

SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT TRUST BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from 20 March.

MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.33 pm]: I rise today to make a contribution to the debate on the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill, and I do so with great excitement because there is a lot going on in this space at the moment. Before I get into that, I want to go through what the bill is about and what it is for. This bill will enshrine the management of significant sports and entertainment venues in Western Australia. This essential legislation will help us to realise the vision of Western Australia becoming the premium events destination in the South-East Asia region. Unless someone has been living under a rock in the last couple of years, they will have noticed that there has been a significant increase in the number of blockbuster events in Western Australia. Those exciting events ranged across a broad spectrum of entertainment and sport, and I will get into what some of them were a little later. This bill will essentially facilitate our ongoing efforts in striving for this vision to become a reality and be embedded in the Western Australian community and economy.

The original act was passed in 1986 to provide a governance and oversight structure for major state-owned sporting facilities. In that time, VenuesWest has experienced significant growth in the number and size of venues that it looks after. It currently looks after 14 venues, including the iconic Optus Stadium, RAC Arena and HBF Park—three venues that have featured very heavily in blockbuster events over the last few years. Unfortunately, this legislation has not really been reviewed in the last 37 years, so this is a very timely refresh that will look towards the future and at what can be achieved when our governing bodies are allowed to undertake the things they need to do to make events successful.

Part of the legislation will provide the ability for venues to have commercial activities. Anyone who has ever been to an event will know that people do not go there just for the game—they go for the experience and the atmosphere. This bill is also about the way that events not only wrap around the people who attend them but also permeate the city and the suburbs for those who cannot attend but who want to be involved in the atmosphere. This happens in other cities when there are big grand finals. The Australian Open is one example when thousands of people congregate outside the venue and watch the grand final on the big screens. This is a way for us to facilitate taking events outside specific venues and allowing the whole community to get involved.

Sporting and entertainment infrastructure is very expensive. We have invested millions of dollars of capital into this infrastructure and this bill will allow us to activate around this significant investment. It will also allow us to provide subsidies to high-performance sport. Why is it important for the government to facilitate high-performance sport? Put simply, you cannot be what you cannot see. I know that for many groups, particularly women and people from minority backgrounds, only one or two people have achieved success in their particular sport or industry over the years. Those people could not see it, but they went for it anyway. What they have done is to provide an opportunity for young people to see them and strive for what they achieved.

Essentially, the bill will enable the trust to include or dispose of venues in its portfolio. That ability will be quite important in the rapidly changing world that we live in today. It will enable commercial activities and provide an ability to operate outside current venues and for other places or venues to be nominated as venues. This is particularly important because we want to be a nimble government and community that can capitalise on events that are coming our way and increase the capacity for people to attend those events. We saw that particularly with the FIFA Women's World Cup games and qualifying matches, with the Matildas games moved from HBF Park to Optus Stadium.

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I was very grateful for that because I was not able to get a ticket to HBF Park, and although I was sitting at the third row from the back at Optus Stadium, it was one of the most entertaining and exciting sporting events that I have ever been to, particularly for my eight-year-old son who is obsessed with football—or “soccer” for those who do not understand football. Being able to move that one game from HBF Park, which is a fabulous facility but with restricted seating capacity, to Optus Stadium, meant that many more families were able to attend the event and see these heroes, who they have only ever seen on television, in real life, as Bluey would say. The Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2024 will make it easier for the trust to do that and it will improve governance practices.

The next thing is really important. The bill will help to improve or regulate patron behaviour. When families take their kids to sporting games or entertainment venues, they do not want to subject their kids to inappropriate behaviour by other patrons. Having the capacity to exclude ill-behaved people from venues is really important to ensure that not only families, but anyone who wants to enjoy themselves can do so in a safe environment.

The bill will create contemporary legislation that is futureproofed. Having grown up in Western Australia, I could never have envisioned an Optus Stadium. It was not something that we ever thought would happen. It was a real juxtaposition for me when I became a member of Parliament and part of the government that opened Optus Stadium. The highlight of my entertainment career as a teenager was finally getting to go to the Perth Entertainment Centre before it was taken down. My very first concert was at the Perth Concert Hall. These places have really restricted capacity. I went to see Southern Sons, for those keeping note, and it was a fabulous concert.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Don't forget the Burswood Dome.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: The Burswood Dome, yes. My daughter's first concert was a Taylor Swift concert at Subiaco Oval. Admittedly, that has now gone and we have Optus Stadium, but her experience was far superior to the experience that I had as a teenager going to these events—not that I did not absolutely love my Southern Sons concert. Her ability to see what this young woman could achieve by packing out Subiaco Oval and then turning around and seeing—actually it might have been held at RAC Arena, now that I think about it. Anyway, she went to see Taylor Swift and backed it up with a Katy Perry concert. In the year since, she has also seen people like Pink perform. I cannot overstate how important it is for young people to see their heroes in real life. This bill will provide that capacity to change, adapt and move forward as society changes, adapts and moves forward.

Some of the major events that we have held are not all to my taste, but I can absolutely see the value in holding them. Events contribute to the local economy; that is a given. They create jobs, they drive dollars—not just Western Australian dollars but also interstate and overseas dollars—into the Western Australian economy and they also increase the state's vibrancy. The recent blockbuster events that have been held at live venues in 2023 and 2024 include the World Wrestling Entertainment Elimination Chamber. This event recorded the highest ever attendance at an Elimination Chamber event with 52 590 people in attendance. This is one of the events that is not to my taste, but I had a very excited electorate officer who managed to secure tickets to attend. He said it was electric. The venue, the atmosphere and the entertainment—the whole thing—was an experience that he will never forget. It was the most watched Elimination Chamber event in WWE history with over one billion viewers all looking at little old Perth. That can only be good for us. Roughly 16 500 out-of-state ticket holders, talent media and staff travelled to Perth for the event. When that is stepped out, it translates to spending on accommodation, food, presents for loved ones, souvenirs, visits to our attractions including potentially going to Rottneest to look at the quokkas or heading to Caversham to look at some of the animals there, and going on the zip-line off Matagarup Bridge. That is the multiplier effect when people come into our state. The WWE press conference the day before had 5 000 fans attend. I am sure that any politician would love to have 5 000 people at their press conference, but, no, it was WWE that had 5 000 people at its press conference—maybe a minister would not like that because too many questions would be asked if there were 5 000 people at a press conference. The Undertaker show the night before was sold out with 2000 people in attendance. I assume that the Undertaker is one of the characters that attends the Elimination Chamber event, so that is fabulous. We saw the lines of people and the empty shelves of the merchandise store. The Camfield also had the best ever attendance that night, beating the AFL grand final attendance. Firstly, I want to take my hat off to the Treasurer because this was a visionary approach to getting something really unique and different into Western Australia. It is clearly had an impact.

I turn to the Matildas Olympic qualifying matches. Almost 100 000 people turned out to watch them play across three Olympic qualifying matches. That is a record crowd for a women's sporting event in WA. The Matildas match against the Philippines had 59 155 people attend, of which we were four.

Members may think I have skipped over the FIFA Women's World Cup. I absolutely have not. I have left, arguably, one of the best events to last because I was able to extract some real, direct figures on its impact on Western Australia. We all saw the FIFA Women's World Cup, we all got caught up in Matildas fever and we all watched the games that were not played in Western Australia on television. We were able to attend the games played in Western Australia. I was lucky enough to attend the Ireland versus Canada game. Unfortunately, the Irish girls did not come away with a win. I note that that night was the first time ever that I am aware of that Parliament House allowed a television to be played in the dining room during a sitting week. It was on for the England versus Matildas game. We were all sitting in the dining room with a TV at one end because everyone was so caught up in the narrative. It was great. We all felt good and we were so proud of the Matildas, despite the fact that they fell at the England hurdle. During the penalty shoot-out with France, I think they probably could have heard me in France screaming at the TV because it was so exciting.

Aside from the economic impact that hosting the Olympic qualifiers and the FIFA world cup event had on this state, I want to talk about the very real impact that it has had on soccer in this state. I am very fortunate to have a friend who works at Football West—Karen, thank you for this information.

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After the FIFA World Cup, Football West saw a 41.9 per cent increase in the number of girls registering to play football for the 2024 season. Overall, for boys and girls, there was an increase of 28 per cent. I know that percentages are really hard because we do not know where they started, but I will tell members that in real numbers, Football West saw an increase of 10 000 players for the 2024 season. Not all of that will be directly attributable to the FIFA World Cup and the Matildas, but we have to imagine that at least some of it would be. I know from being around athletics clubs for many years that every year we have the Olympics Games or Commonwealth Games, we see a bump in the number of kids registering to do athletics.

That brings me to my next point. I absolute agree with the economics of why we do these things. It just makes really good financial sense. But I want to talk about the impact on girls in particular and on people from minority backgrounds. Being able to be what they can be applies in more areas than just sport.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Aside from being gripped by Matildas fever, many of us Swifties were also gripped by Taylor Swift fever. I know that more than one or two of my colleagues were lucky enough to travel to the eastern states to see Taylor Swift this time around.

Mr J.N. Carey: Who?

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: I will not name them.

Mr J.N. Carey: Why won't you name them?

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: They might not want to be outed as Swifties! The reason I bring up Taylor Swift is not just that she has fabulous music, which I will not enter into an argument about. She does—the end. She is a woman who has stood up and shown women and girls that they can achieve. Taylor Swift apparently can also see into the future. In 2024, she made a speech when accepting the Woman of the Decade Award and said that the younger generation need to be taken care of. She said —

... somewhere right now your future Woman of the Year is probably sitting in a piano lesson or in a girls' choir and today right now we need to take care of her.

Not only is Taylor Swift standing up and doing her thing spectacularly, but also she is telling those of the next generation that we need to take care of them, we need to look after them, we need to promote them and we need to provide possibilities for them.

In 2019, when 18-year-old Billie Eilish accepted her Woman of the Year Award, she thanked Swift for taking care of her. She said —

I was 11 at the time, and I was in a choir, and I was learning to play piano and you took care of me. So thank you.

What a full-circle moment. The reason that I raise this is that this bill will facilitate those big moments for girls. It is incredibly hard sometimes for girls to understand that they can do whatever they set their minds to. It can be incredibly challenging, but having a hero, whether it is Taylor Swift, the Matildas or a girl in World Wrestling Entertainment who is very famous but whose name I do not know because that is not my thing, or aspiring to be something and seeing them up on the big stage being celebrated gives them hope that they can achieve the same thing.

Many members in this chamber will know that I have a very big love of basketball, so I am going to move to my favourite topic. They always say, "Talk about what you know", so I am going to talk about basketball. For those who have not been watching and do not get The Pick and Roll on their Facebook feed, there is a 22-year-old girl from Iowa called Caitlin Clark who has broken every record at a college basketball level that can be broken. She even has players in the National Basketball Association like LeBron James congratulating her on how amazing she is—and she is. She is a fantastic player. If members want to see some great basketball and really deep three-pointers, just google "Caitlin Clark highlights" and they will be amazed by this woman. She is amazing.

Mrs L.A. Munday: How tall is she?

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: She is not super tall. She is just super-efficient at getting points. She is not as tall as some others.

She has had such an impact on college basketball that when she was selected yesterday as the number one draft pick for Indiana, the club had already increased its membership at the prospect of her being selected. I am going to read out some of her effect. She has broken all-time National Collegiate Athletics Association scoring records. She has scored over 3 000 points in her college career. This is not a professional sportswoman; this is a college basketball player. She increased the game ticket sales for the Iowa Hawkeyes. The team's home games sold out in August 2023 for the season that started in November. This is one girl. I should not call her a girl—she is a woman;

she is 22. According to the Common Sense Institute, Clark’s economic boost could have hypothetically paid for the tuition of between 1 306 and 4 706 students at the University of Iowa last year. The Indiana Fever has had dramatic increases in its ticket prices since Clark’s announcement. The average price has gone up to \$144, which is a 133 per cent increase on the price in 2023. The Women’s National Basketball Association draft that was televised yesterday had an average of 2.5 million viewers and peaked at 3.9 million viewers. That is four times the number in 2023. In the March Madness series, the Iowa versus South Carolina college basketball game averaged 18.7 million viewers. That was for a college basketball game. Why am I telling members all this?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Yes!

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: The Leader of the House missed the beginning of my comments! It is not just because I am a big basketball fan and because Caitlin Clark is mentioned every day in my household. The reason I am telling members this is that Caitlin Clark has had a massive effect. That is not in contention; that is an absolute.

One of the untold stories of the recent WNBA draft is that three Australians have also been drafted into the WNBA from the college system in America. We have Nyadiew Puoch, who was pick 12 for the Atlanta Dream; Isobel Borlase, who was pick 20 for the Atlanta Dream; and Jaz Shelley, who was pick 29 for the Phoenix Mercury. These girls are the heroes for the upcoming girls in the Western Australian Basketball League. Six, seven or eight-year-old girls playing Aussie hoops might one day dream of being like Annali Maley and Alex Sharp, who are in the extended squad for the Opals, Jade Melbourne and, of course, the “GOAT”, Lauren Jackson. These women inspire the next generation.

I want to finish by commending the bill to the house and quoting a line from Caitlin Clark yesterday.

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The importance of this bill is reflected in the ability to show people what they can be by allowing these events, whether it be sport or entertainment, to happen at a local level. She said —

“Thanks to all the great players like Sheryl Swoopes, Lisa Leslie, Cynthia Cooper, the great Dawn Staley and my basketball hero, Maya Moore,” ...

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr J.N. Carey (Minister for Planning)**.