

MAJOR EVENTS (TICKET SCALPING) BILL 2018

Second Reading

MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [4.02 pm]: Deputy Speaker, I rise to give the second reading speech on the Major Events (Ticket Scalping) Bill 2018.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, member; you need to read out the motion.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: This bill provides for the McGowan government to deliver on one of its —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry; I am just getting a little bit of clarification from the Clerk. You are doing a wonderful job. Can you just start by saying “I move that the bill be read a second time”? Once we have that, we are in play.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I move —

That the bill be read a second time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excellent. Now, where were we?

Several members interjected.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I should have been a minister in the Barnett government! I could have done that. I am sure that is one thing I could have done.

This bill provides for the McGowan government to deliver on one of its “200 Fresh Ideas for WA”. Members will recall the insert in *The West Australian* during the 2017 election campaign in which the Labor Party announced that it had 200 fresh ideas that it would implement in government. This legislation is fresh idea 173. This initiative was not, however, such a fresh idea after all. The Labor Party in opposition introduced this bill into Parliament in 2015. It considered the legislation was important back then. I remind the house that oppositions have limited private members’ time. The Labor Party considered this issue so important that one of the few private members’ bills it introduced in opposition was this one, yet, since then, and having been in office for 551 days, the McGowan government has not progressed this so-called “fresh idea”—this most important legislation. That is why the opposition is pleased to assist the McGowan government in delivering on this fresh idea. As the now Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, said when he introduced this legislation in 2015 —

Attending a major sporting event such as the AFL finals coming up this weekend or a World Cup rugby or cricket match, or attending a concert by an iconic band such as The Rolling Stones, is special. For many ordinary people, it is literally a once-in-a-lifetime experience. But very often, thanks to unscrupulous ticket scalpers, that experience is soured, or even denied, with extortionate prices being charged for tickets—tickets acquired solely for the purpose of onselling at an outrageous mark-up.

I must say that it was a very good speech by the mover of the legislation, the now Premier. He continued —

This bill is designed to protect the interests of the genuine fans in our community, and I do not mean those who are fans of ripping people off. I mean sport, music and theatre fans—the everyday people, the families, who want to be able to attend a major event without being exploited by unscrupulous scalpers. This bill —

Said the Leader of the Opposition back then —

is also not a broad one-size-fits-all bill. It will regulate only the onselling of tickets to major events, as designated by the government on a case-by-case basis.

The then opposition saw tourism benefits as a reason for supporting this legislation. The now Premier, Hon Mark McGowan, said at the time —

Major events, as defined by this bill, include: events that will create tourism opportunities for Western Australia; events that will raise our international profile; events that will attract a lot of Western Australians as participants or spectators; or events that will provide a substantial benefit for Western Australia. This bill gives the responsible minister the authority to declare an event a major event, after consultation with the event organiser and with specific ministers.

We all know this government, despite inheriting a world-class tourism infrastructure inventory, is failing to attract tourists. In opposition, Labor believed that this legislation that was introduced by the then Leader of the Opposition was important to protect our reputation as a tourism destination. On that subject, I, like many Western Australians, was sympathetic to the two young American tourists who became victims of unscrupulous scalpers earlier this month. An article in *The Sunday Times* reads —

Chris West and Beth Drake had hoped to spend their last day in Perth watching West Coast and Collingwood’s blockbuster qualifying final.

They paid \$350 for two match tickets worth about \$118 using the online ticket resale website Viagogo and forked out even more cash for Eagles gear.

But when Mr West and Ms Drake arrived at Optus Stadium they were told someone else had used their tickets to enter the venue at 4pm.

Imagine how they felt. It continues —

Mr West said the event was supposed to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience before they flew out of Perth.

“We knew the footy finals were happening and we thought how lucky are we to be able to go and see one of these games, especially at the new stadium,” he said.

“We are a bit embarrassed that we didn’t do more due diligence as far as maybe doing a little bit more research, but Viagogo was the first result that came up on Google so we thought it would be OK.

“We knew the game was sold out and we thought this was something that we really wanted to go to.”

There is no reason why the government should not be supporting its legislation. I will not buy the argument from the government that when in opposition, Labor was not able to table ideal legislation, as the Premier alluded to in question time yesterday. That is a poor reflection by the Premier on Parliamentary Counsel, which is available to members of Parliament, especially when in government with many more resources. That is a poor excuse for the government failing to meet its election commitment. The legislation I am introducing today will hold the Labor Party to account. It will require the Labor Party to commit to the legislation it introduced originally, or to concede that it was simply chasing a popular vote.

Since Labor was elected to government, we have had numerous special events in Perth at not just Optus Stadium and not just involving the West Coast Eagles—like the match on the upcoming weekend that will be another sellout. Every special event that goes by without this government having passed its legislation is a sign that the government was not really committed to the legislation it put forward in opposition. We are now holding the McGowan government to account. This is its legislation. The question is: does it support its own legislation that it brought before this chamber when in opposition? The Labor Party made a big song and dance about the need for this legislation, and this is an opportunity for it to prove that it was really committed to it. If it is not prepared to support this legislation, the Premier needs to walk outside and make a full apology to the people of Western Australia and say that he did not mean what he said. The Premier cannot have it both ways; he cannot say and do one thing before the election, and abandon his position after it. This is the Premier’s legislation. I expect the Premier will demonstrate his commitment to it by supporting it. I commend this bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms L. Mettam**.