

SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Grievance

MR S.N. AUBREY (Scarborough) [10.05 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Hon David Templeman, regarding funding for sport and recreation facilities in Western Australia. This follows on from a grievance I raised in 2021 regarding the increasing density of my community and the need to increase lighting at local clubs to increase their ability to cater for the demands of a larger population. I am grateful for the delivery of the club night lights program two years ago, which provided \$375 000 for Wembley Downs Soccer Club at Butlers Reserve in Scarborough. It is expected that the lighting will be delivered by next year, and that will allow the club to utilise all its grounds, as opposed to only two, to train and play at night. The greater ground capacity will also allow the club to bring new members on board, including the growing women's teams. This is one of many clubs that have been or will be delivered lighting upgrades as a result of Labor Party election commitments or community sporting and recreation facilities funding, but there are many more clubs to go. As a local member, this is a key priority of mine because I believe it is one of the most effective ways to strengthen and grow my local clubs.

I personally know the power of our sporting clubs; I have been a member of many sporting clubs in my life, starting with soccer when I was six and then quickly realising my mistake and moving to footy, aged seven, at North Mandurah Magpies. I then spent years playing basketball at the Mandurah Aquatic Centre—home of the mighty Magics—and then played some pretty woeful cricket in high school until I became more career-driven and stepped away from sport for several years; that was, until I joined Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club, and it changed my life. Never before had I felt the sense of belonging and fulfilment I felt when I trained to become a surf lifesaver at Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club. Attaining my bronze medallion will always be one of my proudest achievements in life.

The members of this club are like my second family. The power of these clubs to strengthen our lives, the lives of members and communities, cannot be overstated—but do not take my word for it. A social return on investment study commissioned last year by SportWest revealed that WA-organised sport and its 700 000 participants returned \$7.10¢ in economic and social benefit for every dollar of cost each year, totalling a gross benefit of \$10.3 billion per annum for the WA economy. The gross benefit can be broken down into: economic and employment benefits, \$4.85 billion; physical and mental health benefits, \$3.02 billion; personal wellbeing and broader social benefits, \$2.39 billion; and the mental health benefits delivered by sport alone are \$1.8 billion per year.

This report tells me and other members of community sport and recreation clubs something that the 700 000 participants in WA already know—that is, that our clubs are not just sporting clubs; they are our homes away from home. They are villages that work together to raise our children in a healthy and safe environment. They are communities that shape the lives of their members. Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club's motto is "Developing Lives, Saving Lives". These clubs are institutions with long and proud histories, with older members who support and guide the younger members in life and in sport. They are an extended family, and, as a family, they support each other in the best of times and the worst of times.

I have seen the benefits our investment brings to local clubs; North Beach Football Club was one of the first to receive an election commitment of \$200 000 to upgrade the lighting at the Charles Riley Memorial Reserve, where I recently took the minister. The lights now allow them to play and train at night, and this greater access has allowed them to welcome more members to the club. It also allows them to run a new Friday night round that brings other clubs from the area to play friendly matches, which enhances cohesion across our community, increases revenue for the club across the bar, and strengthens the North Beach Football Club, which in turn strengthens our entire community.

I have spoken in this Parliament about the mental health challenges I have personally experienced and overcome in life, and a big part of my support network is the community I have around me at Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club and, more recently, Ocean Heroes Australia. These are people who share my values and interests in physical activity, the ocean and making a difference.

The SportWest report proves that sport and recreation has a marked impact on the social, mental and physical wellbeing of our community, but the budgets for health and mental health significantly outstrip the budget for sport and recreation in Western Australia. Time and again we see in the media positive stories about sport and recreation being used for diversionary programs for youth crime and we see sport and recreation lauded as a way to enhance the lives of those in our vulnerable communities, such as disability, culturally and linguistically diverse, women, LGBTQIA+ and more.

I fully understand the government's need to prioritise budget expenditure where it is needed most, but I would like to make a point that relates to surf lifesaving: if we have to rescue someone swimming between the flags on our patrolled beach, to an extent we have failed. We have failed to recognise a dangerous situation and intervene before

the person's life was put at risk. The effort to intervene can be as simple as asking people to move out of a rip or a surfer to move away from the flags or telling someone to put their hands in front of them when they are bodysurfing to protect their head and neck from an impact. Although we are trained for the worst, and do our best when it happens, the chances of successfully reviving a patient after drowning is minimal, so we do our utmost to ensure that it does not get to that stage. Our simple early actions can prevent or limit dramatic outcomes.

Our early investment in sport and recreation can intervene in and reduce issues in other aspects of our society. Sport and recreation has proven time and again to have a marked effect on supporting our community by diverting youth antisocial behaviour and channelling it into sport; by providing support networks for those who are doing it the toughest in our society; and by providing physical, mental and social outcomes that boost the health of all Western Australians. I would argue that by investing greater amounts in sport and recreation at a grassroots level, we can proactively deliver benefits and savings across a range of areas, including crime, health, mental health, corrective services and much more.

It is also a great opportunity to diversify our economy further into the future. Sport and recreation supports our local tourism, hospitality, retail, and arts and culture industries. We recently held the Aussies, or the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, in Scarborough, with 8 500 interstate visitors to our community. We ensured that when they left Scarborough, they did not leave wanting; 8 500 surf lifesavers from every club in every corner of this nation has gone back to their home states and clubs knowing that Scarborough and Western Australia hosted the best Aussies the nation has ever seen. We are now looking at the international ocean paddling championships in November, which is supported by the department of sport and recreation with a \$50 000 event grant. It will bring 800 interstate and international visitors to Scarborough and Fremantle. We have been approached to replicate the activation that was seen at the Aussies, and the Scarborough community is excited to host the championships, as well as future Aussies and potentially Lifesaving World Championships.

These kinds of events do wonders for our tourism industry. They share the beauty of Western Australia and Scarborough and the talent of our homegrown athletes and artists, and they showcase our vibrant hospitality industry. I thank the minister for taking my grievance today. Can he please explain how the Cook Labor government is supporting the growth of sport and recreation in Western Australia?

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [10.12 am]: I am pleased to respond to this grievance. I congratulate the member for Scarborough. I am really proud that he is in this Parliament, because he speaks with great passion about the community that he represents and lives in and the tremendous network of community organisations, including, of course, the sporting organisations that he has outlined in his grievance.

I want to make a point about his last comment about the Aussies that were held at Scarborough. I know that he strongly advocated for and was actively involved in that event. Can I say how excited I am about working with the Minister for Tourism on events like that. It is not just about getting great numbers of people from interstate and overseas to these events; it is about how the community celebrates and is activated during those times. The Minister for Tourism is particularly focused on making sure that that happens with all the events we attract to the state. It is a really important factor. I think the activation that was initiated at the Aussies in particular is a great model of how that can continue. The feedback has been tremendous.

I want to thank the member for a number of reasons. He is a classic example of a member who is embedded in their community. He is a volunteer. I know that he continues to be a volunteer in surf lifesaving, and he spoke passionately about what being associated with the surf lifesaving club in Scarborough means to him. He is right about that. Clubs are a great way of embracing great and strong values, but they are also about connectedness—being part of something that is special, important and worthwhile. So the member's advocacy for that is welcomed. The other reason is the tremendous work he does with Ocean Heroes. It is a remarkable organisation, and I know it is one that he is particularly passionate about. It is a great organisation that seeks to make sure that all of us have a chance to love the ocean and what it offers in terms of health and wellbeing.

The member did a grievance a little while back and I can attest that his grievance helped to make sure that the Treasurer understood the importance of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. That is why we enhanced the CSRFF in the last budget, with an additional \$7.5 million a year. It is now a \$20 million program. It is a very contested program, as the member knows, because he highlighted a couple of the beneficiaries in his electorate. I visited the North Beach Bowls Club with him earlier this year and had a great time. A tremendous group of people run that club and I know that the member works closely with them. Of course, they will receive money for a bowling green. The member also mentioned the Club Night Lights program and the impact that has had on the Wembley Downs Soccer Club. One of the reasons that the Club Night Lights program is so important is that it extends the opportunities of the playing fields. It obviously means that more people can utilise the facilities, fixtures can be extended into the early evening and training can operate throughout the week. The member's community has been a beneficiary of that program.

With the CSRFF uplift, it is now \$20 million a year. We have also streamlined the process. I want to make sure that this is understood by all members in this place, because the streamlining of the program means that projects valued at up to \$500 000 are now a 50–50 proposition between the state and local government. Clubs are not required to provide their one-third as was normally the case with the CSRFF, but that is still the case for projects valued at over \$500 000. That is really important, because quite often the CSRFF asks are under \$500 000. Clubs want to make sure that it is affordable for members and they do not always have the financial resources to contribute their one-third. We have streamlined that and will continue to listen to clubs about how we can keep on supporting them.

A critical part of the CSRFF and the Club Night Lights program is ensuring that we invest in upgrades, and that is why we have also focused on ensuring that we encourage girls and young women to participate in sport. We are seeing huge participation uplifts in many codes. The member will be aware that we have purposely focused on upgrades to change rooms and female facilities, because quite often some of these clubs have no facilities for their burgeoning girls' and young women's soccer or football teams. That is something that we are very much focused on.

The forward planning round for the CSRFF and the Club Night Lights program are open for applications now. I urge all members to talk to their local governments and their clubs about their aspirations for their sporting facilities, because we want well-planned and well-considered projects to come forward as part of the CSRFF and the Club Night Lights program. We want to see more children and young people actively involved in clubs and sport because of all the reasons that the member highlighted and the huge benefits it has to the community.

I thank the member for his grievance and for his passion for Scarborough. He is a magnificent local member. I thank him for his support of all those clubs in his constituency. I know that they have a great advocate in him fighting for facilities for them into the future.