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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

South Australian National Football League

SPEECH

Thursday, 11 October 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Speaker Georganas, Steve, MP	Question No.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (12:34): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I, too, would like to congratulate you. Even though I did so the other day in the chamber, I congratulate you officially and formally in the Federation Chamber on your elevation to Deputy Speaker.

Last weekend in South Australia was a very special weekend. That was because it was the SANFL, or South Australian National Football League, grand final. The grand final was played on Sunday at Westlakes AAMI Stadium in front of 30,000 people. It was a great event. There are not that many state leagues that can pull a crowd of 30,000 people to a grand final. For me it was even more special, and that is because my beloved West Adelaide Football Club—I am very proud and honoured to be their No. 1 joint ticket holder with former Premier of South Australia Rob Kerin—were in the grand final. Unfortunately they did not win, but it was a special occasion for me; we had been waiting for a number of years to see our team make the grand final, and when they did they made us proud. Just the fact that they got to the final was a great achievement.

As I said, it was a very tough game. It started off fairly evenly in the first quarter, but by the second quarter the writing was on the wall and we could see that the other great South Australian football club, Norwood Football Club, was pulling away. Norwood ended up being the champions of football in South Australia, taking out the premiership and celebrating, as they should have.

I am very honoured to have the West Adelaide Football Club in my electorate, in the western suburbs. They represent the western Adelaide area. The club's formation is shrouded in a little bit of mystery because there are no documents, so stories of its formation vary according to whom you are listening to. The club's website says that it was established in 1887, but then a historian's paper on the club's site suggests that it was between 1891 and 1892. I am sure there will be many debates over the years about which one is correct and which one is not.

West Adelaide club won the 1895 premiership in the City and Suburban Football Association, and in the following year, on the introduction of the electoral system, joined the senior association in South Australia. In 1897 West Adelaide formally joined SAFA—the South Australia Football Association league—and they developed their uniform. The original uniform was a red and white strip, but so as not to be confused with some other SANFL teams in South Australia—such as Port Adelaide and North Adelaide—West Adelaide adopted its colours of red and black. They played in the early years in the West Park Lands and in 1952 the club decided to work towards moving to Richmond, which is just west of the city in my electorate. They developed a council site into an oval and still play there as their home ground. With the assistance of the council and many, many hours of volunteer labour contributed by players, supporters, club officials and a lot of local businesses, the West Adelaide Football Club commenced playing at Richmond oval within the SANFL, or South Australian National Football League, in 1958. Some of their achievements have been premierships, and they were champions of Australia in 1908 and 1909. They were premiers and champions of Australia in 1911 and premiers in 1912, 1927, 1947, 1961 and 1983. In 1983 I was very privileged to have been at the game and I recall that joyous moment. We have been waiting since 1983 to see us win another premiership, even though we have played in a couple of premiership games since then. West Adelaide have been runners-up many times: in 1922, 1954, 1956, 1958, 1959, 1962, 1991, 2003 and, of course, 2012—this year.

It is a great club with great history. As I said, I am very proud to be their No. 1 ticket holder. I have supported West Adelaide ever since I was knee-high, and I remember going to my first games at around the age of six or seven. It is only a stone's throw away from my house and I still enjoy going to all the games. I would like to congratulate the club president, Paul Sperling; the vice president, Wayne Henson; the CEO, Kym Russell; the marketing manager, Angela Jacka; and, of course, our wonderful coach, Andrew Collins, who did so well to get them to the final this year. I congratulate them on making the final and, on behalf of all the West Adelaide supporters, I hope that next year we will actually take out the flag.