



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

Swan Electorate: Gateway WA

SPEECH

Thursday, 15 October 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Irons, Steve, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr IRONS (Swan) (11:18): On Saturday I was at the Gerry Archer Oval for the Belmont Little Athletics opening day of the 2015-16 season. I see the member for Wakefield leaving the chamber. If ever I am in his area of South Australia I will take him up on his offer and hopefully get a personally guided tour from him. The arena was in sparkling shape, which is a result of the \$4 million Gerry Archer Reserve realignment project—part of the federally funded Gateway WA project. Gateway WA has been WA's largest road infrastructure project in terms of cost and probably scale too, with \$1 billion of investment from the federal and state governments. That pales into insignificance when we hear from the member for Hinkler about the \$6.7 billion for the Bruce Highway. The WA Gateway project has targeted several key intersections around Perth Airport—one of them being the Abernethy Road and Leach Highway intersection in Cloverdale, which is a key point close to the entrance of the international terminal and Terminal WA. Part of the works at this intersection involved the unavoidable reclamation of land at Gerry Archer Oval, used for many years by the Belmont Little Athletics Club as well as other clubs in the area, including Belmont Villa Soccer Club and St Finbarr's Gaelic Football Club. The local community came together through the clubs, the City of Belmont and Gateway WA to come up with a superb realignment project to build a new track and facilities at the other side of the oval.

The realignment involved the running track being expanded from six to eight lanes, with tiered seating in a grandstand, a new storage shed and new lighting, as well as new long jump and shot put facilities. I have just noticed they have put up some huge shade cloths in the colours of the West Coast Eagles—gold and blue—at the facility. The result is spectacular, and Belmont would have one of the best athletics facilities going around for juniors in the country. As the CEO of the City of Belmont has pointed out, the new lighting in particular will enable the Belmont Little Athletics Association to have more twilight events and increase their membership capacity, and the Belmont Villa Soccer Club will now have a facility for evening matches. I know the president has called it a 'very fine arena' and Gateway WA have said it was 'an opportunity to leave a legacy for the local community'. Work was completed last year on the realignment, and it is a great example of what can be achieved in major infrastructure projects. The federal, state and local governments came together as part of the planning process and achieved not only a great road traffic outcome but also a great outcome for the community.

We will be taking the same approach with the next major infrastructure project to start in my electorate of Swan—the new sporting development at Lathlain Oval, which will become the West Coast Eagles' new headquarters for training and administration. It is a great sporting development and a world-class sporting facility, with a proposed spend of \$65 million for that project. But as with the Gateway WA project, the community will be at the heart of the development—the same with the West Coast Eagles. It will have barbecues, running tracks, meeting rooms, netball courts and public access to the ovals will be maintained. That is why the federal government recently backed this project to the tune of \$10 million to allow it to proceed.

On that note, I will mention that it has been a major focus of mine to make sure that the community's football team—the Perth Football Club—which is currently based at Lathlain Oval, is also at the heart of this redevelopment. Perth Football Club has recently put forward a business case for their own headquarters at the new site. I support this and will be helping the club with its application. As the Perth Football Club has said in their business case, research shows that \$4.40 is returned in social value in terms of social connectedness, wellbeing, mental health status, employment outcomes, personal development and physical health for every dollar spent on community football.

I spoke about youth engagement yesterday, and the Perth district zone engages with 10,000 youths directly through their involvement in football-related activities. This is not just males; it involves many different groups and cultures. A few years ago, I heard about a game that was not witnessed by many males. It was an Islamic female football game—the first held in Western Australia—and it was at Lathlain Park. They tell me there was blood on the ground afterwards, so they were fully engaged in the game. They wore their traditional dress and played a game of Aussie Rules football at Lathlain Oval.

The community must be at the heart of infrastructure. This is the way I want to see all our major infrastructure projects conducted in the future, and this is the standard I will push for when campaigning for infrastructure in my electorate. I commend the Belmont Little Athletics Club and the Belmont Villa Soccer Club, along with the St Finbarr's Gaelic Football Club, for their facility at Gerry Archer Reserve.