for Mount Lawley. He is the most appropriate person in the chamber to be asking this question, as he is the nephew of a legend of the AFL, Kevin Murray, who is also a Brownlow medallist. Several members interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What a great place to be living in—Western Australia! Not only are we about to hold the grand final for 2021, but we are also the state that is committed to electoral reform and making our upper house a democratic chamber. What a great place to be living in—a very safe and strong place with a thriving economy. Firstly, though, my thoughts do go with the millions of people on the east coast who are locked down during this period and therefore were not considered able to hold the AFL grand final. We are holding the AFL grand final because the McGowan government has kept Western Australia safe and has also kept the economy strong for the last 20 months, when members opposite would have wrecked it by allowing Clive Palmer into the state.

The member asked me whether we actually paid, or how we secured the grand final. I hope that the member for Vasse is listening, because I think she might have gone on radio and maybe said a few things that she should not have said.

Ms L. Mettam: You should have answered the question!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Member for Vasse, please listen. There has been a lot of commentary in sections of the media and by some members opposite, including your good self, regarding the AFL grand final and how we obtained the rights to hold the grand final. Can I make it very clear to the member for Vasse that the state government has not paid the AFL for the hosting rights for the 2021 grand final. We have not paid for the hosting rights. We are holding it in Western Australia because we are a safe state to hold it in. That is why we are holding it in Western Australia.

The state contributed to the cost of the match-day entertainment, but on the basis that Western Australian artists were given preference. The AFL also received some concessions for the use of Optus Stadium, which is very normal in an AFL season, as the member would very well know.

There has also been some criticism by members of the opposition that we have allowed AFL players into Western Australia while Western Australians in New South Wales have not been able to come back to WA since the hard border was reimposed due to the disgraceful efforts of the New South Wales Premier in ensuring that New South Wales was kept safe. I assure the member for Vasse and others that all decisions about entry to Western Australia are taken by the Chief Health Officer and the WA Police Force. None of the AFL finals teams that have played in Western Australia, including the two grand finalists, has been in New South Wales since mid-June or in Victoria in the last three weeks.

The member for Vasse may have also talked about corporate sponsorship. In terms of corporate sponsors from interstate attending the grand final, the AFL and the WA police agreed that essential stakeholders, which comprise major sponsors and commercial partners, would not be able to travel to WA for the grand final. None of those corporate sponsors from over east is coming to WA for the grand final.

The AFL only today said —

“The interest for the 2021 Toyota AFL Grand Final in Perth has been unprecedented,” ...

“The fans in WA have wholeheartedly welcomed the AFL and welcomed the event.

“Today's on-sale and record breaking number of fans wanting to purchase tickets demonstrates the WA community's excitement for the first ever grand final in the state.”

I am sure that the member for Vasse and others are applauding that we are having this grand final in Western Australia on the weekend after this weekend. It is only because of the state of our health that we are holding it in Western Australia. I urge those people who were unable to purchase tickets today—I think the general admission tickets were sold in seven minutes—to go to the pubs and cafes and watch it on the screens or go to the local store, buy their barbecue stocks and have a great barbecue and enjoy a great weekend. It is so good to live in Western Australia under the McGowan government.