

SPORT AUSTRALIA

720. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to reports that Cycling Australia is putting pressure on some of the state's cycling bodies, such as WestCycle and BMX Sports WA, to hand over their governance and finances to the national body as part of Sport Australia's push for the "one management" model. Can the minister advise the house whether the government is supporting the proposal to centralise decision-making to the eastern states; and, if not, why not?

Mr M.P. MURRAY replied:

I thank the member for this very important question on the issue of sport. It is not cycling alone: water polo and a few others have been under extreme pressure from Sport Australia to come under the one model that would see all decision-making moved from Western Australia to the east coast. Two staff members who we hosted in our offices in West Perth have already moved to the east coast, despite having free rent and saying that they would not do it. They have now been moved to the east coast. It is very important, but, further, it is about the bullying tactics. This is not about consultation, it is about bullying. I quote from Cycling Australia's brief about what it is doing. The question was asked —

What are the options for a State/Territory body if it does not wish to be part of NewCo?

The answer is —

As a result, its members would not be eligible to compete in events organised by NewCo, —

Which would be the new company —

including national championships.

It is an absolute disgrace for any sporting body to threaten that people would not be able to compete in national championships, which would mean going on to the Commonwealth Games, the Olympic Games, or even state sporting events. With the help of WA state sporting associations that are right behind us, as a government we are taking a stand and taking it up to Sport Australia. But unfortunately, we are not getting any help from the federal Minister for Sport; none whatsoever. Three letters are unanswered about this issue. There will be a meeting very shortly on the east coast; we are going over there. I also have the support from New South Wales, where most of these bodies would end up being. New South Wales is also supporting WA's position about making sure that all Western Australians and Western Australian sports get a fair go and a say. The last thing I want to see is a nationalised body located on the east coast in which we would have only a minor say about what goes on. The rub comes, as in the cycling industry \$600 000 out of the \$800 000 would go to the east coast. Is that fair for Western Australia? No. We will make a stand and take the other states with us to make sure that the federal government comes out and pulls Sport Australia into gear.