



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION AND THE ARTS

Reference: Funding of community sporting and recreational facilities

SYDNEY

Monday, 21 April 1997

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

CANBERRA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT,
RECREATION AND THE ARTS

Members

Mr Truss (Chair)

Mr Anthony
Mr Robert Brown
Mr Billson
Mr Eoin Cameron
Mrs Crosio
Mr Entsch
Mr Hockey

Mr Harry Jenkins
Miss Jackie Kelly
Dr Lawrence
Mr Martin
Mr McDougall
Dr Southcott

The committee is to inquire into:

whether the Commonwealth Government should be involved actively in funding in full or in part local community sporting and recreational facilities and, if so, whether the Commonwealth Government should have a dedicated program to fund sporting and recreational infrastructure;

determine (as far as possible) existing and future requirements for national, regional and local community sporting and recreational facilities and inquire into ways in which better utilisation can be made of existing community and educational facilities for sporting and recreational pursuits;

inquire into alternative options which may exist for funding national, regional and local community sporting and recreational facilities including, but not limited to, private sector funding and funding via the Australian Sports Foundation; and

make recommendations to the Minister for Sport, Territories and Local Government on matters arising from the Terms of Reference

WITNESSES

BERGMAN, Mr Malcolm, Chairman, National Technical Services Committee, Tennis Australia, National Tennis Centre, Batman Avenue, Melbourne, Victoria 3000	139
CRAMPTON, Mrs Frances, Chairperson, New South Wales Sports Federation, PO Box 204, Flemington Markets, New South Wales 2129	82
CROSS, Mr David Knoyle, National Executive Director, Australian Universities Sports Federation, Level 1, 48 Atchison Street, St Leonards, New South Wales 2065	110
CUMMINS, Mr Peter John, Project Leader, Olympic Project Team, James Hardie Consortium, 65 York Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2000	98
CUSH, Mr Robin Edward, National Manager, Building Group/Director, Barclay Mowlem Construction Ltd, 973 Fairfield Road, Moorooka, Queensland 4105	98
JACOBY, Mr Albert, Secretary, National Technical Services Committee, Tennis Australia, National Tennis Centre, Batman Avenue, Melbourne, Victoria 3000	139
JOHNSTON, Ms Maria Dominique, Vice-President, Northern Sydney Region of Councils, 411 Victoria Avenue, Willoughby, New South Wales	55
KEATS, Mr Michael, National Executive Officer, Scout Association of Australia, PO Box 325, Fivedock, New South Wales 2046	128
KEMP, Mr Peter, Team Leader, Parks and Landscape, Hornsby Shire Council, 296 Pacific Highway, Hornsby, New South Wales	55
LAWTON, Mr Robert James, Executive Officer, Macquarie University Sports Association, c/- Gymnasium, Macquarie University, New South Wales 2109	110
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PATTINSON, Ms Alison, Director Community Services, Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council, PO Box 15, Gordon, New South Wales 2072	55
POLLARD, Mr Geoff, AM, President, Tennis Australia, National Tennis Centre, Batman Avenue, Melbourne, Victoria 3000	139
RILEY, Ms Lesa, Executive Officer, New South Wales Sports Federation, PO Box 204, Flemington Markets, New South Wales 2129	82
ROE, Mr Brian Stewart, Competitions Manager, Athletics Australia, PO Box 1400, North Melbourne, Victoria 3051	37

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WHITFIELD Ms Julie, Open Space Manager, Willoughby City Council, 411 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood, New South Wales 55

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Present

Mr Truss (Chair)

Mr Billson

Mr Jenkins

Mr Eoin Cameron

Mr McDougall

Mr Hockey

Mr Martin

The committee met at 9.03 a.m.

Mr Truss took the chair.

CHAIR—I declare open this hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts for its inquiry into the funding of community sporting and recreational facilities. There will be a number of additional members of the committee arriving during the morning. These will be the second group of hearings that have been conducted by the committee. Since the inquiry was advertised in mid-November we have received something in excess of 260 submissions. On the basis of these submissions the committee is holding public hearings in each of the capital cities, and visiting facilities in each of the states and territories. This is the first time that the committee has held a public hearing outside Canberra on this inquiry.

The committee will hear today from representatives of local government which is the nation's largest provider of sporting and recreational facilities. It will also hear from the New South Wales Sports Federation, two national sporting organisations representing tennis and athletics and at the other end of the spectrum, from a local cycling group. The Multi-Sport Indoor Facilities Consortium, and some providers of sporting and recreational opportunities, the Scouts Association and two university groups, will give the committee their perspective on the funding of sporting and recreational facilities.

Committee hearings are recognised as proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings of the House of Representatives. Evidence given before the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. Witnesses will not be asked to take an oath or make an affirmation, however, they are reminded that false evidence given to a parliamentary committee may be regarded as contempt of the parliament. The committee prefers that all evidence be given in public, but should witnesses at any stage wish to give evidence in private they may ask to do so and the committee will give consideration to that request.

ROE, Mr Brian Stewart, Competitions Manager, Athletics Australia, PO Box 1400, North Melbourne, Victoria 3051

CHAIR—Welcome. We have received your submission which we have read with interest. Before I invite you to make an opening statement, you might like to indicate whether there are any changes or additions that you want to make to the submission.

Mr Roe—No. There are not any substantial alterations. Probably in the first appendix we could change with some good news the fact that a couple of the tracks that were listed as not being synthetic tracks at the time we prepared the report, have since been laid as synthetic tracks. But apart from that it is substantially in accordance with what we would want to put before you.

CHAIR—Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Roe—Thank you. I will take the opportunity to emphasise a couple of matters in relation to track and field facilities. Firstly, they are both relatively and actually expensive compared with other sports. We face the enormous problem whenever we look to develop a new facility, or redevelop an existing facility, of not only the cost of the track itself, but also the cost of the accompanying equipment that goes with it. In general, if you are laying a synthetic track, you can look for preparatory work and earthworks in the vicinity of \$1½ to \$2 million: up to \$1 million for the surface; \$200,000 to equip the facility very basically—and that is without putting in a toilet, a change room, a grandstand, or anything on top of that which would be extra. Therefore, we believe that if synthetic tracks are to be laid, they must be laid in carefully chosen locations.

We also would like to emphasise to the committee that it is unrealistic to expect that athletic bodies at any level—local, state or national—can contribute in any substantial way towards the development of a facility. The cost to those athletic bodies in the purchase and replacement of equipment is enough. But, at the other end, as a sport, we are realistic enough to know that we cannot justify the retention of big venues such as the QEII/ANZ stadium in Brisbane, the Bruce stadium, or even the new Olympic stadium in Sydney, for exclusive use of track and field.

Athletics Australia believes that high-cost athletic facilities—that is, the synthetic facilities—should be funded and placed according to a national plan. There have been some examples in recent years where tracks have been laid at venues which perhaps did not justify it, whereas, other places are crying out for synthetic tracks. We also believe that, where practicable, facilities should be jointly developed with other complementary users—such as, for example, the athletics and hockey development in Launceston—or at schools or universities where we can have a very complementary use with the owners or operators of the venue. Thirdly, we would like to emphasise, in accordance with our national plan, the very urgent need for the laying of new facilities in Perth, an additional facility in Brisbane and the resurfacing of the track in Townsville.

CHAIR—Perhaps, you could tell us something about Athletics Australia. Who are your members and what is your role?

Mr Roe—The members of Athletics Australia are the eight state or territory athletic associations. The athletes themselves, the officials, the coaches and the clubs affiliate with the associations who then affiliate

with Athletics Australia. We are responsible for overseeing the conduct and development of athletics in Australia and, of course, for arranging the participation of Australian teams and individuals in competitions overseas.

CHAIR—What proportion of athletes would be associated with your affiliates?

Mr Roe—That is an interesting question. Unlike some other sports, we do not seek to register everybody that participates in athletics. But in terms of facilities and the participation in track and field, we believe that the appropriate places to start are at the schools, even house athlete carnivals. Many schools now, instead of going to the cost of laying or marking their own tracks, tend to use regional sporting facilities for even their house carnivals, but certainly for their inter-school carnivals and zone carnivals. We have a pyramid rather like the old Russian spartakiad system whereby we end up with a national schools championship in December each year and that starts off effectively at school house carnivals.

In what we might describe as mainstream athletics, there are around 15,000 formally registered athletes in Australia who compete on a regular weekend basis during the track and field season. On top of that there are the athletes registered with Little Athletics who tend to participate in their weekend competitions, thankfully on grass. We would not want young children to be competing on synthetic surfaces all the time but they too have their inter-zone or inter-centre competitions and interstate competitions on synthetic surfaces as well. There are a large number of people who, though not formally registered with Athletics Australia, do use facilities.

CHAIR—What do those people who are registered pay for the privilege?

Mr Roe—It varies from state to state but in fact the largest part of their registration fee is for the use of facilities. The majority of them would pay, depending on their age, about \$60 as an annual fee and between \$5 and \$8 a week per competition to use the facilities.

CHAIR—Those who are in clubs?

Mr Roe—Those who are in clubs, yes.

CHAIR—How much of that ends up coming through to, say, the state association and then to Athletics Australia?

Mr Roe—Out of the \$60 annually about \$5 to \$6, depending on the state. We do allow the states to raise it in ways other than charging a capitation fee directly to their athletes. Around \$5 to \$6 comes directly to the national body for administration. We have tried to reduce the burden on the recreational athletes. I reckon, as a general rule, about half the \$60 would go to the state body for development programs and all of the weekly fee goes to running the competition that weekend—the hire of the facility and so forth.

CHAIR—I have read reports that some of the state associations are very weak and that they have very few functioning clubs affiliated with them.

Mr Roe—The number of functioning clubs is still quite strong. We are trying to reduce the number of clubs by forcing amalgamations where possible between very small clubs to make them more functional. We do not believe there is too much of a problem at the moment at club level but it is absolutely true that many of our state associations are experiencing both financial and administrative difficulties in carrying on their activities.

CHAIR—What is the reason for that?

Mr Roe—Some of the reasons are certainly self induced in terms of overstaffing and attempting to live beyond their means. That is being addressed by Athletics Australia with the state associations. At the moment it is a critical issue for the sport at this time.

CHAIR—But do the state associations have the capability to actually manage and decide what facilities should be provided or to assist clubs and others to achieve ambitious projects?

Mr Roe—State associations would be having a difficulty in providing that expertise at the moment. That has tended to be within the last year to 18 months a responsibility of the national office. We have instituted a number of programs to provide that service directly, in cooperation with and with the agreement of the state associations; we are not operating in competition with them in any way. We are in fact taking that responsibility off their hands.

CHAIR—You provided in your submission a list of places that you think should have tracks. How did you develop that list?

Mr Roe—The list is based on the level of athletic activity in those areas, including the interest at school level. We are obviously conscious of the fact that if we put in a high-cost synthetic athletic facility, athletics in the formal sense might use it on 20 weekends a year during the summer months. It is very important to make sure that if you put one in, it is going to be used by others such as schools, little athletics and so forth. The activity at school level, little athletics level and our own senior level was taken into account, and also the history of elite or developing elite athletes coming from each of those regions.

Mr BILLSON—Mr Roe, is the list in appendix A comprehensive? It is a rhetorical question as there is a synthetic surface down my way that does not crack it for a mention in Victoria. I am just wondering if that is a single isolated oversight or this is not quite the full picture of where the tracks are.

Mr Roe—There would certainly be some grass tracks missing.

Mr BILLSON—It is a synthetic one.

Mr Roe—We rely on clubs and associations to notify us. This list was sent to Athletics Victoria prior to us sending it out. This is a track in Frankston?

Mr BILLSON—Yes, Ballam Park, Frankston.

Mr Roe—We were aware that that has gone in and if it is not on the list, that is an oversight. I believe that every other synthetic track is listed. As I said at the outset, a couple of these that are listed as grass or bitumen have been upgraded to synthetic over the summer. There have been something like seven or eight tracks surfaced during this summer, which is good news for the sport. But the track at Frankston was one of those that went ahead without us knowing about it, one which we probably still would have enthusiastically supported. It does not fall into the category of one or two of the others.

Mr BILLSON—It is the experience there that leads me to ask whether the resurfacing of tracks is a pressing financial issue for the sport over and above developing new surfaces, new tracks or new facilities. Down at Ballam Park, there was a jubilation when the funds were finally raised, and it is as if another generation of athletes come along and it is time to resurface the track. Attracting the resources to do that is extremely difficult. Do you have a sense of how common that problem is across the synthetic surfaces that have been in place for some time?

Mr Roe—Yes, replacing the existing synthetic surfaces is not quite such a problem. You can have some success. There was a black track, a rubberised bitumen track in Launceston, and after some years of negotiation, they were able to replace that with a fully synthetic rubber track. It took them less than two weeks to relay that because the original work was so well done by the local council there was very little work to be done.

On the other hand, the same contractors did Olympic Park in Melbourne, which is a much more exotic and expensive facility and that took them two months. There are great variations according to the history of the track.

CHAIR—You said there are seven new ones being built. How are they funded?

Mr Roe—Olympic Park in Melbourne was obviously funded by Olympic Park Trust and the Victorian government. That was a major project. The majority of the rest were funded, as I understand, by local government and state government contributions.

Mr BILLSON—Do you have a sense of how the interest in the sport is developing or changing at a junior level? Are there trends in little athletics participation that are concerning or encouraging?

Mr Roe—Levels of interest at the over the last five years in both little athletics and at the more senior level have remained fairly constant. We anticipate with the lure of the Sydney Olympics—whatever effect that has on people it does encourage them to take up sports like track and field. We have noticed an increase this summer both in retention rates of past registrants and in new ones.

Mr BILLSON—A final question still on the little athletics issue concerns the grass surfaces and risk of injury and those sorts of issues. Is the public liability question something that is troubling the sport where track surfaces are not satisfactory? There is still quite an investment required in getting a suitable track surface and then keeping off other uses of that sporting field that are going to damage it. Is that something that is concerning the sport?

Mr Roe—We have always been very careful in the sport to make sure we are properly insured. Fortunately, in terms of that personal injury aspect through facilities and so forth, we are one sport that has compulsory insurance for athletes in every state and, fortunately, the premium is not very high for track and field. I guess that is one example where we have little or no risk of contact bodily injury so, therefore, that brings the premium down. No; that is not a big issue for us. It is something we are conscious of, and we take the appropriate precautions, both for the athlete and for the sport.

Mr BILLSON—So there would be little value in the government considering a role in that respect; it is working reasonably well the way it is.

Mr Roe—If there is some way of codifying or simplifying it, it would be good. But that does work relatively well at the moment.

Mr McDOUGALL—Mr Roe, what we are really about is trying to work out how sport and recreation are going to get money in the future to build facilities, both for recreation, training and competition. What experience have you had to date in working with the education system, particularly primary and secondary education?

Mr Roe—With the exception of providing grass tracks for little athletics centres, there has been very little work done with schools and operators of any institution, even up to university, in terms of the placement of facilities there. At the moment, particularly in Queensland, with Griffith University on the Gold Coast and the University of Queensland in Brisbane, we have put in facilities in both of those locations. Also in Queensland one school has already put an athletic track in, which we are supporting, and two others are considering putting tracks in as well.

Where that is done, we try to direct usage of our own programs through camps and so forth to justify those people putting in the expenditure. But we would like to be able to do more. Our great aim is to base the athletic club on the community, with schools and with the local community, and take a much greater role in using facilities which already exist and which can be easily adapted for track and field.

Mr McDOUGALL—You do not see Athletics Australia and their sponsors being partly responsible for the capital funding of those facilities?

Mr Roe—It is unrealistic for us to even consider that. The costs of athletic tracks are so great, and we have expenditure in so many other areas that we could not realistically contemplate that.

Mr McDOUGALL—If you were not to make a contribution, how do you see that you could have rights over the management and use of the facilities if they were developed?

Mr Roe—Our justification would be on the basis of the specific knowledge and expertise in using and managing athletic facilities. Also, we would envisage that the sport—whether it is clubs or the regional association or state association—would remain largely responsible for the provision and upkeep of equipment which is very expensive in its own right.

Mr McDOUGALL—I want to ask you for a little bit more detail about the Griffith University. How is that project being funded, who is going to be able to use it, and under what sort of management arrangement is that going to take place?

Mr Roe—I am not totally involved in that particular project. That is being done by the joint clubs that operate out of the Gold Coast with the Griffith University and the responsible local councils there. They are working together as a group, and we will certainly support them by directing events and programs there in due course. But I understand the majority of funding is coming from the university and the relevant local councils.

Mr McDOUGALL—And how do you see Athletics Australia as a player in multiple-use sporting facilities?

Mr Roe—Apart from almost a traditional expectation that soccer will be played on the infield of athletic facilities, there has not been a great deal of work on this. Perhaps a very good model experiment at the moment is the joint athletics and hockey facility at Launceston where they are sharing all of the other facilities. They have a double-sided grandstand which goes onto the athletic field on one side and to the two synthetic hockey pitches on the other. They obviously share all the car parking facilities, all the equipment sheds, toilets, showers and the club facility, which enables both sports to run social events and raise money for the upkeep of the centre that way. That is a project between northern Tasmanian hockey, northern Tasmanian athletics and the Launceston City Council.

CHAIR—Is soccer about the only thing that actually fits inside an athletic track? At QEII for a while the Broncos played, but there was a lot of conflict there; it didn't really quite fit.

Mr Roe—Neither rugby union nor rugby league can be played to their normal specifications inside a track and field facility.

Mr HOCKEY—But soccer can?

Mr Roe—Soccer most definitely can. It is something that is played the world over inside athletic tracks. Whilst there has been conflict in the past, there is always one issue about athletic meets having hammer throwing competitions during the summer and then soccer players putting their feet in the holes in winter. Apart from that, there is no real reason why athletics and soccer should not co-exist.

CHAIR—Except if you had a synthetic hockey field?

Mr Roe—You could not put a synthetic field inside.

CHAIR—Most hockey players these days want synthetic fields. There are limitations there again.

Mr Roe—That is right. Absolutely. The facility in Launceston, for example, the fields themselves are exclusive of one another, although they do play lower grades on the grass infield.

Mr McDOUGALL—Maybe this is a leading question. From what you have said to me so far, what you are saying is that you see the three levels of government being responsible for funding of athletic facilities in the future?

Mr Roe—Synthetic ones, yes.

Mr McDOUGALL—Have you in Athletics Australia any knowledge to advise us of the impact of rate capping in Victoria and New South Wales in relation to local government being able to supply funds?

Mr Roe—I am not directly aware. All I can say is that there is obviously amongst Victorian councils a willingness to fund facilities like athletic tracks because Melbourne and its surrounding suburbs are well supplied with athletic tracks.

Mr BILLSON—Would it help if you define that list of where tracks need to be built as it does not seem to be in those two states?

Mr Roe—New South Wales were anticipating that some additional facilities will be built in preparation for the Olympics, simply because Sydney has to provide X number of synthetic training tracks for the period of the Olympics. Tasmania and the ACT are very well catered for, or will be when the second track goes in in Canberra. Unfortunately, the outlying areas of New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia are very poorly serviced.

Mr McDOUGALL—Are you as an organisation doing any direct work with local government throughout Australia in working out how you are going to resolve this problem of facility supply?

Mr Roe—We do it on a request basis at the moment. We would be very keen to have a national plan which is somehow agreed with local government and state government, but at the moment when a local group of athletic clubs or a regional athletic centre gets its act together and puts forward a submission we come in and support them with the technical knowledge and any additional support we can give. We are doing it unsuccessfully, I might say, in terms of a new track in Ballarat at the moment, but we would like to.

Mr McDOUGALL—Finally, it is really just ad hoc planning—reacting to demand—rather than some pro-active planning?

Mr Roe—Until now, very much so.

Mr MARTIN—To follow on a couple of those points that my colleague raised with you, if we assume that there is a role for the Commonwealth government in the provision of sporting facilities and that that role is an adjunct to state and local government, what proportion should the Commonwealth share be?

Mr Roe—In relation to athletic tracks, I would say a third each. Certainly, when the original tracks were built, one in each state, that was the basis on which it was done. That seems the fairest to me, given that probably local government will play an increased role generally in providing the land.

Mr MARTIN—If we can assume, in terms of athletics particularly, from what you are saying that there is an imperative about providing facilities to a certain standard around Australia, and there have already been some locations identified in your submission where there is a shortfall, can we assume that essentially it will be from a regional perspective that the top standard facilities need to be provided, particularly, with synthetic tracks?

Mr Roe—Absolutely. We are not so foolish as to believe that every town in Australia—as is the case with virtually every town in Germany—can have its own track, so it has to be regionally based. Groups of clubs who are either in city areas, outer suburban areas or in country areas will have to accept that, if synthetic tracks are to be built, they are to be built in one centre and everyone else will have to use them.

Mr MARTIN—Is there an acceptance within Australian athletics, amongst all your affiliated bodies, that in fact that will be an approach to the provision of facilities in the future?

Mr Roe—Yes, most definitely. They are realistic enough to believe there is not a need for synthetic tracks every 500 metres in every suburban area or in every town. They accept that. And in fact we acknowledge that synthetic tracks are largely used for elite training and for competition only. For training, there is no need for synthetic tracks for the majority of people.

Mr MARTIN—In the planning that is being undertaken at the minute for those sorts of facilities, do you have any knowledge as to whether this newfound spirit of regionalism has been applied in terms of local government involvement in the provision of these sorts of tracks and, if you do, whether there is a different attitude perhaps that might exist within a concentrated urban environment compared to more regionally-based parts of Australia?

Mr Roe—I think certainly, if we take suburban Melbourne as an example, there has not been a lot of cross-planning between councils. A council, either on the urging of some prominent locals or an athletic club, has gone ahead and produced a track. In other areas there have been disputes. For example, we needed a synthetic track in the Newcastle Hunter area, and there was a dispute which went on over, I think, two years between the Newcastle council and the Macquarie Shores local governments as to where they would put the track. At one stage they were putting two in where only one was necessary. It was actually a rare occasion when we were fighting for a reduction in the number of tracks because we felt that was not the best use of funds.

On the other hand, there have been good cooperative regional examples. Your area of Wollongong is one where everybody in the area cooperated for one track, and also, in my own home area of Launceston, the surrounding councils actually contributed to the cost of the development of the resurface in Launceston.

Mr MARTIN—Accepting that athletics is part of the super seven sports, is there an expectation within this country—from your very considerable experience in sports—that all sport should be catered for by governments, irrespective of the level, and do you think that is a realistic assessment for Australia?

Mr Roe—I certainly believe that a realistic number of sporting facilities for the regularly participated in sports should be provided by government, and we as a sport believe it is reasonable for government at all

levels to provide those. There are lots of other sports which can use existing-type facilities, but sports like track and field, hockey and the football codes need specialist facilities. Lots of other sports can adapt to use halls and parks and so forth. There should be a rational approach and a considered approach at all levels to the spending of the money where it is needed.

Mr MARTIN—Do we need a bit more of an education process with all sports in this country to get them to come to that particular view?

Mr Roe—Absolutely. We would certainly not be averse to government forcing sports to cooperate together because a lot of sharing can be done by sports in respect of facilities. Everybody wants their own, and everyone wants their own all over the place, and that is not necessary. There can be a lot of sharing of costs and, once facilities are developed, sharing of facilities.

CHAIR—Mr Cameron.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—How long has that facility in Launceston been operating?

Mr Roe—The original rubberised bitumen track went in in 1982. Hockey moved from its unsatisfactory grass facility to build its first synthetic pitch there about four years ago. They built a second pitch last year, and the resurfacing of the athletic track occurred last month.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—You said that everyone cooperated in that development.

Mr Roe—Yes.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—Has it worked out highly successfully? Have there been any real problems associated with it?

Mr Roe—No. In fact, to date it has worked out perfectly. The two sports operate at different times of the year, largely. There are lots of people that do both sports so that also makes it a lot easier, and there are some administrators who are involved in both sports. The council is obviously pleased with the development because they only have to look after one facility which is largely synthetic rather than two facilities which had large amounts of grass area which required greater regular upkeep. It can be more self-sufficient as well because of the joint use of fundraising facilities.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—Is there any kind of active push to encourage similar developments in other parts of the country that you are aware of?

Mr Roe—Whenever a group of clubs or a regional association comes to us, we advise them that their best chance of their submission or their needs being attended to is to cooperate with another sport.

Mr HOCKEY—Are there any undercover stadiums in Australia?

Mr Roe—No.

Mr HOCKEY—Indoor?

Mr Roe—No.

Mr HOCKEY—None at all?

Mr Roe—No.

Mr HOCKEY—Is there any demand for it?

Mr Roe—I suppose the novelty demand. We have at least had one demand from an entrepreneur who is no longer available to conduct competitions—or not for the short-term, anyway. But realistically there is not a big need for indoor synthetic facilities in Australia, other than for training. We would like to see some existing venues adapted with small strips of synthetic surface to enable athletes to train during the winter months. There are a number of one-off cases. For example, Emma George, the pole vaulter in Victoria, has arranged on her own largely, and with a couple of her training mates, to develop a facility there for her to train in.

There are a number of places in Australia where indoor athletic tracks could be placed quite easily. The velodromes in Adelaide and Launceston could take them quite easily. But there is not a big need. We would not regard that as a high priority.

Mr HOCKEY—Can you just take me through the benefits of a synthetic track as opposed to a rubberised bitumen track as opposed to a grass track?

Mr Roe—Any synthetic track is superior to a grass track in that competition can be held virtually at any time. I think only just about a severe lightening storm would affect the ability of the competition to go ahead. Grass tracks are greatly affected by weather—not only raining during a competition, but even more so having rained or been damaged beforehand.

There is no question that the level of performance at an elite level is much higher on a synthetic track. The risk of injury—comparing rubberised bitumen tracks with polyurethane tracks—is much greater on a rubberised bitumen track, both falling on tracks but most importantly the repetitive impact on stress fractures and so forth.

Mr HOCKEY—How prevalent are stress fractures in athletics?

Mr Roe—Very.

Mr HOCKEY—And is that directly related to the quality of the tracks?

Mr Roe—Yes. And the over-use of even good quality tracks is an issue for coaches. If you train seven days a week on a synthetic track, you are asking for a stress fracture.

Mr HOCKEY—Do you have any figures on the number of participants in Little Athletics as compared to senior athletics?

Mr Roe—Yes; we know basically the difference.

Mr HOCKEY—Could you provide them to us?

Mr Roe—Yes. I could give you an estimate now, but we could certainly provide the accurate figures in due course. There are about 80,000 participants in Little Athletics and about 16,000 registered in senior athletes.

Mr HOCKEY—What are the reasons for the fall-off in participation?

Mr Roe—There are a number of theories about that. Little Athletics starts athletes off very young—at five or six years of age—and they now go through to 13, 14 or even older in some states. One theory is that they have had their go at track and field and that, as there are many other sports available these days, after they have done track and field for seven or eight years they go and do something else for a while. When they get to senior athletics, there is a perception that is for people who are very good at it, and so those who are not so good tend to drop off. We have very good retention rates of talented little athletes going into senior competition, but there are others who go off into other sports. Athletics is a very basic sport in terms of its benefits to other sports, and there are loads of Rugby League players, basketballers and netballers going around at high level in Australia who have had careers, if you like, in Little Athletics, and some even at lower senior level.

Mr HOCKEY—Can I just go a little broader than just facilities and talk a bit about where athletics is heading in terms of competition with other sports? Particularly, for example, the various forms of football, cricket and netball seem to have a growing amount of money being thrown at them by sponsors, and that in turn leads to better facilities, arguably, and specific purpose stadiums. Have you found that there is any correlation in the improvement of the stature of the sport because of the stature of facilities, in the eyes of participants?

Mr Roe—I could not provide you with any objective statistical data; but, in my own experience, when a new facility is developed, the retention rates of existing people are much higher and the recruitment rates are much higher as well.

Mr HOCKEY—Is that overall, or with the leading athletes?

Mr Roe—No; at all levels. A good facility does attract people to the sport.

Mr HOCKEY—Is it fair to say that the warm-up track at Homebush Bay is the best athletics facility in Australia at the moment?

Mr Roe—Yes. Overall, with the warm-up track beside the main stadium, it is the most perfect athletics special purpose facility.

Mr HOCKEY—Are you anticipating that the athletics track at the stadium will be ripped up?

Mr Roe—We know it will be. That is why we insisted from day one that we would be supportive of Sydney having a bid, provided that we got the facility that we have now as early as we did.

Mr HOCKEY—For how many days a year is the warm-up track used?

Mr Roe—I would say, on average, four out of every seven days.

Mr HOCKEY—And is it used every weekend?

Mr Roe—In summer, it is certainly used every weekend. In winter, it tends not to be used at weekends but, because of the desire of schools to have their house sports carnivals at the big facility, the school carnivals get spread throughout the year; and during the week, even in winter, there is quite prevalent use of that stadium.

Mr HOCKEY—Is there much use of the stadium outside the hours of nine to five?

Mr Roe—For training, on what you are describing as the warm-up track, there is quite significant use from six till eight.

Mr HOCKEY—And what about for night-time competitions?

Mr Roe—In Victoria, at Olympic Park in Melbourne, there is a lot of night competition. There is not a demand for night competition yet. We would like to encourage more venues to have lights to enable competition to be held at night, because we believe that would attract more people to the sport. People obviously have more available leisure hours in the evening.

Mr HOCKEY—Finally, in Europe, as you know, athletics is probably the number one or number two sport. What is the fundamental difference between it being so successful and such a prominent sport in Europe, yet it being very hard in Australia to encourage people to be spectators at, or participants in, athletics?

Mr Roe—I think it is largely historical. They have maintained the momentum when there has been a high level of interest in athletics in Europe, and there have been times when we have not maintained the level of interest or the momentum of the growth of the sport. The sport structure is different in most European countries, in that they tend to have clubs that are the size of our associations and they are more functional and more self-sufficient.

Mr HOCKEY—As a federal government, what can we do to maintain the obvious momentum that is going to build up because of a week of athletics in the year 2000?

Mr Roe—A lot of the federal government programs working with the sport are very helpful and are pretty right in all aspects except the funding of facilities, at the moment. The way that sport is funded, with

the accountability of the sports back to the Sports Commission, is the appropriate way to go and will probably leave not too many stones unturned in making sure that there is a continuity of interest after 2000.

Mr BILLSON—Does the one-third, one-third, one-third funding scenario that you have suggested change as you move through the hierarchy of facilities, as you go from a state or a national complex to a state facility and then to a regional venue and down to a more localised centre for Little Athletics? Do you see that relationship changing?

Mr Roe—The cost obviously would change, because we believe there should be only one major facility with a significant grandstand in each state; and so the cost is obviously going to reduce as you come further down. Once you get beyond a sort of inter-regional level, we would not suggest that synthetic tracks should be provided, in any case; so, obviously, it is probably reasonable for local government to provide grass tracks or training facilities on their own.

Mr BILLSON—Comparing athletics to, say, triathlons, where the operational costs of triathlon events are huge compared with those for Little Athletics, they are all reversed personal outlay versus the cost of participating: is there an argument that says that, if the feds are involved in facility provision for a facility-intensive sport, it should contemplate participating in high operating-cost event sports and provide funding in that area as well? How would you draw the difference, if you were Brian Roe from Triathletics Aus or something like that?

Mr Roe—It is not something that I have really thought about a lot; but, even in sports like triathlon which use open areas, rivers and roadways and so forth, there is a lot of work that can be done to reduce the costs of operation. I have only ever been involved in one event like that, and it is possible to significantly reduce for some of those events the amount which some of them are actually spending on running costs these days.

Mr BILLSON—Finally, on the multiple use issue: down our way, the dog club works very well with the athletics club and brings in an enormous amount of revenue which is used to look after the facility. Could that notion of non-sporting multiple use be extended to social clubs and those sorts of things which have an earning capacity and could look after themselves a bit more?

Mr Roe—Very much so. I know that the intended development of the physical off-field facilities at the Domain in Hobart is largely based on that idea. They will take a loan out to do that and they will fund club rooms, redevelop grandstands and offices and the like from the future income that they will get from hiring the premises out to social clubs, and they will encourage Rotary clubs to have their weekly meetings there, and so forth. Absolutely: outside of sporting bodies, there is a big potential for co-usage.

Mr BILLSON—But in that scenario you would not see a role for the federal government?

Mr Roe—No.

Mr BILLSON—I do not either. I was just interested in your view.

Mr Roe—We believe that, if all levels of government can contribute to the development of the actual on-field facility, the sport should have a responsibility after that.

Mr MARTIN—The big question is that it is great to be able to provide all these facilities but can you tell us where the Commonwealth government might find the money? Have you got a few ideas as to where they could get it?

Mr Roe—We have only ever had the age old one of the sports lottery. We are not experts in government funding.

Mr MARTIN—You know how to spend it, though.

Mr Roe—We do. We are very good at that.

Mr McDUGALL—Can you give us any indication of any parts of your organisation that has had anything to do with the Sports Foundation and how they have funded it?

Mr Roe—On a number of our teams, which are partly self-funded, athletes have found a considerable number of ways of using the Sports Foundation to pay their levy or to be supported. Most of them legitimate, I must say, where they have got local business houses or whatever to support their participation in an international team. But it is not something that has been exploited in terms of facilities or equipment and it is something that, I guess, could be. If there is a tax incentive for business houses to be involved in providing facilities or equipment, it is not something that we have exploited but it is something that might be encouraged.

Mr McDUGALL—Finally, I have a question about ‘recreation athletics’. How much do you work with recreation athletics as opposed to sticking to your straight, pure athletics?

Mr Roe—We are all encompassing in that the sport, both nationally right down through to club, tends to run all aspects of the sport, both for the ordinary weekend athlete through to the potential Olympic champion in track and field. A lot of community groups run road running on their own, separate from the sport. The other principal organisers of recreational athletics are schools. We work with them as much as possible and we encourage the clubs to work closely with the schools. In some states, where the education department and the teachers have dropped out of the conducting of school athletic carnivals, athletic clubs have taken them over to continue them.

CHAIR—Following on from Mr McDougall’s question about the Sports Foundation, why hasn’t Athletics Australia used it? You indicated in your submission that it was a very good conduit for sporting organisations to raise money but yet you haven’t used it.

Mr Roe—We have not. I guess that is through lack of time and manpower on our behalf to run that as another project. But it is something that we would like to do, given that a lot of our other projects and plans are well advanced. It is coincidental that we have a concentration on facility development at the same time as you are doing your inquiry. We did not develop our focus on that to meet your inquiry. It is

something that we have decided to do in the last 12 months, in any case.

CHAIR—But obviously the Sports Foundation's future is a critical element of this inquiry and we have heard some critical comments about it. You have indicated that you are enthusiastic about it but you have not used it.

Mr Roe—We have used it for the individual funding of athletes where, say, an athlete has to contribute 50 per cent to their participation in a team. We encourage the athletes to explore the use of that and we give them some guides on how they might be able to use it.

CHAIR—Yes. That really is exploiting it, though, if the contribution is intended to be directed to a particular athlete through the foundation.

Mr McDougall—I think you were generous in saying that it may not have been used as it was intended.

Mr Roe—Yes. That certainly happened on some occasions.

CHAIR—Finally, why should the government provide facilities for athletes, for athletics, when ten-pin bowlers and squash players and indoor cricketers have traditionally funded their own?

Mr Roe—Our No. 1 submission to that is that track and field is probably the only sport which everybody in Australia does at some stage of their life, whether they are disabled, able-bodied, young or old. It is the one sport which everybody seems to participate in from their school house carnival right through. It is a base sport for almost every other sport, running, jumping, throwing—it has the key elements of most sports. The only one we do not have is ball skills. We are a fundamental sport to all other sports. There is a significant usage from just about every school in Australia all the way through. And, whilst a synthetic track might be regarded as a specialist facility, we would equate the provision of the athletic equipment as being the same as a ten-pin bowling facility. We agree that, in general, the participants in the sport should fund the equipment.

Mr HOCKEY—Do you receive any funding support from the Australian Olympic Committee? Given that in 2000, the Australian Olympic Committee will make at least \$120 million in clear profit from the Olympics, of which athletics is a huge and significant proportion, do you expect that they will make any contribution to the long-term good of athletics in Australia?

Mr Roe—Any contribution to athletics from the AOC—I would say that, on average, over the last five years, it has been around \$100,000 to \$160,000—

Mr HOCKEY—Total?

Mr Roe—In each year. Any contribution is always tagged for a specific purpose, and the specific purpose always is the direct costs of preparation or participation in an overseas competition preparatory to an Olympic Games.

Mr HOCKEY—For elite athletes?

Mr Roe—For elite athletes only.

Mr HOCKEY—So there is no facility funding?

Mr Roe—No facility funding, no equipment funding.

Mr HOCKEY—No equipment funding, either?

Mr Roe—No.

Mr HOCKEY—And have you spoken to them about profit-sharing out of the Olympics?

Mr Roe—We have recently had the first of our meetings with them in relation to a plan they have with SOCOG for some benefit to flow to sports from the equipment purchasing by SOCOG for the Olympics. There has been no intimation from the AOC that there will be an expenditure on facilities.

CHAIR—Thank you for your evidence today. It has been interesting and helpful. We also thank you for the submission that Athletics Australia has provided to the committee.

Mr Roe—We thank the committee for its interest and hopefully some good things will flow from its work.

[10.04 a.m.]

JOHNSTON, Ms Maria Dominique, Vice-President, Northern Sydney Region of Councils, 411 Victoria Avenue, Willoughby, New South Wales

KEMP, Mr Peter, Team Leader, Parks and Landscape, Hornsby Shire Council, 296 Pacific Highway, Hornsby, New South Wales

MURRAY, Mr Paul, Recreation Development Officer, Willoughby City Council, PO Box 57 Chatswood, New South Wales 2067

PATTINSON, Ms Alison, Director Community Services, Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council, PO Box 15, Gordon, New South Wales 2072

WHITFIELD Ms Julie, Open Space Manager, Willoughby City Council, 411 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood, New South Wales

CHAIR—Welcome. We have received a number of submissions from your organisations. Are there any changes you would like to make to those submissions? If not, would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms Johnston—I was really intrigued by the comments of the previous speaker and while I support his submission on behalf of athletics, I think he has an unreal expectation of what local council can provide. The suggestion of a third, a third, a third funding is totally unrealistic. Local government's capacity to raise funds is nowhere near the level of federal or state. In fact, someone here suggested rate capping. That is a real problem for local councils. It seems that the number of services local councillors are expected to provide are growing daily and yet our sources of money are diminishing. We are having to provide a whole lot of things now which years ago we expected the state government to provide. With one particular one, waste management, there has been a whole lot of our money that has gone into that area.

With regard to funding of recreational facilities, particularly sporting facilities, it is difficult because council has to rely on the support of the community to an extent. Of the funds that we derive—you might have read in our submissions—a lot of it is section 94 funds. Nowadays there has got to be a nexus. You have to put sporting facilities in certain areas because that is where you have derived your section 94 funding.

Also, sport is not just a local thing, there is an overlap within areas. That is why, in our submissions, we are suggesting that there be some federal funding to enable the local council areas to perhaps work together to provide better regional facilities. The big problem within the northern Sydney area is the high cost of land. There just isn't a lot of spare land available. I heard comments earlier that local council can provide the land. Well, we do not have it. A lot of the land that we do have is bushland. People want that intact. In fact, that is where a lot of our money goes, to provide better walking tracks for people. With the Disability Discrimination Act we have to provide facilities for all sorts of people to access these areas. Providing sporting facilities, football fields and netball courts and things like that, that is just another burden.

They are not just used by local groups, they are used by people on a regional basis. It is very hard to convince the community that yes, Willoughby Council should provide a facility because the ratepayers there are saying, 'Why should we provide it when we have got people from Ku-ring-gai coming to use it'. We have an allocation for sporting facilities and community groups ask why is it that Ku-ring-gai soccer is playing on Willoughby Council fields. It is very difficult to convince the local people. Primarily, we just don't have the resources to provide the sort of sporting facilities that the community seems to want.

CHAIR—Perhaps you had better explain to people from other states what section 94 funding is. I suspect it is subdividers' contributions and developers' contributions?

Ms Whitfield—Our funding sources in Willoughby city come from two sources. Section 94 funding is from the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. It is New South Wales legislation. Those funds are contributions from development which increases the population densities or which have impact on existing facilities. That legislation may not carry over into other states of Australia.

CHAIR—I think other states have similar requirements but they do not call it section 94.

Ms Whitfield—Section 94 funding is our major source for funding capital works for any sporting and recreation facilities. At the moment our trust fund at Willoughby city has \$2.8 million in it and we have been spending about \$800,000 a year. That goes towards improvements to existing open space, or acquisition. The trouble with acquisition for Willoughby city is that trying to purchase land can cost something like \$1,000 a square metre. So our ability to do so is severely curtailed by the amount of money that we have and by the land available because there just isn't the land.

Each year, depending on our economic growth in the area, an average of about \$1 million goes into that trust fund. But once the growth slows in our area then that trust fund becomes depleted. We have a works plan for our recreation needs in the area that looks at works totalling about \$61 million in facilities over the next 15 years. We just do not have the resources sitting there within section 94, which is our major source of funding.

CHAIR—Councillor Johnston, you expressed some concern about the one third, one third, one third split but the evidence given to the committee by the Local Government Association, and in a number of the submissions we have received, suggests that local government provides more than a third at the present time. They say that of the three tiers of government, local government is the best funder.

Ms Johnston—Not in terms of new facilities, but in terms of maintaining existing facilities, the cost of maintaining facilities is just horrendous. When you have a limited number of fields and they are being used all the time, it increases the costs. Some of our fields in Willoughby are really in an appalling state. It is more the maintenance rather than provision of capital funding for establishing new facilities.

CHAIR—We have had some indication as to what is provided by the northern Sydney councils towards recreational facilities. Do you have statistics? Are you able to give the committee some advice as to what proportion of your budget is involved in sports and recreation funding?

Ms Whitfield—The total council budget is about \$39 million for Willoughby city and our maintenance budget for all our open space areas is about \$3 million.

CHAIR—That is the maintenance.

Ms Whitfield—That is recurrent.

CHAIR—What about capital?

Ms Whitfield—As I said before, we are spending about \$800,000 a year.

CHAIR—Is that included in your \$39 million budget or, because it is in a trust fund, is it separate?

Ms Whitfield—No, it is in a trust fund, it is separate. We have not had a surplus in council's revenue to be able to put towards any capital works for more than five years just through withdrawal of state government grants and rate pegging. They are the primary reasons that we just have no surplus at all.

CHAIR—Mr Billson has just left us but he did raise the point with the previous witness that when it came to athletics facilities, the states with rate pegging had better athletics facilities than the states that didn't.

Ms Whitfield—Where did he get that from?

Mr Kemp—Look at our facilities. We have one athletics track that is on a former landfill tip site which is subject to very severe ground subsidence. We do not have the funds to repair it, it is just going to stay in that state, and there is no alternative location for the athletics. It is a really substandard facility and it is probably one of the largest Little Athletics organisations in Sydney that has to put up with it.

CHAIR—Do Little Athletics or cricket or any other sport pay to your councils anything for the privilege of using the sporting facilities?

Mr Kemp—Yes. The surveys we have done would show that it is about a 10 per cent cost recovery, at the most, with most sports.

Ms Pattinson—That varies from council to council. It is 33 per cent for most of ours or 16½ per cent for turf wickets because it is such a high cost item.

Ms Whitfield—The council has a management objective of 25 per cent cost recovery. We are at about 20 per cent at the moment, but that is a great cost to a lot of community groups who just do not expect that.

Ms Johnston—I just wanted to say when I first got on council in 1991, our recovery was about 10 per cent or less. To bring it up to that level we have had charge local sporting groups a lot more, which has made it very difficult for them because these are ordinary mums and dads and the fees for their son participating in cricket or soccer have gone up. It is very difficult for the community when we have had to

have that big hike, but we needed it to maintain our fields because the costs of maintaining them had risen so greatly.

CHAIR—What items are particularly costly as far as maintenance. I gather from the comment you made that you are actually still preparing turf wickets for the cricket.

Ms Pattinson—Yes. Ku-ring-gai is. We would like to phase some of that out but that is not politically viable.

CHAIR—Your paid workers prepare the wicket?

Ms Pattinson—Yes. They do in most councils.

CHAIR—Do you produce turning pitches or bouncing pitches?

Ms Pattinson—A very high cost item.

Mr McDOUGALL—You just amaze me that you actually prepare wickets.

Ms Whitfield—Who is going to do it?

Mr McDOUGALL—I came into federal government out of local government and maybe I came from a funny state but in Queensland we do it a little bit differently. We have a leasing arrangement in relation to sporting organisations and they do their own maintenance and preparation. That is part of their deal of the lease and maybe some changes to management practices in relation to leases, or management of rental arrangements, is an alternative to overcome costs.

Ms Whitfield—We would love to do that.

Ms Johnston—Can I just add a comment in relation to that? You are dealing with volunteer people.

Mr McDOUGALL—Absolutely.

Ms Johnston—Mums and dads. Dad rushes home from work to manage the local soccer team. They do not have infrastructure to be able to handle something like that in terms of maintenance.

Mr McDOUGALL—I beg to differ. They do because they employ people to do it and they raise the funds. Can I ask a serious question? What you are suggesting to me is that everybody who plays sport in Australia, whether it be youth sport, or senior sport, at a competition level should have the government supply 100 per cent cost for them being able to have that sport rather than them paying more than \$2 a week to be able to play the sport. Do you not think that there is a responsibility for those who want to participate? If you want to go off to a gymnasium which is run by a private entrepreneur, you pay a fee. What is the difference when you play another sport in your paying at least a very reasonable contribution towards the supplying of the facilities to play that sport?

Ms Whitfield—It comes down to what is reasonable. I mean, in this case our council is saying 25 percent of that cost is reasonable. Others have different percentages. I do not think we would disagree with you. We would love to pass it off on just a leasing basis, the same as bowling clubs do. Bowling clubs on crown land or council owned land usually run their own leases and they do their own maintenance at their own cost.

Mr McDOUGALL—How do you charge for your passive use of recreation and open space, as opposed to your competition?

Ms Whitfield—We do not charge for passive recreation.

Mr Murray—Most councils would not.

Mr McDOUGALL—Just money raised through rates.

Ms Whitfield—Because it is a low cost, low impact use on the land, whereas organised sport, organised activity there has usually a higher cost impact on the land.

Mr Murray—It would be difficult to police it, as well.

Ms Pattinson—Not only that, it would cost you more to collect it. You would have to have—

Mr McDOUGALL—But do you not find that the cost of supplying passive recreation is far greater than the cost of supplying active sport?

Ms Whitfield—No, not at all.

Mr Kemp—It depends on which way you analyse the cost—per user or per unit of area of open space provided. It would be much lower for walking tracks, playgrounds and those kinds of facilities than it is for sporting facilities.

Mr McDOUGALL—So, you would consider that under a joint funding arrangement that has happened in the past and, I think, would probably continue to happen, a cycle track can be put down by government contributions from the three levels probably—most are joint funded—and the total community has the use of that and can use their bicycles as part of their recreation activity on that track. You fully maintain it. But if you want people to play cricket, you are saying that they have got to pay 100 per cent, or 25 per cent of the upkeep of it, but that the cyclist does not have to.

Ms Johnston—That is pretty much it.

Mr Kemp—If you are just talking about a kiddies' bike track and a park, yes.

Ms Whitfield—The point that you are making is about the use. You have got .01 percent of population playing cricket with people watching it, as opposed to a higher demand within the community,

say, 25 per cent or 50 per cent, who like going bicycling for leisure. It is quite justifiable for you to provide the more needed facility at no cost to the community, as opposed to a very specialised sporting facility like cricket that is played by a very significant minority in the community.

Mr McDOUGALL—I am not criticising you. I am trying to find out where you are putting your priorities and why, because I think that part of this inquiry is to find out what people are doing with that.

Ms Whitfield—We are putting our priorities towards our community needs, which we are finding through needs survey work. That is where our priorities are coming from. They are going towards passive recreation. People go walking for leisure; they go bicycling; they like swimming; they like going to nice places to sit and look at the view; they go picnicking; and they want barbecue areas and off-road bicycle facilities. Really, it is through research being done on national surveys done by your own departments that we have been finding out that leisure survey information. It is backed up by what we find on local survey work throughout our community on what the bulk of the community want to do, and that sets the priority for local government. Yet the high cost, and what our money goes on, is often for specialised sporting facilities that are not used by the majority of the community.

Mr Murray—And a lot of that is traditional, too. Cricket is very traditional in Australia and, in particular areas on the North Shore where we are, cricket is entrenched, if you know what I mean. It is very hard to squeeze them down.

Mr McDOUGALL—What have you done together, or with other levels of government and the private sector, in relation to trying to develop multi-sport facilities?

Ms Pattinson—That will vary for each of us. Ku-ring-gai council has not had the capacity to develop any multi-sport facility. An indoor sports facility is something that has been indicated through our surveys as being required. We cannot fund that through our local mates because of the state government rate-pegging. Our residents could afford to pay, if the rate cap were lifted. We could levy them and they could afford to pay; but it is capped, and so we cannot. But those sorts of facilities cost a lot of money, even for the acquisition of the land. As Mary said earlier, the cost of a facility of that kind is in the order of \$2 million to \$3 million, just to purchase the land to put the facility on, and you have then got the facility costs on top of that. There are very high costs on the North Shore for land acquisition. That is the starting point. There is very little land available; the topography is up and down and there are very few places that are level or suitable for development, and so that again forces the costs up. So we have not got one, but Willoughby has.

Mr Kemp—Mr Chairman, in Hornsby shire there are moves afoot to develop a multi-use facility such as that. A number of sports have formed a loose consortium to try to raise the funds, but they are still looking for about 50 per cent of the money to come from a state government grant—they cannot seem to raise all the money without one—and also for a fairly significant council capital development contribution, as well as the provision of the land free of cost for 20 years. It would probably break down to roughly 30 per cent each from the community, the state government and the council to fund that, if it ever gets going.

Mr McDOUGALL—Have you done any work whatsoever in relation to putting that sort of proposal in with the education department and utilising the sports foundation?

Mr Kemp—We have had some discussions with the education department and, unfortunately, for the best sites that were identified, the schools near them were not particularly interested. We do have a smaller facility that was developed with some council funding on a high school site at Cherrybrook; but, for the sort of larger facility that is required now, the schools that we were interested in did not seem to be all that interested in return.

Mr McDOUGALL—You mentioned a specific school. Would you not be dealing with the education department on a principle of policy in relation to this, rather than dealing first of all with individual schools? How does the education department in New South Wales work with local government for the development of multiple sports facilities on their existing sites?

Ms Pattinson—It is left to the local principals: that is why you deal with the local principals, and that is why you have difficulty.

Mr Kemp—You have to get the support there.

Ms Whitfield—In Willoughby city, we have arrangements with three of the local schools for cross-public use of their sports field. With two of those schools—a primary school and a high school—it is not a problem. We both use their fields. We do the maintenance on them and we have provided floodlights on them. In return for that, we can hire them out at other times—on weekends and after hours—to other sporting users, not a problem. With one of those schools we do have a problem. We are not getting anywhere. The principal in that particular school wants to have the approval before the council can hire it out. So, each school is different.

Ms Pattinson—It is similar for us.

Mr McDOUGALL—Would it be better if it was run by the department of education rather than being a school-run policy?

Mr Kemp—It would be better, but I do think the reality is that it probably will not happen.

Ms Johnston—The education department has changed the way things are done.

Ms Pattinson—The Willoughby situation is the same for us. We have got agreements. Two schools cooperate, the other one does not. We have put in substantial funds to make that available for community use but if the local principal does not support it, you do not get anywhere.

Mr MARTIN—Are you talking only about state schools?

Ms Whitfield—Yes.

Ms Pattinson—No.

Mr BILLSON—Are we to draw from that that there is a range of possibilities?

Ms Whitfield—I was talking about state schools. If I wanted to start talking about the local private school we would really have to go in camera because you get nowhere with them. They do not even want to know about the council—and they have one of the largest sporting facilities.

Ms Johnston—And provide no off-street car parking, which has given local council the biggest headache you can possibly imagine.

Ms Whitfield—So, it is really short shrift.

Mr MARTIN—And the sorts of facilities the private schools have compared with the state high schools and public schools are much more significant?

Mr Murray—Sometimes very much so.

Ms Johnston—The private school has a very large sporting field. There are a couple within our area.

CHAIR—But the council would have control over whether or not it got approval to build in the first place.

Ms Johnston—The approval was given when people were still only cycling around the place and there was one car per three families.

CHAIR—But the council cannot blame the school if there is no car park, and it was within your power at the time—

Ms Johnston—It was something that was decided 40 years ago when technology was just so different. Now you have mum and dad driving in their own car to the sporting facility. You need to consider that. You not only provide the facility you have to consider car parking, because local residents get terribly irate.

Mr MARTIN—To pursue the multi-use concept that Mr McDougall was raising, I would like some comment from all of your colleagues as to the difference that you are experiencing in your local governments areas between the state school system and the private school system in respect of both the availability of and access to existing facilities by the general public in your council areas. I would also like some assessment of the type and quality of sporting facilities that exist within each level of private and public schools, as a point of comparison.

Ms Whitfield—The comparison between the facilities—

Ms Johnston—You generally do not get cooperation from the private schools. It is precisely that; they are private schools. Whilst some members of the community go in through the gates and can walk the dog, facilities are not available for local sporting groups, or anything like that.

Mr McDOUGALL—They cannot hire the facility from the private school?

Ms Johnston—You need to make your personal approach to that school, and they may choose to hire it out to you. It is not done through local government, in any capacity.

Mr McDOUGALL—I would not think so, but there are sporting clubs that use private school facilities by hiring them on an arrangement.

Ms Whitfield—We are not aware of them, and the one time we asked the local—

Mr McDOUGALL—There are certainly plenty in Queensland that do that.

Ms Johnston—It does not happen a lot.

Mr Kemp—The limiting factor is the time slots. Quite often the school uses it at the same peak time as the community organisations want it. You obviously cannot use it at the same time.

Mr MARTIN—Can you make a comment about the quality of the facilities, and what sorts of things the private schools provide?

Ms Johnston—That is the reason they do not like to hire it out. The cost of maintaining the fields is so high that what they get for renting out the particular field for a couple of days a week just would not warrant it. That is one of the comments I have heard. They would rather not lease it out to anyone else, and leave the pitch and the oval and whatever in a good state for their school teams to play on.

Ms Whitfield—They hire council fields to train on.

Ms Johnston—That is right.

Ms Whitfield—All of the private schools in the Willoughby city area hire the council fields.

Ms Johnston—A lot of them do not have their own fields.

Mr MARTIN—What are the facilities that they have? Can you give us an indication of what they have?

Mr HOCKEY—That should be on the record, that they do that because they have not got their own facilities.

Ms Whitfield—Some of them do. The particular school we are talking about with the enormous car parking problem still hires our fields. They want to train on council fields because they want to keep their own fields for competition matches on weekends.

Mr Murray—That is pretty much the norm across Sydney. I have worked in a few councils and most of the private schools will train on the council facilities but play their games of a weekend on their own fields, because they can keep them up to scratch for the weekend matches and have a quality surface.

Mr MARTIN—I am still trying to get a handle on the sorts of facilities that we are talking about. We are conducting an inquiry into whether the Commonwealth government should have a role in providing community based sports facilities in Australia. Whether they be community, whether they be local, state or regional, we are looking at that as a side issue as well.

My reason for wanting to get a handle on some of the school facilities that are in existence is because it goes to the basic question about duplication. If some of these facilities already exist in an area, and have been provided through a variety of sources, whether directly or indirectly by government, then should they not be available in a broader sense in a community? There may be good arguments why not, and I can understand why some of the private schools would say no, but I just want to know what sort of facilities are there. Do they have swimming pools? Do they have terrific turf cricket pitches? What do they have? Could you give us an overview?

Mr Kemp—It varies. For example, Barker College at Hornsby has probably got one of the best turf wickets in Sydney, but it is not available for use by community organisations for the reasons we have heard. Some schools have got very good gymnasiums and indoor pools and all those sorts of things. There are various policies on access from outside school groups and there are also various pricing policies. There is no single answer to that question.

Ms Pattinson—We have several private schools in Ku-ring-gai and they vary again. There are some playing fields, and one of them at least has a swimming pool, but it varies according to whether it is a boys or a girls school, what sorts of sports have been traditionally played and whether they are trying to go with emerging sports or not. Some of the schools are saying that there are emerging sports and they need to keep up with that. Others are saying that this is the tradition here and we need to do that.

So there are playing field or court based sports, but there are also some indoor ones. I did indicate in my submission that we had done a survey of schools and that I would be happy to make it available for the committee.

Mr MARTIN—Please.

Ms Pattinson—We have surveyed all the schools to find out what facilities there are and which are for community use. We found out that the amount that they had available was so minimal that it was not worth pursuing. It was at timeslots that nobody really wanted, after 9 o'clock at night or these sorts of times when nobody is really going to want to use them. I can make that available to the committee.

Mr MARTIN—Just on the school issue again, can you give a comparison in your own areas between the sorts of facilities that the public school system has compared to the private school system? In a quick sentence, do they have the swimming pools and the indoor gymnasiums, et cetera?

Mr Kemp—It is like comparing the First World and the Third World.

Ms Pattinson—That is a bit tough.

Mr HOCKEY—Mr Chairman, can I add something to the questions from Mr Martin. What has not been brought out by the representatives here is the fact that on the lower North Shore, of the 25 schools, 21 are private schools, and of those 21 private schools, two-thirds of the pupils do not come from the lower North Shore. There is a massive influx of people into the lower North Shore using the facilities that are available.

It also needs to be taken into account by this committee that in most of the sports that these schools undertake, the training time is sometimes four or five times greater than the playing time. For example, in relation to rugby, where there is a very high usage level of private school facilities, and they are used all day Saturday and parts of Sundays, the training times mean that the schools need to use council facilities to train because they cannot use their pitches for fourfold or fivefold training, it simply is not possible.

CHAIR—Mr Hockey, have you got a question that you want to put?

Mr HOCKEY—I am just saying that people need to be aware—

CHAIR—You will get opportunities to continue your discussions—

Mr HOCKEY—They might care to comment. I think it is very important that that is brought to the fore. I would not want this committee to have a skewed view that regional areas of Australia have the same disadvantages or advantages as the highest density areas of Australia, which are represented by the people here today.

CHAIR—I am quite sure you will make sure that we do not forget about that during our deliberations.

Mr BILLSON—To Joe and the others, there is also an issue about the alumni organisations of those schools that are often using the facilities that take demand away from the provision of other facilities in the community, which is something you will be pleased to know we are looking at in a visit down our way later. We are looking at that public-private school interaction.

Having grappled with what we talked about earlier following Mr McDougall's question about funding these facilities, can I ask you a question about exclusivity? Every council does a needs study. That leads to provision and funding tends to follow it. What we tried to do in the municipality I was a CEO in was to apply an exclusivity test. That is, if anybody could use it at any time with no barrier to entry, there was a public good in that and the ratepayer funded it.

If it was a tennis court, a bowls club, a basketball stadium, a bingo joint—whatever the case was—where you had to be a member and you were denied access to the use of the facility because of the organisation that ran it, then the greater that denial of access—that is the more exclusive it was—the higher the contribution was from the people that occupied it. Is that a test that you have applied? It is a great incentive to make the facilities available; that is the bottom line.

Ms Johnston—To an extent I think that applies in any case. For instance, the suggestion that we

charge passive users of parks, have a toll gate and anyone who wants to walk in it—

Mr McDOUGALL—I did not suggest that. I asked the question.

Ms Johnston—We do not.

Mr BILLSON—It is the hire of the pooper scooper that is important.

Ms Johnston—That would be a little difficult. But yes, I know certainly the councils in the northern Sydney region are trying to recoup costs by charging user groups what we perceive to be a fair price. But when you get feedback from them, you hear that some children are going to be denied the opportunity to play cricket because their parents cannot afford the annual fee to be in the club. That is really quite difficult. The perception is that it is a very privileged area. But you are dealing with a lot of people with different economic capacities and that is what local government is supposed to cater for.

Mr BILLSON—It leads me to the next question. If you accept that as a concept and as a principled way to go, it runs entirely in the opposite direction to the arguments that are put to us about where Commonwealth funding should go. The arguments talk about elite, state, national and regional facilities, which are those most likely to deny access to your punter in the street, yet that is where we are being encouraged to put Commonwealth resources. There is an essential tension in all of that.

Ms Pattinson—There is. But there is still the demand. What we are dealing with is that there are competing demands for resources and you are saying, ‘Where should they best be put?’ You can make that decision but it does not make the demand for the other thing go away. You have still got to have some capacity to supply what people are asking for. The question then gets down to how you go about doing it and who pays.

Mr Murray—I think the other thing, too, is that local governments can normally provide the local level facilities. Our infrastructure is already there because we have no more land to develop. But in the regional centres it is the high-cost things like the major athletic tracks or aquatic centres or whatever that we simply do not have the funds for. That is what you are looking at. What we are saying is the local stuff we can produce—the cycleways and the playgrounds and the walking tracks and whatever. But it is the high-cost things that we simply cannot. That is what the larger sporting groups and the state associations are saying, ‘We want it in your area,’ and that is where we are at.

Mr BILLSON—At a local level the pressure tends to be more on quantity and as you go up the hierarchy of talent and of facility requirements, it is quality.

Mr Murray—Yes. Exactly.

Mr BILLSON—If you follow that through, where does the Commonwealth get on and get off in that continuum? Are you arguing that it should be at the quality end of the market?

Mr Murray—I think so. What we are saying in our submission is that the local stuff we could fund

because the quality does not have to be so great. Normally it is only if your local A grade or whatever have a game. Local cricket clubs only play; they normally don't even train. It is only when they move into the A grade and the more representative level that they need the quality of pitches that we have not got.

Mr BILLSON—That is not going to help your local authorities and all those around the country that have a need at their local level though, is it, if the Commonwealth goes down that path? It is still going to have that need.

Mr Murray—Yes, but in most cases we can provide at the local level. I am saying in most, not all, either through section 94 or through rates, but I am not saying the quality is great.

Ms Pattinson—The issue of quality is an important one, which we talked about in the Kuringai submission, because the Commonwealth is actually in a very good position to be defining what level of quality is suitable for what level of competition. One of the difficulties in dealing with demand locally is that the locals say, 'We need this standard,' and we are arguing, 'No, we can only maintain to this level here.' There are not some good standards around to say, 'This is suitable for local, this is suitable for state and this is suitable for national.'

Mr BILLSON—We should send you what we worked out.

Ms Pattinson—Okay, good.

Mr BILLSON—If you stick on that theme for a minute, and we go for quality regional, state or national facilities as the most likely area for Commonwealth funding involvement, what do you rule in and what do you rule out in terms of sport or, as Graeme alluded to earlier, broader leisure activities?

Ms Pattinson—I think you would go back to your surveys and say, 'What is it that people most do?' or 'Where are the demands? What is the competing demand for the resources?' The Commonwealth has got some information on it but one of the other things the Commonwealth needs to do is regularly collect that data so it knows the dollar is going where people need it.

Mr BILLSON—In my area, my golden retriever and its friends at puppy class would probably be top of the hit parade in terms of interest because a lot of people have dogs.

Ms Pattinson—But you have got to look at demand with supply.

Mr BILLSON—I accept that.

Ms Pattinson—They might already have enough facilities supplied to meet that demand, so there are two sides.

Mr BILLSON—I am suggesting we might need to be a little more discerning though than looking purely at needs because there might be some areas where the Commonwealth thinks, 'Well, that's an important, highly popular heavy-participation leisure activity, but is it sports? Is it recreation?'

Ms Pattinson—Sure, but again that is the supply. I would suggest there are very few areas where you could not walk a dog. I think the supply of places where you can walk a dog is everywhere.

CHAIR—Sorry, I chopped off Mr Martin before.

Mr MARTIN—My question follows some of what Bruce was just asking and it is in respect of where the Commonwealth might have an involvement. It seems to me that we really are talking about Commonwealth involvement in terms of provision of infrastructure as opposed to maintenance funds from local government's perspective. Is that really what you are putting to us?

Ms Johnston—Yes. We just do not have the resources to get out there and establish anything from scratch. Mind you, it is going to be tough finding the recurrent funding for it as well because we are already strapped. Our biggest problem is the rate-pegging situation and the fact that we cannot even increase fees in other areas because there is some sort of statutory restriction.

Ms Whitfield—But there can also be a problem with recurrent maintenance. Peter mentioned a bit about sports field developing on landfill sites where you are up for subsidence and they cannot fund it. The leisure centre that Willoughby has is up for major refurbishment. There is a lot of money involved with a large aquatic leisure centre with an indoor court that now has a certain amount of maintenance problems to do with the structure of it. Council is just going to have to find the money to refurbish that building now. Yet it is highly used by the region, not just by the local community. It is servicing the greater northern and lower northern shore region.

Mr MARTIN—That argument though about it being a regional facility: is it one which council has tried to raise through your own regional organisation or councils, for example, to see whether there is some way in which other council areas are prepared to contribute to this major refurbishment?

Ms Whitfield—We could. There will be problems with where they will find money. There were some inquiries through the state government to do with using the section 94 on a cross-boundary levying and it is not allowed at the moment under the existing state legislation. If we were going to build Willoughby aquatic leisure centre again, we could ask for the neighbouring councils to contribute because that is where the catchment would come from that would use it. You cannot do it under the legislation; it is just difficult or not there.

Mr MARTIN—I understand that but it does not necessarily have to come from section 94 contributions. It could come from some other source of capital funding within councils—general rates or revenue collection. If you are suggesting that you have got a regional—

Ms Whitfield—You need permission from the minister for a special levy.

Mr MARTIN—I know that too. Let us concentrate on this aquatic facility that happens to be in one local government area. You are saying that a whole bunch of people on the North Shore use it. Even though it is in your local government area, a whole bunch of people from elsewhere are coming to use it. Why not get an agreement—based on survey results or whatever that shows where the usage factor is—from councils

that says, 'We will adopt this as a regional facility but, in doing so, we expect each of the councils to contribute to the maintenance associated with it?' The maintenance vote that comes within council's budget each year is just a general vote.

I am suggesting that, irrespective of whether the funds are collected under section 94, whether they come from the general rate or whatever it might be, there be a general vote that comes out of the engineering budget for maintenance, or something like that, and that it be directed towards that facility—because each council has put its hand up and said, 'We are prepared to accept ownership of that, in part, even though it happens to be in your local government area.' Are people starting to think like that? If they are not, what can we do to encourage them?

Ms Johnston—You have obviously never taken part in a budget decision making process within council.

Mr BILLSON—You will be the first one to go, Steve!

Ms Johnston—It is just not a feasible way to go. The reality is that councils just do not have the money, except for section 94, to look at something like that.

Ms Whitfield—I think it is great in theory.

Ms Johnston—In theory, it works well.

Mr MARTIN—I think you are narrowing it down by saying that you are going to put into recreation facilities funds that you collect by way of developer contribution under section 94, and that that is the only way you are going to do something like this. If you accept that regional facilities are important, maybe you have to be a bit inventive across the board. If you, as one local government area, say, 'Look we have got this tremendous aquatic facility that is going to take \$5 million to fully redevelop because of all the problems that have come over the years it has been operational.' Why should your council and your ratepayers accept all the responsibility for it, when people from other parts of Sydney are using it?

Ms Whitfield—Fair point.

Mr Kemp—Perhaps the Commonwealth can provide some financial incentives to get that to work.

Mr MARTIN—My view would be that perhaps the Commonwealth could contribute—whether it be one-third, one-third, one-third—to that refurbishment or reconstruction. My basic point remains that, if you accept it is going to be a third, this internal mechanism of a regional approach, other than individual council approach, is something that you have to address.

Ms Johnston—I agree, and I think it is being looked at but it is a very new concept. It really has not been happening until now. All councils are aware that they need to consider it but there are enormous restrictions.

Mr BILLSON—That concept has been operating with cultural facilities for 20 years in Victoria. When the budget pressure is on they get a good look at it because of the political consequences of trimming a budget allocation outside the municipality.

CHAIR—But isn't it also true that whereas one shire might be providing the regional indoor sports facility, the next one might be providing the regional cricket ground and the next one the regional open space or something?

Ms Whitfield—I think that is a fair point. The general community does not recognise local government boundaries. They go to a park or a leisure centre that attracts them. When they did a survey on Centennial Park, in the middle of Sydney, they found that one of the high use groups was from north Sydney council area. People were prepared to travel across the bridge to go to the Centennial Park because it had intrinsic attractions for them. We have a population in this area that moves around.

People who use the beaches all the way up the Sydney coastline come from catchments way outside those council areas. Hence there is a state government program that funds the beach improvement program. They recognise that people from outside those immediate areas use those resources. It is the same with councils. We could go to our neighbouring councils and say, 'Cough up, we need you to contribute'. Equally, they could come to us and say, 'Cough up, people from your area are using this, this and this.' Hornsby people will say, 'Willoughby people are using this.' There is a cross-use of facilities—be it child-care, libraries, parks, leisure centres or whatever. We all look after our own because we are actually all using each other's stuff.

Ms Pattinson—It would be an administrative nightmare.

Mr HOCKEY—This group is perhaps not aware that we are going around Australia speaking to councils that are, in the main, significantly larger than the councils represented here. It would be good if you could provide this committee with some facts and figures about the size of your councils, the types of facilities that you have and the usage levels. For example, the Willoughby leisure centre has a 25-metre pool, a gymnasium and a basketball court. How many people go through the Willoughby leisure centre every year?

Ms Johnston—It is phenomenal.

Mr HOCKEY—They are the sorts of facts that would be very handy. In an area of 38 square kilometres, I represent 180,000 people and 120,000 are listed on the rolls. It is in a very small area. The second aspect is about the population density of the area. Referring to Mr McDougall's point earlier, when you have got extremely high population densities, the passive recreation areas are fewer in supply and have greater usage levels than they would if they were in Mr McDougall's electorate. Facts such as those, including an assessment of the number of schools and the facilities available at those schools, would be very handy for this committee .

Ms Pattinson—I can give part of that now if you want it for Ku-ring-gai Council. Do you want it for the record or do you want me to send it to you?

CHAIR—It would probably be more useful for you to send that documentation to us.

Mr HOCKEY—Could you also give us some details on the cost of purchasing land for facilities in your areas?

Ms Whitfield—The current market value is \$1,000 per square metre for Willoughby City Council.

Mr HOCKEY—What about construction costs of the Willoughby Leisure Centre and various other facilities?

Ms Whitfield—It cost us \$10 million, and that was about seven years ago.

CHAIR—Exclusive of land?

Ms Whitfield—That was exclusive of land.

Mr HOCKEY—Could you also give us a breakdown of the number of ovals that you manage, and the proportion of turf wickets for those ovals, and golf courses.

CHAIR—Does the council run the golf course?

Ms Whitfield—The council does not manage them, we lease them.

Mr HOCKEY—Do you mark to market the value of council lands?

Ms Whitfield—Council land value is \$1.3 billion.

Mr HOCKEY—So you marked to market Northbridge Golf Course?

Ms Whitfield—Yes, we did. It is crown land.

Mr HOCKEY—It is crown land?

Ms Whitfield—Yes.

Mr HOCKEY—But you mark to market it. Could you provide us with that information for comparison benefit?

CHAIR—Do you only get a 25 per cent recovery on your golf courses?

Ms Whitfield—No, we do not. The main one we have is on crown land and we have a certain formula for working out the percentage of lease fees on crown land.

CHAIR—So you do better on the golf courses?

Ms Whitfield—We would like to do better on the golf courses but we cannot. It is a state government formula.

CHAIR—What percentage of recovery are you getting on your golf course?

Ms Whitfield—It is related to rate or UCV on adjoining areas.

Mr BILLSON—What rate though—2½ per cent?

Ms Whitfield—I couldn't tell you. I would have to get back to you.

CHAIR—The users of the golf course are being subsidised by the ratepayers; are they?

Ms Whitfield—That is correct.

Mr HOCKEY—We will talk about that outside of this committee, Mr Chairman.

Ms Pattinson—That is not the case in every area. It varies from area to area. It depends on whether we own the land.

Mr HOCKEY—Could you also give us a breakdown of the costs of maintenance. For example, for the turf cricket pitches, do you provide covers for the wickets and issues such as that? One of the beefs that I have, which I will share with the committee at another time, is that turf wickets are extremely costly to maintain. When it comes to spending \$5,000 for covers, which would provide greater protection, councils sometimes do not provide that money. So the cost of maintenance is poorly managed at times by various councils.

Mr BILLSON—If twenty-two people use them for six hours—

Mr HOCKEY—It varies. Also, for example, can you take one set of cricket pitches in your area and calculate the amount of usage of those pitches?

Mr Kemp—Could we additionally give you the number of blades of grass on each?

Mr HOCKEY—The point I am making, Mr Chairman, is that it comes down to comparing apples with apples. You scoff at the level of usage of golf courses. I would bet that cricket pitches in the inner-city areas of Australia receive ten to 20 times greater use than they would in regional areas or in outer suburban areas where they are far more prevalent and there are more people.

CHAIR—I did not scoff in any way at all. I was, I guess, surprised that there are councils that are funding golf courses.

Mr BILLSON—I think it raises another question: do you run a fee-for-service information service for federal MPs to provide—

Mr HOCKEY—Could you provide any other information that is pertinent—such as the number of days the facilities are out of action for maintenance? That is quite important as well.

CHAIR—Any information that you have is obviously helpful, but we would not want the ratepayers in your shires to be levied special rates to provide extra information to the committee.

Mr Kemp—Perhaps Mr Hockey can explain how that may benefit us councils in—

Mr HOCKEY—When a committee of the House of Representatives is looking at the allocation of funds it may take into account the fact that facilities in regional areas are of a poorer quality than they are in inner-city areas rather than taking into account the fact that usage levels are far greater in inner-city areas than they are in regional areas and in places where facilities might not be as prevalent. So the cost of land and all those sorts of issues are very important when this committee deliberates.

Mr JENKINS—A comment first: I think we should get Mr Hockey before us as a witness.

Mr HOCKEY—Happy to.

Mr JENKINS—The point that has just recently been raised is an example of the complexity of this inquiry—the mention of golf. In preceding parliamentary inquiries into sports funding, I do not think that golf has actually ever rated or put up its hand for assistance from the Commonwealth government. I think that begs the question that we have to explore why that is. I am flabbergasted that in certain instances there is any sort of subsidy towards golf from local council. I suppose, we should, if we have got time, explore the reasons for that, and the experiences of other municipalities with the way in which golf fits into things. I think that if you did a community needs study there would probably not be as great an expectation from the community that the level of subsidy should be great.

Ms Johnston—I think the subsidy exists only because of the way that the leasing arrangements are organised with the golf clubs. If council did not lease them to the golf clubs we would have to maintain them ourselves. While there may be a perception of the community subsidising the golf courses, in reality they are not because the costs for local council would be far greater. I cannot see the councils maintaining the golf courses at all. There is this perception that there is cross-subsidisation, but in reality I do not believe it is a justifiable one.

Ms Pattinson—I think that relates more to Willoughby because it is on CALM land. The land that it is on in Ku-ring-gai is our own land and there is no subsidy by ratepayers; it is user pays.

Mr JENKINS—The council directly runs it?

Ms Pattinson—No, we lease it. They used to directly run it and there was a level of subsidy. We now lease it.

Mr JENKINS—Are you suggesting that the level of subsidy disappeared because of the tendering out?

Ms Pattinson—I am suggesting the management practices improved with the leasing out, yes.

Mr JENKINS—Could they have improved under public—

Ms Pattinson—They could have, but council preferred to go with a known management. It is a known management—

Mr JENKINS—Another win. Mr Chairman, I have led the witness in the wrong way.

Mr HOCKEY—Another win for reform.

Mr JENKINS—I will try a last question.

Ms Pattinson—Yes, council could have improved the management and run it themselves.

Mr JENKINS—Thank you.

Mr BILLSON—You should quit while you are behind.

Mr JENKINS—I will try once more.

Ms Pattinson—However, the staff numbers are constrained.

Mr JENKINS—In Victoria, where a number of councils have moved from commissioners back to elected councils, one of the important aspects has been the due diligence procedure. But amongst the due diligence reports that have been given to councils is a suggestion that, because local government is supposedly moving to more commercial accounting practices, councillors should not enter into agreements when they are involved in the provision of capital not on their own land.

I have great difficulty with that as an ideology. I believe, for instance, that if councils, especially at the local level, cannot come to agreements with local schools about the provision of facilities—whether it be basketball stadiums or things like that—there is a greater difficulty in being able to meet the need. For instance, under the schools for the future program schools have been encouraged to come to agreements with the wider community: a new school in my area gets a half basketball court as part of the funding for the new school. I do not really know what you do with half a basketball court, but they are trying to get the local council interested in providing the full court.

The council has identified a need because the local basketball competition needs courts. Therefore, if they make a contribution it meets the community need. I think that that sort of fulfils everything, but the due diligence procedures are encouraging local government not to be involved in those practices. What is the overall view of New South Wales local governments about that sort of aspect?

Ms Pattinson—I do not think we can speak for New South Wales overall.

Mr JENKINS—Just as an example—sorry.

Ms Whitfield—We spoke before about the hiccups in arrangements with some of the schools. Perhaps if we just look at using state government land. If there was some rock solid guarantee about the ongoing general public use of those facilities on state government land that council's capital had gone towards, and if the land was not earmarked for disposal or used for something else at some stage—for example, the school expanded and something else was to come in there; we had a circumstance where we discussed this exact issue with a local high school—I do not think that would be a problem. Councils have contributed before towards the development of sporting facilities on school land. I do not know that we have tackled it on other people's land.

Ms Pattinson—Water board land.

Ms Whitfield—Yes, water board land.

Mr BILLSON—Ordinarily those arrangements would proceed in conjunction with a long-term lease and a management agreement—

Ms Whitfield—Yes, it has to be.

Mr BILLSON—So you go in with your eyes open and you pitch your capital outlay accordingly.

Ms Johnston—Yes.

Mr BILLSON—That is what we did in Victoria.

Ms Pattinson—You can still run into those—

Ms Johnston—But you have to start out that way. You cannot just say, 'Well, there is a facility that is being used by the region. Now we want money from everyone.' If you start out by getting the agreement then it is a realistic option.

Ms Pattinson—The other way of looking at the issue is that, instead of the department of education being the land-holder, it is held by some property section. The education department leases it for the hours they use it and it is leased to other groups for the others. What happens at the moment is that school education believes it has it for 24 hours a day and that everyone else is trying to grab a bit of it. If it goes to another agency and they have got priority of use for that period of time it would make it a lot easier for other community agencies to get a bit of it. But that is just my view.

Ms Whitfield—My understanding is that the department of education in New South Wales was like that years ago—it was open public access. It seems to have constricted down as budgeting—

Ms Johnston—Final budgeting and management is with local schools.

Ms Pattinson—They have delegated down and the whole thing has become local.

Mr JENKINS—Mr Chairman, the downside with making agreements with the local school is that it is only current as long as the local school exists. Before we had the schools for the future program, one of the enlightened schools in the local area entered into an agreement with the local council to provide an indoor swimming pool. But, at the time the schools for the future program was put in, this school discovered it had no future and disappeared. The indoor pool was excised from being part of the sale of the land, fortunately, and still has some community use.

CHAIR—Right. We are running out of time again.

Mr McDOUGALL—Can I just take this one step further? Obviously, we have different local government acts across Australia and we have got different practices, which is going to be a problem. Can I raise the question of this indoor centre at Willoughby, which is one that you threw up and that you have got a capital funding problem with?

The Brisbane City Council had a capital funding problem in relation to all its 15 aquatic facilities. Even though its rate base is far greater because it is a bigger council, it still could not capitalise what was needed to rejuvenate all those centres. The council went into an arrangement with a lease term of up to 20 or 30 years with a private investor who would invest capital. The private sector got the original infrastructure and the capital that they put in, along with some council capital, enabled it to be completely rejuvenated.

The council is on a win, it gets a profit. The private sector is on a win, it gets its profit from running the business on an expanded operation. Have the New South Wales local governments got the capacity to deal with the private sector on their facilities to be able to attract funds?

Ms Whitfield—I would have thought they do, but it depends on each of those facilities that you are talking about and to what extent they have to be commercially profitable, and some are not. Some developers and investors will say, 'Yes, we can make a go of the swimming pool, but you need to have this, this and this which you do not have yet', so you have got further development needed.

Mr McDOUGALL—Which the private sector puts in?

Ms Whitfield—Yes, provided you can do it. There could be constraints on that site of being able to do further development. There could be alienation of more public open space, it might be the site cannot take it, but—

Mr McDOUGALL—Have you got the legislative power to be able to do private sector joint ventures?

Ms Whitfield—Yes, we do.

Mr McDOUGALL—That is the most important thing.

Ms Whitfield—Our leisure centre is run by a separate organisation.

Mr McDOUGALL—And you can accept capital?

Mr Murray—Yes, and a lot of the councils are doing that.

CHAIR—In one of the submissions, I think it was from Ku-ring-gai, there was mention made of a local government salary subsidy grant scheme that used to apply in the 1970s, and the comment is that it was very successful. Why is it not continued if it was so successful, or is it a program that has concluded its task?

Ms Pattinson—It was successful from a local government point of view. Whether it is from a state government point of view, who were the previous funders, I do not know.

CHAIR—Did it end in the 1970s?

Ms Johnston—The funding was only available for a short time. Funding is no longer available and so the positions ceased.

Mr BILLSON—Was that the MRO scheme?

Ms Pattinson—It is a similar scheme but it is a New South Wales version which was a sliding scale, but it is similar to the MRO scheme in Victoria.

CHAIR—So there has been no successor to that scheme? That was a short-term program to subsidise recreational offices in local government?

Ms Pattinson—Yes, or recreational planners.

CHAIR—Is there a state recreation organisation?

Ms Pattinson—Yes, there is.

CHAIR—Is it national fitness or something?

Ms Pattinson—Mr Chair, can I just clarify something. I may have misled you on the golf courses matter when I talked about the leasing out of the management. It was leasing out of the pro management, the professional side of things. Council still manages the course.

CHAIR—Still mows the grass?

Ms Pattinson—Yes, it still mows the grass.

Mr JENKINS—At full cost recovery?

Ms Pattinson—Yes.

Mr HOCKEY—Do you have full cost recovery on your land as it is marked to market?

Ms Pattinson—No, we have not factored in the commercial price of the land. It is the operational cost.

Mr HOCKEY—So in fact it is just the operational costs and they go nowhere near, I would estimate, recovering a return on the value of the land?

Ms Pattinson—No.

CHAIR—Thank you very much to the local government representatives from northern Sydney for coming in today. Your evidence has obviously provoked a great deal of interest on the part of the committee. You have certainly helped to highlight the particular problems that an inner metropolitan area faces in providing recreational facilities for its residents and we appreciate the information you have provided to us. Thank you for coming.

[11.11 a.m.]

CRAMPTON, Mrs Frances, Chairperson, New South Wales Sports Federation, PO Box 204, Flemington Markets, New South Wales 2129

RILEY, Ms Lesa, Executive Officer, New South Wales Sports Federation, PO Box 204, Flemington Markets, New South Wales 2129

CHAIR—I welcome the representatives of the New South Wales Sports Federation. Thank you very much for your attendance today. We have received your submission; are there any additions or corrections that you would like to make to it?

Ms Riley—There is one correction. We currently represent 71 state sporting organisations, not 67, as per our original.

CHAIR—So you have some extra names to add to the list.

Ms Riley—Yes.

CHAIR—Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, I would. I would first like to reiterate the comments in my letter of 11 February and congratulate the minister, the Hon. Warwick Smith, for initiating this inquiry. We would also like to thank the committee for the opportunity to expand on our written submission.

The federation, as we have mentioned, currently represents 71 sporting organisations. Of course, you would be aware that the Sports Commission acknowledges that there are 150 sports and our Department of Sport and Recreation recognises about 92 as mainstream sports. The discussions earlier this morning have been really interesting because almost all the conversation has revolved around the super seven, with a couple of extras added on.

Our submission was a result of canvassing our members for their opinions and represents the collective or majority viewpoint. We see a need for leadership through coordination and financial assistance at the federal government level. I think it has come out quite clearly today that there does not appear to be an overall authority or coordinating body to oversee current and future facilities—and there is obviously a very great need. We have heard from Athletics of the need for a national plan and we have certainly heard from the local councils that one does not exist.

Unnecessary duplication can and does occur. Examples are: do we need a full international aquatics centre in both Albury and Wodonga? Would we need an international athletics facility in Coolangatta and Tweed Heads?

With the emphasis on establishing a healthier community and reducing expenditure in the health area—and we would relate here to the new Active Australia campaign that the federal government has

recently initiated—physical activity, of course, is vital. This necessitates greater access to suitable and—again, I think we have heard this morning—safe facilities. Some exist and are under-utilised, and education is one of the major areas. Some need to be established; many can be shared; all need to be affordable for the user. We see a challenge combined with a considerable need.

Funding sources are always a concern, and that has been raised this morning. We would join with Athletics in recommending a sports lottery such as the one currently conducted in the UK. A small percentage of gambling taxes could solve the problem of facility development and many other areas in sport and recreation. Recently, the Confederation of Australian Sport has calculated that if one cent per cigarette was added to the tobacco excise, we would have in excess of \$200 million.

CHAIR—Perhaps you could tell us something about the New South Wales Sports Federation: what your role and objectives are and where your funding comes from.

Mrs Crampton—The New South Wales Sports Federation was actually born out of a crisis in state government funding where it was mooted a few years ago that all funding to sport and recreation was to be eliminated from the budget. That caused a bit of a crisis amongst New South Wales sporting organisations and a task force was initially established to look at that problem. Ultimately, out of that, the New South Wales Sports Federation was born.

We are only five years old. We are a non-government body, obviously. We represent the collective views and try to give the global perspective of sport in New South Wales. As we say, at the moment we have 71 state sporting organisations as full members, and then we have several other bodies that are associate members. So we are trying to encourage sports to help themselves. We are also trying to look at the global issues that affect sport, particularly in New South Wales.

CHAIR—Where do your funds come from?

Mrs Crampton—They come from the membership, and we do get a Department of Sport and Recreation grant. Any events that we can run generate revenue for us.

CHAIR—So you actually run events too?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, we do.

CHAIR—What is your budget approximately?

Ms Riley—It is about \$90,000. We also have a couple of corporate sponsors that provide funds for us as well.

CHAIR—Are you the only staff member then?

Ms Riley—Yes, I am.

CHAIR—Then you have to do all the work?

Ms Riley—I do.

Mr MARTIN—Who were the sponsors?

Ms Riley—We have the Insurance Exchange of Australia and we also have the NRMA. We have a few in kind sponsors, a printing company and Australian Sports Travel.

CHAIR—Perhaps we have not spent enough time today on looking specifically at how governments could raise additional funds. Since you have actually provided in your submission a list of ideas, you are probably good people for us to talk to about how you would envisage some of those things working. You mentioned a national lottery, but you have also suggested in your submission that the state government should be encouraged to allocate a percentage of gambling taxes to fund developments. What does the New South Wales government currently spend its gambling taxes on? Are there any amounts of it specifically earmarked for sports or community facilities? Are clubs obligated to spend a certain amount of their money on facilities for the community?

Mrs Crampton—In general, there is none of that money going into sport. I will say that there is a current exception, although it is more in terms of sponsorship. The Registered Clubs Association of New South Wales is currently the major sponsor of the New South Wales Institute of Sport, and that was negotiated by the Department of Sport and Recreation, but it is not a direct result of tax coming into sport. The taxes that come out of gambling and tobacco, et cetera, go into consolidated revenue. They are not specifically earmarked. We do not have any health promotions units like a lot of the other states do.

CHAIR—Nor is there a fund set aside from gambling tax to fund community recreation facilities, as there is in some states?

Mrs Crampton—No.

CHAIR—Is the local bowls club that happens to have 50 poker machines obliged to spend a certain amount of the money on bowls, or is that just an internal arrangement?

Ms Riley—Just internal.

CHAIR—If we had a national lottery, how would you envisage that being run?

Mrs Crampton—I am not an expert in how a lottery is run, but I think that we could look at what happened in relation to the Sydney organising committee for the bid for the Olympics. They were able, through a lottery and through certain race days, to generate significant funds in order for them to continue with the bid and ultimately succeed in getting the games to Sydney. I guess there would have to be cooperation between the various lottery commissions across Australia. I do not know how they operate. I do not know if they are as independent as the educational institutions, which obviously cause some problems for us. There would have to be cooperation and whether it was on a population basis—pro rataed back—would

all have to be looked at.

CHAIR—Would you envisage that a lottery would be in a new form of gambling or that the Commonwealth or this new national lottery would take over a field currently already occupied by the state lotteries?

Mrs Crampton—It probably could take over or assume one of the fields that is currently operated by the state lotteries.

CHAIR—Do you have any evidence or information about how the states would react to ceding some of their lottery revenue?

Mrs Crampton—No, we do not.

CHAIR—You have also suggested tax concessions. What sort of tax concessions that are not currently available could provide benefits for sports funding?

Mrs Crampton—Currently, all sporting organisations have to pay sales tax on everything they purchase, which is up to 22 per cent. If some of that could be exempted, that would obviously give them more funds to utilise to operate facilities and provide the necessary support mechanisms for their members.

CHAIR—What do you mean by exempted? Do you mean that the tax continues to be collected but the money be hypothecated for sports facilities? Is that what you are suggesting?

Mrs Crampton—No, I am suggesting that the sports could be authorised as charities. Some of them are charities for the purposes of fund raising, but they could be given charity status so that they were then tax exempt.

CHAIR—So the sports organisation would be allowed to buy, say, tennis racquets tax free?

Mrs Crampton—Yes.

CHAIR—What makes you think that those savings would then go into facilities?

Mrs Crampton—Just the way that we know sport operates. Most sports are there because they want to improve their own activity, and they want to provide greater services and facilities to their members. They want more people attracted. Often the cost of playing the sport is prohibitive and therefore people do not come in.

CHAIR—And you would prefer that voluntary approach to the Commonwealth putting aside the money collected from, say, the sale of sporting equipment for use in regional and local areas?

Mrs Crampton—We would not mind which way it went if sport gained a benefit in the end.

CHAIR—Would you accept, bearing in mind how difficult the government's budgets always are, increasing sales tax on facilities and equipment used in sports and for that extra money to be allocated for sports facilities?

Mrs Crampton—I do not think our members would appreciate that at all.

CHAIR—So they are not so keen to get extra facilities; they are prepared to pay more for their equipment?

Mrs Crampton—They cannot afford to pay more for their equipment. You heard the athletics man today talk about athletic tracks. If you look across the range of sports some of the equipment is very expensive. Rowing shells, and things such as that, do not come cheap, and most sporting organisations are struggling to provide those sorts of facilities. Yes, they are keen but they are not in a position to really be handing out a whole lot more money. Again, it would come back to the user and, already, a lot of the sports are very costly.

CHAIR—I go back to the question Mr Martin asked earlier: where does the Commonwealth get the money from? So far you are proposing tax reductions but no extra revenue from the government.

Mrs Crampton—That is why we have made the suggestion that perhaps a percentage of gambling taxes or the sports lottery—

CHAIR—Are you suggesting that, if we ran an extra lottery, there would be more revenue or is that just forgoing revenue that the state is currently getting?

Mrs Crampton—No; I am suggesting there would be extra revenue. We already have sports betting, and those sorts of things. At this point, in the state of New South Wales, none of that money flows into the sports coffers so that is another avenue that could be looked at.

CHAIR—Do you think the gambling fraternity can find some more money?

Mrs Crampton—I am sure they can.

Mr BILLSON—That is a voluntary tax, is it not?

Mrs Crampton—Yes; that is a voluntary tax.

Mr McDOUGALL—I would like to keep following that line. There appears to be some pretty good evidence around, and there is currently an inquiry being conducted in Victoria about the effect of poker machines on consumer spending in Victoria. As a member from Queensland, I can say that the impact of poker machines in Queensland had a massive effect on consumer spending in the retail sector before Christmas. Let us assume that those reports are going to come out and show that poker machines have had a very large impact on consumer spending and therefore we have not had consumer confidence and a pick up in the economy. If you overload it with more gambling, whether it be in the form of a lottery or a share of

the gambling take at the moment—as you have suggested—how will you guarantee that sport will get some money out of it if there is not too much more money to go around? Is it not just a nice theory at the time but there is no practical reality or guarantee that you are going to get more money?

Mrs Crampton—If all state governments did what they do in Queensland, where a larger percentage of the gambling money goes into sport and recreation, perhaps New South Wales would not be faced with this dilemma that we currently have. New South Wales is not funded through any of those sources but Queensland is. Queensland is one of the highest funded sporting states in Australia and that is because of the percentage that comes out of the gambling revenue. We are saying, as we are looking at sports betting coming into the market as opposed to the traditional sports betting in terms of the racing industry, that perhaps now is the time for us to get in on the ground floor and say, ‘Can we have half a percent or one per cent, or something, come into sport?’ We are not asking for anything additional but just a percentage of what is currently there. The sports lottery is a different thing, that is additional. But, in terms of the gambling, could we negotiate with government for a percentage of that to come into sport?

Mr McDOUGALL—I would not necessarily agree with you that there might be more in New South Wales. The money coming out of the casino tax, or a major proportion of it, is not necessarily going towards sport. A lot of other community organisations benefit from that. You are really saying that, if we want to change the philosophy dealing with existing lottery or gambling systems, we are going to have to get a coordination between state governments to all agree to a similar pattern to be an equal contributor toward the total national funding of sport. Would that be the case?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, if we have a national lottery or a national system, even though that is fraught with difficulties.

Mr McDOUGALL—You mentioned that you agreed with the submission from the Confederation of Australian Sport that one per cent per cigarette stick should be added in a tax form and hypothecated directly to facility funding.

Mrs Crampton—I mentioned that the confederation has recently done a survey and discovered that figure.

Mr McDOUGALL—We are watching the smoking levels in Australia go down. I think, in the last couple of years, they have gone down nearly 10 per cent. If they continue to go down, what is going to happen to the real realisation of the one per cent?

Mrs Crampton—We would have to get those figures from the Confederation of Australian Sport.

Mr McDOUGALL—They just said, in evidence, that they would put it up—2c, 3c, 4c, 5c—to keep the money coming. Do you think that is a realistic way of supplying capital to a funding process that we want to put in place to last a long time?

Mrs Crampton—It is just another suggestion. We have been asked to come up with suggestions and currently in this state, as I mentioned, there is no health promotions foundation that assists sport.

Mr McDOUGALL—Not all states have health foundations. As a federation, what have you done in helping your membership utilise the Australian Sports Foundation that currently exists?

Mrs Crampton—We have tried to make them aware of it. When the foundation initially started, and it was called the Sports Aid Foundation, there were a lot of uncertainties and complications with it. They have gradually settled down. We have tried to make our members aware that it exists, that it is available and of the mechanisms by which they can use it. We cannot force them to do that. We can only make them aware of that information, provide them with the documentation, the forms and all of those sorts of things. Each sport, of course, utilises it in a different manner.

Mr McDOUGALL—I have to acknowledge a passion, having been a sports administrator at both a national and an international level. I understand your passion. Why do you believe that a person playing a sport should be subsidised to participate in that sport because it is expensive? If a person wants to go into participation or recreational sports—for example, camping or fishing—they have to pay their own way. Yet a person playing a sport under the banner of a recognised sport—whatever that is, it always seems to vary—may not have to. Why should one group be given priority over another?

Mrs Crampton—We are not suggesting that one group necessarily be given a priority over others. For all sports it is user pays. At the elite end, some sports are more heavily subsidised than others. Some sports have to fully fund themselves to represent Australia. Others are fully funded to represent Australia. There is a variance from the recreational level through to the elite level. Along the way, in the majority of the sports—I would suggest in over 100 sports—it is totally user pays. That is fair enough because people choose to participate in those particular activities, whether they choose to go camping or rowing or whatever. Ultimately, through to competition, they themselves can determine that.

However, in our aim to produce a healthier community in Australia, and reduce the health budget, as we have already mentioned with the Active Australia campaign, there needs to be greater opportunity to access suitable, safe facilities. If we wish to compete against the rest of the world in sport—and one would have to say with Sydney 2000 on our doorstep that we certainly do—we have to provide the infrastructure and the facilities for that.

I think it is more at the top end that we need the federal government funding assistance. At the lower end, I see that we need federal government coordination assistance, to coordinate what is currently there and what is available. We need to produce the data that we obviously do not have on what currently exists and why we cannot access educational facilities. Why are private schools holding on to their facilities and all of those sorts of things? We do not have sufficient information.

Mr McDOUGALL—What I seem to be getting out of your reply is that you believe that sport which is competitive, international, may be elitism, and I think you are going broader than the IOC sports. I think you are expanding yourself there.

Mrs Crampton—Yes, I am indeed.

Mr McDOUGALL—But at the same time you are saying governments should support them and

support them only, but not passive or recreational sports.

Mrs Crampton—I am saying government should assist us with the facilities that will certainly be used by the elite end but will also be used by the recreational end of sport as well. As we are seeing with the Olympic Games, without the international facilities we cannot compete, we cannot provide the competition, we cannot attract tourists to Australia because we do not have the appropriate facilities to bring in these major international sports.

Mr McDOUGALL—Are all the IOC-member sports members of your federation?

Ms Riley—No. The two major ones missing are Athletics New South Wales—although we have Little Athletics New South Wales; they operate as two separate bodies in New South Wales—and also New South Wales rowing. They are the two major recognised Olympic sports that are not members of the federation at this point in time.

Mr McDOUGALL—If they are not members of the federation, why do you support them? Your arguments have been based around two sports which are not members.

Mrs Crampton—It does not matter. My examples are just covering sport. I am not here to necessarily support the 71 sporting organisations. We are here to talk about sport in the state of New South Wales, and I used those examples because they have been used today and it seems that the committee is familiar with those sports and perhaps more able to understand. Perhaps I should have used croquet and lawn bowls or something.

Mr MARTIN—Turning to the issue of a national health promotion foundation, you have made much of the fact that there is presently this greater awareness about the need for physical activity, and you have been supportive of the government's approach to this and the announcement jointly made last year by Warwick Smith and Mike Wooldridge. Does it therefore not smack a touch odd that one of the suggestions for having a source of funding to try and encourage people, through the provision of facilities, to become fitter, is by charging or putting one cent on a cigarette to get the funds together to do that? Therefore, you are relying on a product that, according at least to the United States law recently, is dangerous to your health, to put it mildly, and yet, in terms of finding a source of funds, we are going to say, 'Take this product which is dreadful for you; we will charge you for using it, and then we will put it into funds to encourage you not to smoke any more.' There is a bit of a circular argument in it.

Mrs Crampton—My personal opinion is that I totally agree with you. I am very anti-smoking. However, this was a suggestion that came out of the majority of our members' recommendations.

Mr MARTIN—Are you aware that when the Health Promotion Foundation was started in Victoria one of its major aims, by hypothecating a tax on cigarettes down there, was in fact to buy out the sponsorship of sport?

Mrs Crampton—Yes.

Mr MARTIN—Are you aware just how much money was actually raised through that Health Promotion Foundation and how much of it actually went back into sport and funding for arts and cultural activities?

Mrs Crampton—The last time that I looked at figures it was \$33 million. It was divided by thirds, and sport actually got one-third of that \$33 million.

Mr MARTIN—And where did the rest of it go?

Mrs Crampton—Into arts or community activities. It was divided one-third, one-third, one-third into the areas you have just mentioned.

Mr MARTIN—And was that the total amount of money that was raised by the promotion foundation down there?

Mrs Crampton—That was the last time I looked at the figures, yes. I have to say I have not looked at those figures in Victoria for a couple of years.

Mr MARTIN—So, from your knowledge, all of the money raised for the Health Promotion Foundation by this hypothecation tax on cigarettes went to sport, culture and arts; none of it went to consolidated revenue?

Mrs Crampton—To my knowledge. But I do not live in Victoria and I am not as familiar with that, but that is what we are advised by our counterparts in Victoria.

Mr MARTIN—Okay. I am just interested in an update because certainly in the 1980s when we did a similar inquiry of this nature that was not the case—most of it went to consolidated revenue. So if there has been a change in the Victorian government's attitude from using smokers as yet another milch cow so that the funds are going to sports facilities, that is very interesting. We will pursue that in Victoria.

I think my colleagues have covered the question of a national lottery system so I do not wish to pursue that particularly. But can I take you to the issue of corporate sponsorship or regulated corporate investment? What is the circumstance in New South Wales at the minute as far as the sports that are in your organisation in terms of what they are telling you about their access to corporate sponsorship?

Mrs Crampton—It is currently harder than ever before for sport in New South Wales to get sponsorship, predominantly because most sponsors are trying to sponsor the Sydney 2000 Olympics. You would be aware that some very big companies have been signed up as TOP sponsors, but there are many other smaller companies that are still hoping to attach themselves to the fringe somehow because obviously the greatest event in the world provides the greatest opportunity for public exposure, and those companies are waiting, hoping that they will be able to put their dollars in there where their label or logo or whatever will be seen by the world. So our members tell us that it is harder than ever now to get sponsorship.

Mr MARTIN—In that climate, then, I guess Netball Australia have done very well to get the

sponsorship that they did from the Commonwealth Bank.

Mrs Crampton—They have done exceptionally well, and that was the national body looking for the whole of Australia in a sport that culturally is very accepted in Australia in women's sport.

Mr MARTIN—And providing also something that is slightly different in that they are having a national competition with eight or so teams representing the states and so on, and also having access to television?

Mrs Crampton—Yes.

Mr MARTIN—Is that still important for sports in terms of attracting sponsorship as a form of financial support?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, it is. Most sponsors look for promotional opportunities and exposure, and the best is via television. If you can come to them and say, 'We have television coverage guaranteed', whether it be through free to air or any other medium, then they are more interested than if you come and say, 'Maybe we will get sponsorship', or 'Perhaps the camera will swing past your logo.' That is not of interest to them.

Mr MARTIN—You mentioned free to air. Do you think the circumstances might change in respect of pay television?

Mrs Crampton—I hope so, but I don't know.

Mr MARTIN—As to the issue of facilities provision, though, that we are principally concerned with in this inquiry, your organisation obviously believes that there is a need for these facilities to be provided by the Commonwealth government. We have talked this morning about a one-third, one-third, one-third-type of approach. How would your organisation feel about that particular division of responsibility, if you like?

Mrs Crampton—It seems a reasonable suggestion, without really sitting down and looking at all the figures that that would incur. We are not expecting, and I don't think our members are expecting that the federal government will provide 100 per cent of the funds. There also needs to be, I think, a commitment from the organisations that are involved, and certainly in the past that was a situation where, if the regional people of Riverina region wanted a facility, they also had to contribute something so that there was more of a feeling of ownership and responsibility. I think those things need to be looked at.

Mr MARTIN—Over the years, do you think there has been a better acceptance of the need to approach the provision of sporting facilities from a regional basis rather than a local basis?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, we do indeed. And I gave two examples. If you are looking at very big international-type facilities such as an aquatic centre, which is a very expensive undertaking—and I think that was highlighted by the previous panel—there is a need to look at it in terms of a region and the people from the region who will go to that facility. We certainly cannot have an international aquatic centre in every suburb in Australia or even in every country town in Australia.

Mr MARTIN—They will go to it, certainly, but will they pay for it?

Mrs Crampton—They probably will not pay sufficient to maintain it, which you have obviously heard is a problem.

Mr MARTIN—One opportunity perhaps that your membership might be prepared to accept is charging more for the use of those facilities.

Mrs Crampton—I think that has happened with the international aquatic centre at Homebush. Initially its rates or its entry charges were a certain level. They have risen, and it has not affected its intake at all. In fact they have more and more people coming because it is a novelty, it is a unique facility, and it is servicing that very large geographical area and, I am sure, well outside the western Sydney area.

Ms Riley—Can I add to that? That facility, the aquatic centre, is not managed by the state sporting organisation, it is managed by the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust, so they are private entrepreneurs who are there to make money—which causes another side issue, I guess, for sporting organisations. State organisations wanting to utilise the best facilities we have in Sydney have been hit with a huge increase in the hiring fees to utilise those venues, and post-2000 that is a concern of our membership, that the international standard facilities that we will have will have huge hiring fees because they will be managed by private providers which, from a government point of view, I guess is still keeping the participation by the community at the same level but, from a sport and a competitive point of view, it does increase the cost of hiring that for elite and competitive or structured competitions.

Mr MARTIN—I don't think Mike Egan would like to hear you refer to the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust as being a private organisation. I think he expects to get a bit out of that as well. But I take your point; I think it is well made.

CHAIR—Do you have any figures about what they are charging for entry into that swimming complex compared with other swimming complexes in Sydney?

Mrs Crampton—We do not have them here. We can certainly provide them.

CHAIR—Perhaps we could make some inquiries about that. Obviously they think they are going to make it run at a profit, and it is probably helpful for us to know what the difference is between what it costs to enter a place that is determined to make a profit compared to one that is relying on ratepayer or taxpayer subsidy.

Mr McDOUGALL—Mr Chairman, could I just suggest, when you are doing that, that you do not limit it to entry fees, because the real return in that is all the bits and pieces that you pay for. If you want lights, if you want timing and if you want this and if you want that, that really is the income level.

CHAIR—Yes, but I am also interested in what it costs in order for the public to go in there casually to have a swim compared with another place.

Mrs Crampton—And that is readily available. They could even post to you a list of their hire charges.

Mr BILLSON—I have a number of questions. Firstly, do you think people are missing out on participation in sport at the moment?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, I think they are and, in a different area, particularly children, where we do not have sport and physical education as a compulsory part of their activities on a daily basis.

Mr BILLSON—They do not get that taste to start with, so an introduction to it is something that is essential in your view?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, it is. I alluded earlier to the problem that we currently face across Australia where each state government education authority is autonomous, and we have heard today each school operates in an autonomous manner as well. That creates even further difficulties and problems.

Mr BILLSON—I will come back to the national guidelines, but that would be something you would argue should be included in the guidelines. There must be some minimum effort in terms of exposure, presentation?

Mrs Crampton—Yes.

Mr BILLSON—I am at times disturbed by club level player payments. It is an area that is out of control, in my view, and sees an enormous amount of volunteer and club sporting effort going to paying the best full forward in the league or whatever the indigenous equivalent is in New South Wales. Do you see that as well? Is there a concern for the association about the resources that are going into picking off not the elite players but, at a club level in regional competitions, trying to buy their services?

Mrs Crampton—It is probably of greater concern in the professional football codes and basketball leagues and things like that, smaller professional leagues, where we see that occurring. Our membership is not quite so concerned with that. Certainly we have the football codes as members, but that professional end is generally looked after through professional revenue sources such as the huge sponsorships, the gate takings and things like that that those traditional sports that are accepted in Australia are able to attract.

Mr BILLSON—The local equivalent for me is the Mornington Peninsula Football League. The club won the grand final last year and every one of its players got cherry-picked, so they could not field a firsts this season because they said, 'We do not want to have our members having to put up gate entry fees and all those sorts of things to outbid people for that level of player.' As a consequence they got beaten by 350 points in their first game—they could not field a team.

Mrs Crampton—I guess that would then come down to that club and that organisation's development plan—what they have in place, what they are doing to make sure that they have a future, what they are doing to bring up young players to that level. Ultimately, everybody that comes into competitive sport, has a goal of trying to reach the top. People come into swimming because they aspire to be Kieran Perkins or Samantha

Riley. One of sport's responsibilities is to provide that opportunity for people to reach their maximum potential.

Mr BILLSON—I think you and I could have got a run in the game to help field a team.

Mrs Crampton—That would be right, yes.

Mr BILLSON—In terms of the elite players, what is your view on an argument that says the elite player should be putting some funds back into their sport as a return on the investment that the nation has made in the development of their skills? Is there life in that argument amongst your membership?

Mrs Crampton—I think there is, and I think it has already existed. Certainly at the Australian Institute of Sport the professional players coming out of the tennis program were asked to put a percentage—at one stage it was 25 per cent; I do not know what it is today—back into that particular program to help continue the development of that program. So I think in some sports that is already in place. A lot would depend on what you call income—whether you are earning millions of dollars or whether you are only earning hundreds, and those sorts of things—but I think it is already there.

CHAIR—But it really is on a voluntary basis, is it not, in most cases?

Mrs Crampton—I would think so, but I would really have to go and ask each of the individual sports. With the AIS one, they signed a contract when they went in that they would give a percentage back into that program which then kept the funding.

CHAIR—So the professional cricketer may not receive any direct cash going through their life, but the small group of elite cricketers end up earning substantial income and it is really up to their goodwill to put it back into the industry, is it not—as a sport?

Mrs Crampton—Yes, and I guess Cricket Australia could look at that and change its contracts with its players if they thought that was an appropriate way to go.

Mr BILLSON—Are they the sorts of things that you think should be considered in the development of national guidelines, where the Commonwealth—in conjunction with state and local government and peak sporting bodies—would say, assuming we find some resources, that there is money available, but the quid pro quo includes access; functionality of the facility; a minimum catchment area, whether it be an index of area, population participation or minimum state and local government financial effort; the reinvestment of proceeds from professional development down the track back into the sport; even participation in peak bodies like your own, and making sure coaching standards and those sorts of things are up to scratch? Is that the sort of thing you had in mind to be included in the national guidelines that you are advocating?

Mrs Crampton—I think they are all areas to be looked at. If people know when they start out to be a professional golfer that, when they get to a certain earning level, they are going to have to put back into the sport a certain percentage—

Mr BILLSON—A Tiger tax.

Mrs Crampton—Yes, a Tiger tax would be wonderful—because the sport gave you all the foundations, all the basics, all the assistance. As we have become more professional with the various state institutes and academies of sport in assisting elite athletes, there is a huge investment that goes into them, so they need to know from the beginning. It is not something that you can suddenly bounce on them. When Tiger wins the greatest golf tournament in the world you cannot suddenly say, 'Right, mate, you now have to put that in.'

Mr BILLSON—'Cough up your zacks.' Lastly, in the event that federal funding was available—whether we had a quick pick or won lotto—where would you see it being made available: right through the hierarchy of facilities from entry level to standard facilities, to regional facilities, up to state? Do you think it should be across the board or do you have a view about it being more narrowly defined?

Mrs Crampton—I think it is a responsibility of national and state sporting organisations to sit down and look at a plan of what they really need to provide their sport across the board, and then to realistically make application. Currently we see a need for more international standard facilities in Australia. Once those needs are settled, and that might take several years, then we might need to look at the next level down.

But if we want everyone in Australia to be able to swim because we live on an island continent and we think that it is important, then we have to provide the wherewithal for people to learn to swim. And if we want everyone in Australia to be well coordinated, then we need to provide those opportunities as well. But I think it is incumbent on national and state sporting organisations jointly to work out their plan and then to be able to make application, and justify it according to their plan.

Mr BILLSON—So that might involve both local facilities, say, in the equestrian area where there are at times problems in just getting to facilities without putting the float on and driving for a couple of hours, whereas in other sports it might be at higher levels in the sport?

Mrs Crampton—Yes.

Mr BILLSON—It is a sport-by-sport thing.

Mrs Crampton—And it is hard to give one straight answer when you are looking at over 100 sports.

Mr BILLSON—Okay. That is a shame; we would have liked that.

CHAIR—Any other questions?

Mr McDougall—I only have one. You have talked about a third, a third and a third at local government level. I am certainly going to be asking the corporate sector whether they fit in to the third, third, third at some stage as we go around with this inquiry. I am not asking for a percentage, but I am asking this question: does sport have a responsibility to make a contribution to facilities funding?

Mrs Crampton—Yes.

Mr McDOUGALL—Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you very much again for your attendance and for the information you have provided to the committee. You have stimulated our thinking in a range of areas, and we appreciate that. It may be that we will want to get back to you about some matters in the future, but we appreciate your attendance and the evidence you have given today.

Mrs Crampton—Thank you for the opportunity.

[11.50 a.m.]

CUMMINS, Mr Peter John, Project Leader, Olympic Project Team, James Hardie Consortium, 65 York Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2000

CUSH, Mr Robin Edward, National Manager, Building Group/Director, Barclay Mowlem Construction Ltd, 973 Fairfield Road, Moorooka, Queensland 4105

MOLLER, Mr John Leonard, Executive General Manager, James Hardie Consortium, 65 York Street, Sydney, New South Wales 2000

CHAIR—We have received your submission and have authorised its publication. Do you propose any changes to your submission?

Mr Moller—No.

CHAIR—Would you like to make any opening comments?

Mr Moller—Yes, I just thought I would summarise our written submission.

CHAIR—Committee members have had an opportunity to read it, so you do not need to repeat it. But if there are things that you would like to add, you are welcome to.

Mr Moller—In May 1996 we formed the industry consortium. That really came out of some meetings we had in late 1995 with the Australian Institute of Sport. James Hardie is one of the principal sponsors with the Institute of Sport. There was an apparent need for multi-sport indoor facilities throughout Australia, so the consortium was put together with the objective of designing a multi-sport indoor facility and making it viable from a business perspective. We put a concept together which we believe has commercial viability. The facility can be debt-free after 10 years and, after that 10-year period, provide an ongoing revenue stream to the appropriate body. What it needs for the equation to work is \$1 million up-front equity funding and land to be provided by the council or the government.

Our initial investigations into current practices showed that the majority of the indoor facilities today are inadequate; the operating costs are too high and the revenues too low. Our research has shown that as a consequence of that we are currently running losses of about \$232 million per annum. Our recommendation is to adopt the concept developed by the consortium which, first of all, requires a long-term plan to be established for multi-sport indoor facilities. Secondly, we believe that these facilities need to be professionally managed and they need to be strategically located, from a demographic point of view. Thirdly, we believe they need to be professionally built and that they need to be designed properly. Finally, we believe that the best solution to this was really to provide a turnkey solution, from a construction point of view. In summary, that is where we are at.

CHAIR—You have therefore developed a concept. Have you actually built any of these? Are there any of them in operation?

Mr Moller—I might let Peter answer that question.

Mr Cummins—Not as yet, but we are having final negotiations with several parties. We are currently talking to about 23 different groups and one, in particular, at Shailer Park in Queensland. It looks as though that could very soon be given the go-ahead.

CHAIR—Are we going there on—

Mr McDOUGALL—We will be very close to it. We will be at Browns Plains and in Logan City at the dump recreation area. That would be very close to Shailer Park.

Mr Cummins—That is probably pretty close to the facility. An interesting aspect of that is that it is on education department land. We have the same sort of facility down in New South Wales and we are having discussions down here. Initially, the education department had some legal impediments in allowing these sorts of facilities to be built in secondary schools. Generally, there is a no commercial activity clause within the operation of the high schools and there is a security element. But I think there is a will, both here in New South Wales, and Queensland, to ultimately annex those sorts of lands to overcome that problem.

CHAIR—Where is the million dollars generally going to come from in the cases where you are having discussions?

Mr Cummins—Essentially, that needs to come from seed funding, either from one or a number of the levels of government. Some of the associations have small funding available, but that is generally minuscule. What we have tried to encourage is several sporting organisations getting together. Again, in the case of Queensland, Queensland Netball and Basketball have joined forces. That is a very good example, I think, for associations elsewhere. They have spoken to Futsal and those three groups nationally constitute around 800,000 to 900,000 registered players. We see the shared use of these facilities as being critical.

CHAIR—But where is their million coming from?

Mr Cummins—At this stage, in terms of specifically Shailer Park, that is coming from council. In many other areas, some councils are contributing up to \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000 initially, with promises of more further on. Some of the sporting associations in local areas, such as Toowoomba, are looking at raising the money themselves, but it is quite ad hoc. There is no firm plan.

CHAIR—You are aware that the previous Queensland government promised about 11, 15 or 20 communities a million dollars for an indoor sporting complex. Are you negotiating with any of those awardees?

Mr Cummins—Our understanding is that there is only about \$1.1 million left in the Queensland state budget and the funds have been already allocated.

CHAIR—Yes, they have already been allocated. But I do not think in any case that the facilities have actually been built.

Mr Cummins—That is true. We are talking to about four other groups in Queensland. We believe their funding is coming from that. We also believe that if they are not commenced by June this year that funding ceases.

CHAIR—Yes. I think they have got to be finished by next February. If, in fact, you get all of these facilities up and running, you will require a large number of skilled managers. I applaud your concept that, in proposing these kinds of facilities, you need not just bricks and mortar, you also need a management plan and proper business expertise. How do you propose to train or where do you expect to get your centre managers from?

Mr Cummins—If we used Queensland Netball and Basketball, they have actually formed a joint venture company. They are using professional managers essentially from the financial side of things and using sports graduates from Griffith University and the other sporting campuses to run the sports programs within the facilities. They currently manage the Runaway Bay netball facility on the Gold Coast and they have selected something like four or five professional managers just recently. They have won the rights to manage, I think, two other facilities, one at Caloundra, and one near Noosa.

CHAIR—Is there a training program already in place for these people or are they just being picked up out of industry?

Mr Cummins—There are training programs in place at the universities. From a financial viewpoint, the Queensland Netball and Basketball want to oversee the financial side of it, so they have established that particular area.

CHAIR—Is your consortium only interested in delivering a turnkey project or are you interested in being involved on a long-term management basis?

Mr Cummins—Developing it only. But in terms of delivering the facility, we have also had to look at business plans based on successful operations and ventures. We have discussed things like court rates, revenue and expenses over a 10-year time frame to make sure that what we have put together is commercially viable.

CHAIR—You are selling a plan and a building that you are making in a factory somewhere, presumably?

Mr Moller—Yes, parts of it.

CHAIR—Parts of it and then delivering them all round the country. Where is the factory, incidentally?

Mr Moller—It is not out of one factory. There are components that are made in the factory. We have factories located in every capital city. So from that point of view it will be located wherever the work is.

CHAIR—There will not be a Henry Ford production line type of arrangement. Each one will be built separately using common plans?

Mr Moller—A common design is the foundation to it. Conceptually what we are looking at is a design which incorporates external cladding which is insulated and that is what we call a sandwich panel. Internally we are looking at a fit-out which is built in a modular construction so that the facility can expand or contract accordingly. We are also looking at a construction which can be pre-built off-site which enables significant cost reduction. Time on site has two components. It takes a lot longer to build it and it is more expensive. The quicker we can build the facilities, the quicker the project can start getting revenue in.

The other key element of the design is that the design has been certified by the Australian Institute of Sport. The sprung floors, the lighting and all those criteria which provide for an adequate facility have had a lot of research and investment put into them.

Mr MARTIN—Have you guys come in contact with this concept of the rage cage? I think it is being manufactured in South Australia as a sports facility.

Mr Cummins—No.

Mr MARTIN—I saw recently on a news item where apparently they are building something prefabricated again—nothing as big as this. They are also using labour out of one of the prisons in South Australia to manufacture it. It is putting a multi-purpose basketball court into environments where the children basically get put into the cage, as it were. They are protected in some of the neighbourhoods where they would like to go out and have some active sport, but are in some way being discouraged from doing so.

Mr BILLSON—Are you going to mention the armour-plated coke machine as part of the design?

Mr MARTIN—No, none of that. But you have not come across it? You have not heard of this concept?

Mr Cummins—No.

Mr MARTIN—When and where do you think the first of these will be up and running?

Mr Cummins—We are currently under negotiation with at least six groups and it is a case of the funding. The funding is generally the hold-up.

Mr MARTIN—About \$3 million will get it on the ground?

Mr Cummins—Absolutely. There are several PC items in there. It assumes a considerable amount for landscaping and car parking and a considerable amount for below floor level piling because some of these are on sloping sites or tips.

Mr MARTIN—As part of the development of this, you are marketing it to sporting organisations. Are you also doing it to local government areas?

Mr Cummins—Yes.

Mr MARTIN—So they are all aware of it and they know that this concept is available?

Mr Cummins—We are just starting to get around. We have been actively promoting it for about three months.

Mr MARTIN—Do you have some brochures on it or something that we might have a look at?

Mr Moller—We have drawings of the facilities.

Mr MARTIN—Are you able to provide those to the committee so that we might have a look at them? Or is this technical in confidence and commercial in confidence? I guarantee that none of these people on this side of the table will go into competition against you.

Mr Moller—The issue with something like this is that it is an investment in the design. What we would prefer to do is to try to keep that as confidential as we can. But in talking through the concept, we are happy to show the designs and talk through it, if that is going to help you. We would rather keep the documentation confidential.

Mr MARTIN—I understand.

Mr McDOUGALL—You said at the start that you did the design in consultation with the AIS in relation to the development of this indoor facility. Was that based on the AIS's very narrow view of the world about elitism or were any community requirements added to the design so that the local government may see that the facility has a broader use than the AIS?

Mr Cummins—It was very specifically community based firstly, regional and then national. What we have been able to do is incorporate all of those requirements into the design. At a national level, the facility is marginally larger and that simply relates to the run-off area for basketball and netball.

Mr McDOUGALL—Are we assuming from all this that this whole indoor facility is really about ball sports? It is really netball, basketball, futsal, et cetera.

Mr Moller—Yes.

Mr McDOUGALL—And it is not going any broader than that.

CHAIR—Is it suitable for tennis?

Mr Cummins—Tennis could be played, but specifically the markings we have are for those four.

Mr McDOUGALL—So it is multi-purpose, but very directed multi-purpose.

Mr Moller—Very direct, yes.

Mr McDOUGALL—It is not expanding into gymnasiums and aquatic sports?

Mr Moller—Yes, it can accommodate gymnasiums.

Mr Cummins—And aerobics.

Mr McDOUGALL—I am interested in the 10-year debt free. I seem to have heard all this before. There was a company called BHP and there was 'Life. Be in it'. Why are you different and how are you going to make it work when they could not?

Mr Moller—It is probably worthwhile talking about the assumptions, how it stacks economically and whether it will or will not work based on the economics. The key criteria are all about first of all containing the cost to build the facility, and secondly, making sure that we get a guaranteed revenue income stream.

For the model to work, we have based it on the following: during the peak times, which we classify as 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., we believe that we can get 80 per cent court utilisation and the court rate will vary somewhere between \$40 and \$47 per hour. During the shoulder time, which is between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. and also 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturdays, we would run the model on \$25 per hour, with court utilisation at 80 per cent.

During the day, we have said that there will be a 15 per cent court utilisation and that will be at \$15 per hour. The overall utilisation for a day from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. works out at roughly 50 per cent.

The upside on the model is that, if the facility is used as a gym and a gym is added to it, that is additional income stream. If there are sponsorships, et cetera, we have allowed a minimum of \$25,000 per year sponsorship. But with the right facility, we believe that there is a lot of upside on that. There is also a lot of upside on the catering services that are offered in the facility. We believe our model has been somewhat conservative if the facility is run professionally. I think the other key to it is to make sure that the demographics are selected correctly for the location.

Mr McDOUGALL—I do not want to discourage you, because I would like to see this principle work, but it was tried once before. Most of it was hung on the basis that the local government was really going to be responsible for the funding of it and, when it became debt free, the ongoing maintenance and running costs of it. I am talking about the BHP 'Life. Be in it' program. We have heard this morning from some local governments that they are flat out, broke, they have got no money and they are not going to get any money.

You said that you saw the Commonwealth as creating some seed funding. Have you come up with a chart which can show us how you believe the total financial structure should be put together? Obviously you are involved yourself as the corporate, the sport, the local government, the state government and the federal government. Why would you say that it has to be only seed funded by the Commonwealth government?

Mr Moller—We have that model. Do you want to talk through it?

Mr Cummins—Certainly. Essentially for this to get off the ground and to be debt free after 10 years, it needs \$1 million put into it. Various councils do have funds to put in. In several instances they have the full amount. In other instances, they have substantially less than that. Through the Commonwealth Bank we have got a very competitive vehicle set up to be able to offer low interest rates during that period, so that the pay back is nowhere near as great. We are talking generally about income of around the \$550,000 to \$600,000 level with expenses and, with the way we have designed the facility, of around \$200,000 per annum. The sponsorship at the corporate level and the catering are in fact an upside.

We have found that we need to pull sporting groups together. The stakeholders have to be from at least two of those ball sports we have nominated or it will not work. We do not believe a single use or single purpose sports facility generally at the community level would work.

Mr BILLSON—Why not target the private sector? If there was an investor with a crisp million looking to do something worthwhile with it, why is your pitch not as attractive to them? Notwithstanding that they would be looking for a swifter return on their million and perhaps a grant from the Commonwealth that would be carried with it, why are they not being looked at?

Secondly, in my particular electorate I have somebody who does these things. It was the venue for the first Australian indoor tennis championships in Frankston. We are talking to the proprietors of those facilities and they are asking us the question: why is the taxpayer continually being involved in these sorts of ventures when they finance their own? They run in competition with other government sponsored, government subsidised facilities and where is the fairness in that? That is the question they are asking us. I would be interested in your reflections on those two things.

Mr Cummins—Our objective specifically was to aim these at community level. We have not gone out to the private sector. We felt there was a backlash. The feedback we were getting was that there was a bit of a backlash to the private facilities. Generally there was a feeling that it was not so much the rates being charged, but the sports being chosen to be played there were only those that would return the greatest level of profit.

We set out to have a multi-purpose facility and have it aimed at the community level. That does not mean to say that this would not work at the private enterprise level. In fact, there are several very successful centres being run which are profitable. So we did not set out for that. I could only endorse your comments about the group down in Frankston. Quite obviously, these facilities can be successful.

Mr BILLSON—They are frightfully annoyed that in the catchment they are up against four like facilities. They have got considerable public money in them and they are feeling that they are competing with one arm tied behind their backs. As you follow the cost structure through, even for access to equipment and those sorts of things, their competitors have tax advantages that they do not have. They are saying, 'Well, this is why there are not too many private facilities around. You have stacked the table so much against the private operator.' This is why this sector of the market is increasingly looking to initiatives like yours, the Victorian Basketball Association model and the BHP 'Life. Be in it' model because it is so difficult to compete when there is so much public money underpinning so many of these facilities.

CHAIR—Is your model financially dependent upon the million dollars receiving no interest or redemption, at least for ten years, being a grant?

Mr Moller—The way the mathematics work is that it is based on a million dollars up front.

CHAIR—But free money?

Mr Moller—Free money and it is based on no cost for land. They are the two components. That is why for instance we were thinking, if the council provided the land, maybe that revenue stream down track after the 10 years would get apportioned back to who provided the initial funding. So, if it was a combination of land and a million dollars, you value that and you apportion your revenue stream down track of that.

Mr BILLSON—The feasibility modelling that we did showed enormous upsides in not only your sort of facility, but having the aquatic element all brought together on the one site. If you separate one from the other, it is extraordinarily difficult without these sorts of financial advantages to make them viable. I would be interested in your comments about how important those complementary and reciprocal magnet types of features are for facilities in these sorts of ventures.

Mr Cummins—We have been asked to look at swimming pools and we have found it difficult to make those work. It is not really our bag.

Mr BILLSON—Not on their own?

Mr Cummins—On their own. We have really looked at simply an indoor facility primarily aimed at ball sport and we are quite confident in our financial numbers on that at the commercial end. As to the pool, we were very frightened by some of the levels of subsidies that councils are currently paying for pools. One council on the coast in New South Wales is paying \$800,000 a year subsidy to keep pools open that probably have a utilisation maybe of 15 per cent. Some of those are in areas where the amount of money that is being spent on that sort of facility can be reviewed and where the money is really going down the drain.

Mr BILLSON—In picking up the comments that were made by the earlier sports federation, if the Commonwealth was to get more involved in these things, its guidelines must emphasise viability. Is that what I am understanding to be your point?

Mr Cummins—Viability, quality, that the correct demographics have been done and that the facility has every chance of being a commercial success.

CHAIR—I presume that is important to you as well?

Mr Cummins—Absolutely, and to the lender.

Mr McDougall—Following on from that point, I acknowledge your point that swimming centres cost money. I think the Sleeman aquatic centre in Brisbane runs at about a \$1.7 million loss per annum. Could I suggest that, if you take pools in isolation, you will have a debt problem. If you take pools in

conjunction with an indoor facility, you might find the equation totally different. Would you be prepared to look at it in a new light rather than just on the pool alone basis and then compare it to the ball sports alone basis? Have you done a joint comparison to see how they would stack up? It may necessitate bringing in a partner to be able to come up with the total proposal.

Mr Cummins—I am sure we would look at that. We have looked at 25 metre heated indoor pools and, under certain circumstances with the right revenue at the gate, they could be commercially viable.

Mr BILLSON—Again with pools all the economic data pushes you in the wrong direction in terms of maximising public use. The size of it is absolutely critical. Everybody wants their pool to host the regional interschool swimming carnival. The economics of a pool of that type for that function take you totally in the wrong direction in terms of the day-to-day viability for splashers, lap swimmers and all those sorts of things. It is a tough call, is it not?

Mr Moller—The other point worth making as well is that the more courts you get the more profitable the model works out. If you start off with a one-court indoor stadium, you are really running at a loss. You have really got to get to a minimum of two courts to even start to get into the equation. The best model is the four-court model. Then you run into space criteria. If you are building a four-court model, where can you get land for a four-court model plus a pool?

CHAIR—How much does your four-court model cost?

Mr Cummins—Three million.

CHAIR—Three million is your four-court model?

Mr Cummins—Correct.

Mr McDOUGALL—You raised the interesting part about Shailer Park and I think you were talking about the education department. I spent 10 years in Queensland trying to get the education department to become involved. You did mention problems in legality. Frankly, I suggest the legality is only in their own head. It is not a real problem if they really want to get around it. After 10 years of local government and federal government trying to get the education department in Queensland to get out of the system and get out into the real world, how are you going to make them do it?

Mr Cummins—I think it is pretty well under way with the existing principal there. They will get a precedent at Shailer Park that will work, that I think the education department is satisfied with at the moment and the local council is happy with. I think that could be a precedent then for the rest of it.

Mr McDOUGALL—I think we should take this one a little bit further and have a talk to the other people concerned.

CHAIR—As we will be in Logan City—we can have a look. Any other questions that committee members would like to raise? If not, I thank you for drawing your concept to our attention. We appreciate it.

I think you have been to see the minister and he also expressed an interest in the work that you are doing and was keen that the committee should be exposed to this concept as well.

I certainly wish you well with the proposal. We hope that many, many indoor sports facilities become a possibility because everywhere we go people say they want more indoor sports facilities. If you can find a way to make it work, that will certainly be greatly appreciated in communities everywhere.

Mr JENKINS—Can I just ask about something that has not been clarified? Is the facility here being pitched at the local level? It is not a regional facility?

Mr Cummins—It is at three levels—local, regional and national—and it varies in size.

Mr JENKINS—If you are looking at it to be at those levels, the viability must go to getting advice from the peak bodies about the need for the higher levels.

Mr Cummins—Correct.

Mr JENKINS—Are you satisfied that they have the expertise to give you the right advice about that?

Mr Cummins—We are satisfied with the demographics and the number of registered players that exist. As long as the sporting associations are stakeholders in the facility, then I think it will work.

Mr JENKINS—I think you are doing some of the base work for them.

Mr Cummins—That could be the case. We have had to be able to present numbers and to be able to satisfy ourselves that these are viable.

Mr BILLSON—You bring the reality test to the table, Peter.

Mr Moller—I think it is fair to say too that, for any one individual sport, it is very hard to get the model to work. You have really got to have the netball association and the basketball association, at least two of them together, to start to get your usage rate up.

CHAIR—Going back to the prices again, if it were a one-court facility, what would be your price then?

Mr Cush—We would not do it.

CHAIR—Two courts is the minimum?

Mr Cummins—Two courts—about \$1.9 million, with a pretty large amenities area that includes a gym and aerobics area.

CHAIR—Two courts is about \$2 million. And you would want up front then \$700,000 or \$800,000 out of that?

Mr Cummins—Correct.

CHAIR—Thanks very much.

Luncheon adjournment

[1.30 p.m.]

CROSS, Mr David Knoyle, National Executive Director, Australian Universities Sports Federation, Level 1, 48 Atchison Street, St Leonards, New South Wales 2065

LAWTON, Mr Robert James, Executive Officer, Macquarie University Sports Association, c/- Gymnasium, Macquarie University, New South Wales 2109

CHAIR—We have received your submissions and they have been authorised for publication. Do either of you wish to propose any changes to your submissions?

Mr Cross—I would like to make an amendment, in fairness to the specific universities I used as examples on the bottom of page 2 of my submission. Although I do not think they would have any real concern, I think it would be appropriate for the purpose of publication to take out the examples of the universities that either have no facilities, limited facilities or antiquated facilities. If there is no objection I would seek that amendment.

CHAIR—Where is that?

Mr Cross—It is at the bottom of page 2. About halfway through the last paragraph there is a series of examples that I have selected. It is of minor consequence to me and I do not think it is of great concern to the universities, but—

CHAIR—The difficulty is that this submission has already been published, but we can note that that list is extracted.

Mr Cross—Okay. Thanks.

CHAIR—If there are no other comments, would you like to make any opening remarks?

Mr Cross—Bob and I are members of, and represent, the university sports sector, Bob from the point of view of a single university and I from the point of view of representing 53 member campuses across the country. The Australian Universities Sports Federation would be viewed as the peak organising and controlling body for sport within the university sector in this country, having affiliation or links to approximately 450,000 students. It is in that context that we put in our submission.

The bottom line for us is that quality sport at universities requires quality facilities. The basis on which I have put our submission is support for the need for federal funding of facilities in a coordinated—and that would be the underlined word—and planned fashion, and in a fashion that is not spasmodic or linked to the political moment. That is, that we have a coordinated long-term strategy in place, and particularly off the back of the Olympic Games.

There is not a great deal that I could say in addition to what is in the submission—I have been as comprehensive as I possibly can—except to raise a couple of points. In terms of the Commonwealth program,

what is required is a continuous funding base; and, particularly because of the opportunities that come off the 2000 Olympics, that we really try to make sure that we have the community facilities in place that can capitalise on that. We believe the university sector can play a major role in that, in spreading what will no doubt be a limited budget allocation to achieve better quality facilities for the community generally.

Mr Lawton—My submission was short because I realised you would get hundreds of submissions. I focused on the community and I believe that the educational resource is under utilised. I have taken the trouble over the last couple of weekends to do an informal drive around the Prime Minister's electorate of Bennelong, because that is where Macquarie University is located, the electorate of Mitchell, because that is where I live, and a couple of neighbouring electorates. I have looked at primary schools, secondary schools and a couple of universities. It is patently obvious that those resources are underutilised. It may be that some of them are substandard. There are a number of schools, for instance, that have asphalt tennis courts, which are rather old hat.

But if government at any level is going to put money into facilities, they ought to ensure that they are going to be used. If they are going to identify the educational sector as a valuable community resource, they ought to make it mandatory that, if they are going to fund facilities in educational institutions, they are available where possible for the community.

It is self-evident that governments ought to put money into sports facilities. The thrust for the last four or five years has been international standard facilities. I believe that following the Olympic Games in 2000 there will be community interest in sports facilities. I was 15 years old at the end of the 1956 Olympics and every tiny little town in Victoria got an Olympic pool. It did not matter whether it was five feet long or 55 yards long, they called it their Olympic pool.

I started my teaching career teaching swimming at some of the facilities in Victoria, and I can well remember teaching in a 20-foot long Olympic pool in the village of Neerim South in the Victorian Divide. People got together and got a little bit of their own money and a little bit of local government money to build that pool. The Olympics will provide a catalyst for government to be able to interest communities.

I believe the focus should be on local rather than state or national. I believe it should be on facilities that the people can use, and I do not believe that it should be a handout from government. I have suggested in my paper that it ought to be a four-way sharing of the costs, that the money might come from state, federal, local and the community for these resources. I have suggested, as has the Confederation of Australian Sport, that you ought to grasp the nettle and look at a national sports lottery.

I have been told by a number of government inquiries in the past that it is too difficult, that you would not get the states. I believe that sport is far too important to use that as an excuse. I believe that with goodwill that a national sports lottery ought to be achievable, and that that should be used to fund community sports facilities.

I have suggested an alternative, which again politicians have told me is too hard. I have suggested a classical user-pays approach by having the sales tax on sports goods used to fund community facilities. Again, I have been told that that is too hard, that you cannot be specific and earmark taxes from this

particular area. I point out that governments do use funds generated from specific levies on petrol tax for roadworks so I do not see why it could not be possible to use specific funds from sports goods. I note with interest that the Confederation of Australian Sport has suggested a tobacco levy. That is an old and tried course of action.

I would conclude by urging all of you not to drop the ball. I think sport is far too important in this country. If you do nothing else as a committee, ensure that there is funding for community sports facilities after the Olympic Games.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for such a forthright presentation. In actual fact, I do not think there is at the present time any petrol money specifically earmarked for roads, but the idea was around at one stage, and it certainly did exist when the petrol tax was first around. Do you believe that the current money raised from sales tax on sporting goods should be used for sports funding, or would you accept an increase in the tax on sporting goods on condition that that money was spent on facilities?

Mr Lawton—Obviously, it is a two-edged sword. If an increase in sales tax is going to turn people off buying goods, then it is self-defeating. But if people knew that a small percentage here or there was going to be used for sporting facilities, I do not think there would be that much of a backlash. But I am attracted, primarily, to the idea of a national lottery. I have seen first hand what it has done in Italy. My sport is cross-country skiing. I have seen the facilities that local communities have got through the national sports lottery. I note that it is about to be or is being tried in Fiji and New Zealand. I think it is an area that ought to be explored. The one thing that any sort of tax should not do is drive people away.

CHAIR—You were not here this morning—

Mr Lawton—No.

CHAIR—We asked a number of witnesses questions about sports lotteries so perhaps we will ask you similar sorts of questions. Obviously, the states have considerable revenue earned these days from gambling in various forms. Would you advocate that the states forgo some of their current lotteries, or that the Commonwealth introduce another one over the top of it, or do you envisage each of the states running a lottery for the same purpose?

Mr Lawton—I believe that the funding has to be coordinated by the Commonwealth. Funding in the past has been haphazard because it is not centrally coordinated. I hope that the states will give up some of their income from gambling and focus on a national sports lottery. I do not think that there is a government going that does not believe in the importance of sport. The health benefits have been well documented, and there are benefits to the community and national pride, et cetera. The national pride can go down to community pride in the facilities that they have got. Yes, I hope that the states will work with the Commonwealth government, forego a little bit of the revenue that they are currently getting and focus on a national sports lottery.

CHAIR—Is that just a hope? You have no evidence that they are likely to be willing do that?

Mr Lawton—I believe that if government at all levels is interested in funding community sports facilities it has to bite the nettle. This inquiry is the opportunity for it to bite the nettle. Certainly states are unwilling to share with the Commonwealth, but they can do it. Local government is unwilling to share with the states. It will take a concerted effort. I believe the focus of the Olympic Games should be used to determine that government is interested in funding community sports facilities.

CHAIR—On a broader approach, how many universities open their facilities to the public now?

Mr Cross—I could not give you exact numbers on that. I think it would be fair to say that, in previous years, previous decades, it has been pretty much a closed shop mentality. I am a relative newcomer to university sports, having taken the job in the last six months, but I can simply see that the trends that have been occurring out in the community sports area, which is where I have come from, will gather momentum in the university sector. A number of universities, as Bob has already said, have already opened their doors and more and more are doing so, but I cannot give you specifics. As I indicated in my paper, we do not have a full handle on exactly what sports facilities exist within those 53. We are currently trying to do that through Deakin University using a survey.

CHAIR—Mr Lawton, would you like to comment on how successful Macquarie University's initiatives in making their facilities available to the public have been? Also, could you perhaps identify whether any of the problems that were often talked about have, in fact, occurred?

Mr Lawton—As I put in my paper, our best example is SCEGGS Redlands. They have got nothing, so to speak, because of their location. They make extensive use of our facilities for 30 weeks of the year on a Saturday morning. The problems are very small; they are largely managerial. They are supposed to finish a football match at 12.30 and allow a little bit of time before our university teams. Sometimes, if the opposition team is late in coming, then the referee feels inclined to let the match run its full course. They are just minor management problems. When I first came to the university sports sector most of the universities did not encourage community use—they were there for the university. For 20 weeks of the year at least they were hugely under-utilised because the students, who pay sports fees at most universities, are not there for 20 weeks of the year between December and the end of February.

CHAIR—Does Macquarie now have a policy of allowing all its sport facilities to be available to the public?

Mr Lawton—Yes, we do. The overriding factor is to first to provide for the university. This weekend, for instance, there will be a rugby match on our main ground. If the rugby club has no use for that main ground, then it is available to the community. Obviously, because students pay compulsory sports fees and a large part of that has been used to fund the Macquarie University sports facilities, we have an obligation to our student membership. But we can manage to fit in extensive community use, particularly during university holidays and particularly during the long vacation. There would not be more than 200 or 300 postgrad students on the campus between December and February. They would mostly want to use the gymnasium complex during the day. The sports fields, on a typical summer weekend, are available to any community organisation that wants to use them.

CHAIR—Do you charge for that use?

Mr Lawton—We charge to cover costs. On three or four occasions in the last couple of years we have charged more than cost. It was pointed out to us that a fairly heavily patronised local soccer group was charging a fairly exorbitant gate fee, so we charged above what we would normally charge for the use of the facilities. We charge basically what the local council will charge.

For instance, if somebody wants a turf wicket especially prepared, it is \$250 to cover the extensive preparation of a turf wicket. If they are prepared to use the wicket after our cricket club on a Sunday and it is just a matter of touching it up, then it might be \$20 or \$30 to have a groundsman come in and touch up the turf wicket. We basically charge to cover costs.

Our arrangement with SCEGGS has meant that we have been able to do a lot more. The fee that we charge SCEGGS has funded another groundsman, and it has funded a lot of equipment down there. We have got a couple of sight screens that came from the income from SCEGGS et cetera, so we plough back into the facilities the income that we generate from community user facilities.

CHAIR—And do you feel the public near to your facilities regard them as being available for them to use?

Mr Lawton—More and more so. The trend was set with our golf driving range. We had a golf driving range that was initially on a sports field. We had asked if we could set it up on a piece of vacant land within the university. The planners were not too keen and we let it run at our sports fields for 12 months to prove that it could succeed. But it could not be used three nights a week in the winter because there was football training. It could not be used most Saturdays and Sundays because of weekend sport, but it was so heavily patronised by the local community that the university saw the value and it was moved to where it currently is.

It is used by the local business sector. Macquarie Park has people like Sony and Hewlett Packard, to name a couple. Their people are always using the golf driving range. The Prime Minister's electorate has a fairly heavily concentrated population of Asian immigrants and they are mad keen on golf. The first question they ask is, 'How much is it to join?' When they are told it is free, they ask, 'Okay, how much for a bucket of balls?' When they are told it is \$5 or \$6 for a small bucket, they are amazed. I have had a number of Koreans tell me that if we put five tiers in and we had 300 or 400 people using it, we could maximise the usage—but the university would not like that. We still like the open green fields.

Because of that the community has come to recognise that the campus is open. The university has heavily promoted this community outreach program. They have got about 14 schools that use the resources of the library, the lecture theatres, the sports facilities, and I am very, very keen on it. I can see what it has done for sport. It has meant that our facilities are used. We have only had to close our doors twice. In 1982 there was a drought on and our fields suffered beyond belief because of water restrictions. We then actually had to say to community groups, 'Sorry, until the drought breaks you can't use it.'

We are hoping that this tollway that some of you know about that is going past the university can be

used as a backup. We are planning to use the run-off from the tollway for our main ground, with the cooperation of the tollway consortium. That will not quite drought-proof it, but it will provide a valuable backup.

I might add that a number of my colleagues are like us. You might ask yourself, 'Why should the government put money into sports facilities?' If you came and had a look at our sports facilities I would be very proud to point out that the bulk of them have been funded through the compulsory student fee. We got a small grant from the government when we started. For whatever reason, the government saw fit not to carry out the extended program.

We have engaged in a largely self-help program. We had five years of local government engineers creating a plateau. We have got a couple of the best sports fields in Sydney, largely through self-help. But, if we are in the future to receive government help, it should be on the basis that our facilities are available for the local community. If we shut our doors, then we do not deserve government funding. It is as simple as that.

Mr MARTIN—One alternative source of funding that has been explored at certainly one university I am familiar with is through the university foundation, where community citizens give of their time to be on a committee and, if approached appropriately—like, for example, by the university's sports association—go about raising funds for the redevelopment of part of the sporting infrastructure on the campus.

Are you aware of just how extensive that sort of approach to funding from universities is, because I am ever mindful that there are fees charged by the university on its students, which are compulsory fees, for sports association membership and, as you have pointed out, in most universities that has been a source of funding for capital investment over a period of time.

Mr Cross—Many of the universities are making that strategic link with their local communities anyway. Something that I have found within the university's sport sector is an ability to draw on community leaders and people within the business community. It is something I have not experienced before in other sporting organisations. So I think that the potential is there. As for the extent to which it is currently being utilised, I could not be sure. I think what you have to realise is there are 53 university campuses that are members of us. There is probably half a dozen that are not. I think you have 53 different scenarios and 53 local communities. It is going to work for a large percentage of them, and for others they will have their own mechanisms. You need to acknowledge that.

The point I wanted to make from Bob's comments was that we need to be careful about making the assumption that every university already has its sporting facilities in place. A number of universities are still developing a building and are placing their university sporting facilities further away from the middle of the campus, on the edge of the campuses and so on. An example that springs to mind is Toowoomba, which has built a tremendous \$9 million facility in a position that really makes it not look as though it is part of the university as a whole, per se. That is being accessed by the community quite easily, and their intent is to utilise it as a central facility for that community. So the positioning of the facilities that are being built needs to be noted.

The other thing is that many universities are still building. There are campuses out in the western suburbs of Victoria that do not have facilities, yet have spent major dollars in capital infrastructure for the libraries and the buildings and so on. They are yet to get around to their sporting facilities. Those groups are targets for a potential facility that could involve community groups far more than they perhaps have in the past in the building and design of these facilities.

Mr MARTIN—I think that is a very important point. If you are talking about more recent examples, if you are talking about multiple use, if you are talking about access of the broader community to facilities that are there, that must provide a tremendous opportunity now to just get that mind-set within the community and the university community to say, 'We're going to put a facility in place that is going to be for the students, partly funded there, but we are also going to use it for the local community.' Perhaps it is local government involvement, and then whatever else might be available.

Mr Lawton—A number of the older established universities have hundreds of thousands of graduates on their books, and they have a lot of clout. You have only to look at the kaffuffle over Sydney University being excommunicated from cricket and rugby and the number of prominent people that signed petitions, et cetera.

Sydney University used their graduate network when they built their swimming pool—the University of New South Wales, similarly, when they built their swimming pool. Our chancellor has identified the need for a pool at Macquarie University. The sports association has convinced the university that, if it is going to be built, it should be a community facility. We have the backing of the city of Ryde. The mayor is on a committee that is looking into the feasibility of the pool. If we build a pool at the university, it will be a campus/community pool, and it will be the local residents, the local business community and the university that will try to generate the funding for that swimming pool.

We have 46,000 graduates. We are able to reach about 38,000. When the others have dropped off our mailing list, we would intend to use our graduate population. If we were to go into building a swimming pool, we would establish a trust fund. The money for the pool would be tax deductible. If every graduate were able to give just \$100 tax-deductible dollars, it would be a sizeable part of the start of the fund for a swimming pool on the campus.

A number of our prominent graduates are interested in supporting it, and we will be trying to use a graduate network. The swimming pool will be the first focus. Up until now it has been current students who have paid money. We have borrowed extensively. They have not always seen the benefit of what their sports fees have done. The current students see the benefit of it. If I do say so myself, we have some pretty good sports facilities. The swimming pool will be the icing on the cake.

The city of Ryde has one 25-metre sauna as a swimming pool. It is a terrible building. It is located on Ryde Road. It is a glasshouse. It is something that the city of Ryde is not altogether happy with. It was the result of some state government funding quite a few years ago. They do not have the land at the moment to build a community pool. The university is working with the city of Ryde. The land is there. If the community wants a pool, we will get a pool. I have no doubt about it.

The only thing that is going to stymie us perhaps is the escalating building costs in Sydney at the moment because of the confounded Olympics. I am wearing an Olympic tie and I am a proud state Olympic committee member, but the Olympics can stymie the development of local council building over the next four years. I am told that in the last 12 weeks building costs have escalated 52 per cent.

Mr McDOUGALL—What happens if you go into community joint funding of the project? Does that mean you will make student fees non-compulsory for sporting facilities?

Mr Lawton—If there were a voluntary element—whether it is unions, sports associations or student political groups—the Macquarie University Sports Association would cease to exist in its present form, simply because without those compulsory fees we are unable to fund it. We get no support from the university. The electricity, the cleaning and the maintenance is all funded from the compulsory student fees. Recently we spent \$125,000 on a new roof for our gymnasium. The university, through government, did not provide that money. We provided the money through the compulsory student sports fees.

Mr McDOUGALL—What is your percentage, though, of students who actually use those facilities?

Mr Lawton—It is something like 45 per cent across the board.

Mr McDOUGALL—And the other 55 per cent are happy?

Mr Lawton—It is looked upon by the university as a tax. Nobody is happy paying sports fees. It seems that most students will fund a cafeteria and whinge about the quality of food. Most students will fund sports facilities because they see them there. Most students use our gymnasium at some time, because they sit there for their end-of-year exams. Most students, if they have a whinge at all, usually whinge about the political body, and their politics are not what particular students use.

Yes, if voluntary fees were introduced for university sports organisations, it would be extremely difficult. We would turn the community away. If we started charging over-the-top prices for the use of our facilities because we were no longer getting an income from students, there probably would be a consumer backlash. We are trying to strike a happy medium. We would hope that the so-called tax on students as they enter a university is retained.

Universities are concerned about the level of fees that students have to pay. I am an old fogy. I paid my way through university way back in the late 1950s and early 1960s. My wife is currently doing a course at Macquarie University, and I am paying for her to get through the course. You have hit a very delicate point. Voluntary student unionism, if it were applied to the union—which is usually a cafeteria food provider, meeting room provider—if it were applied to student political bodies, if it were applied to sports unions, would hit hard.

Mr MARTIN—There has been a lot of talk about the lead-up to the Olympics. One of the things, obviously, that will be of concern to us—because it is getting closer—is post-Olympics provision of facilities. Do you have any views as to whether or not circumstances for the provision of sports facilities at university complexes will become easier? In states other than New South Wales and in campuses other than those that

are in metropolitan Sydney and perhaps Wollongong and Newcastle, are they really affected by what is happening with the Olympics anyway?

Mr Lawton—They would be affected if voluntary fees were put in. I think sport will be affected because—and I hope I am wrong—I sense that the sports funding well will dry up in the euphoria of the Olympics. People will say, ‘We have got the Homebush complex and have got a velodrome. What else is needed in sport in New South Wales?’ I am saying to you that community sports facilities are needed. Instead of duplicating what is there, there ought to be an inventory done across the board of what is currently available and what is needed to make people use the resources that are there. Asphalt tennis courts can be easily replaced with synthetic grass tennis courts and some floodlighting put in. Focus on the community rather than more international sports facilities. We do not need to have an international velodrome in every state; we do not need to have international sports facilities in every state; we are, I hope a country. This rush to compete—Kennett versus the rest—is foolishness. There are some great facilities.

Mr McDOUGALL—We will give you an international velodrome in Brisbane, free of charge. It never gets used.

Mr Lawton—Yes, that is the problem. If we develop international facilities across the board, will they be used?

Mr McDOUGALL—There is one that is not.

Mr Cross—There are a few points I would like to make. The implication is that we are competing with community facilities. The university sector does compete with the community facilities, those that have their doors well and truly open, because the siting of those community facilities is within the same catchment area. That seems to me to be inappropriate. We need to look at the ways of use of the infrastructure that is being put into universities, irrespective of what is happening in the local community. That money is being spent because of the student fees that are being paid, but we need to complement that money that is already going in and actually make that facility more accessible to the community, rather than have one stationed two or three kilometres up the road, where you are competing. I do not think we are coming here to say, ‘We have got the best set-up.’ What we are saying is that there is an opportunity here to build off that basic investment that is being made, rather than site one within a few kilometres that is going to set up in competition.

As a newcomer to the university sector—I might go back a couple of points because I am competing with Bob here for a bit of time—I believe there has been a change in mentality and there will be a stronger change in mentality in terms of opening up the doors. Sydney university, if you want to use that as a traditional university, is renovating its sports facilities in such a way as to incorporate Hungry Jacks. If that is not opening up to the community, I do not know what is. Monash University has spent \$9 million improving their foyer set-up; they are adding to their facilities, building a huge car park within very close proximity. That is another traditional university, where it would be viewed that the sporting facilities there do not necessarily sit on the outer roads of Monash. They would be in the inner part.

So there is a lot of work and a lot of thinking going on within the university sector about how it can

align itself strategically with its community, and that needs to be considered. It is not just the new ones, although they are better placed to do it, obviously, because they have got vacant land that they can start building on; there is a lot of work going into changing what they have currently got. I guess if they had their time over they would build them slightly differently. Many of them are having their time over because they are putting capital investment into changing the look of those facilities. While they have not got the money to pick them up and take them to a certain part of the campus, they are certainly changing the look and will be working harder, I have no doubt, in opening their facilities to the community broadly.

That comes down to the fact of complementarity. The times at which those facilities are being maximised by the university students, in the main, are not the times when the community would want to maximise that facility. Monash would not be spending \$9 million doing what it is doing if it did not think it could marry the two together, nor would Sydney, nor would the other universities and nor would Bob be promoting the pool concept so strongly, if there was not an opportunity to marry those things together. What has come through from my members is that there is an opportunity; it may not fit for five out of the 52, but the large majority are saying that there is an opportunity to work in a complementary fashion for community usage.

What I believe is very important is that there is land sitting there that is to be developed by the university, so your land costs are already in effect 'paid for'. As an example, to bring it back to the very basics, if you have got \$5 million it will buy you the land and build you a reasonable community facility in a municipality. If you work strategically with the university in that area, it has probably got the land already and you probably need to spend only \$2 million to open up that facility through infrastructural changes, whether it be foyers, whether it be improving the swimming pool, putting a movable floor in that swimming pool to improve learn to swim lessons and those sorts of things. You have still got \$3 million to move on to the next municipality, to invest into that one. That is, I think, the issue. We are not competing with local community facilities, or we are by default and that is because it is not planned and it is not structured. That is what needs to occur.

Mr MARTIN—How much did Hungry Jacks buy into Sydney University for?

Mr Cross—I have got no idea. But that is the word, that they will be placing a facility within that. That just threw me back, as it has probably thrown back people here.

Mr MARTIN—No, the University of Wollongong knocked back \$1 million from McDonald's—knocked it back!

Mr Cross—I guess that shows you the differences that are occurring within the universities. On the point of voluntary student unionism: it is alive and well in Western Australia. There is no compulsion in the fees to the west. The west still volunteer their fees to AUSF. AUSF are a body that these 53 campuses can choose not to be part of. They still pay their fees on to us. They are working extremely hard to hold their student numbers and to keep them involved, but they are nevertheless trying to improve their sporting facilities all the time as well.

The last point I would like to make is that a number of universities have indicated to me the interest

that they are getting from international countries, or countries from other regions, in relation to the Sydney Olympics for training sites, and housing those athletes to train in those facilities in the accommodation that they have in universities. It is a natural marriage. Griffith University, in southern Queensland, have announced a \$1 million track upgrade or the development of a track for \$1 million dollars, plus the signing of facilities to assist with the British team coming over for the Olympic Games and so on.

Mr McDOUGALL—So have three other universities. There is a bit of competition going on.

Mr Cross—That is fine. I do not have any problem with that. From AUSF's point of view, it is quality facilities and you can get quality by maximising your dollars. What I am saying is that you maximise your dollars because you have got universities willing to use their base grants, on which we need some top-up money to make it a community facility.

Mr McDOUGALL—I want to ask you a question on community. Does that mean you will come to arrangements with sporting clubs and associations to have fixed arrangements, or are you saying that it is open to community for free open use only? For example, a sporting association might come along to you and say, 'We want to have your facility for three days a week, or two days a week, for so many hours a day.' Are you prepared to go into fixed arrangements?

Mr Cross—I cannot speak on behalf of specific universities. I guess, again—

Mr Lawton—We would be. We already do it. But some of the facilities that are around universities will not pay without community use. Swimming pools are a classic case in point. For 20 weeks of the year, when you are swimming—December, January, February—the bulk of the students are not around your campus. If you did not have community use of your swimming pool, your swimming pool would lose heaps. Synthetic grass hockey fields need to be utilised through the day. Using them in the night-time just does not make them pay for themselves. You need to have community use. It would be crazy, for example, thinking about government funding for a synthetic hockey pitch at Macquarie Uni—you have got one down at Peter Board High School, just down the road. This is where you need your inventory—what is available—so that you do not duplicate resources.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—With the way that you have opened up your university to the community, is that just a break-even or does it actually help subsidise the students now with their sports fees?

Mr Lawton—With the golf range, yes, it helps subsidise the sports fees. With the SCEGGS arrangement for sports fields, it is ploughed back into the sports fields.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—So theoretically they would be paying more if you had not opened up as you have?

Mr Lawton—Yes, although for all sorts of reasons, not least for political reasons, we try to keep our sports fee at a current level. We have been successful for two years; we are intending to hold it at the same level for the next three years, despite increasing costs, because we are hoping that there will be community use of the facilities.

As I say, where an organisation can afford to pay—if a local soccer group that have got the backing of poker machines, et cetera, want to hire our facilities and they are intending to charge a gate fee and make a feature of the game—then the fee for them would be much, much, much higher than for a local school wanting to use the facilities.

Mr McDOUGALL—We heard today, just before you, from James Hardie Industries in relation to their multi-sport indoor facilities consortium. I do not know whether you are aware of it.

Mr Lawton—They are coming to see me this Thursday.

Mr McDOUGALL—If you had heard of it, I was wondering whether you saw that as a possible way of funding facilities within the university.

Mr Lawton—Yes. They are coming to see me Thursday. I met a contact of theirs through a SCEGGS evening just last week. I might say that New South Wales Basketball approached us about 12 months ago—we have got a huge piece of land adjacent to the gymnasium. Their perception was that universities have lots of money and, therefore, they would be willing to use a four-court basketball centre at Macquarie University if we were to build one; and, if we do not have the money, all we need to do is talk to you and you will throw the money at us. That is not what it ought to be about. If the state organisation were able to attract a state government grant and work with us to develop a two- or three-court basketball centre at Macquarie University, we would be happy to talk to them. But a lot of people do perceive the universities as being unlimited in the money that they have.

CHAIR—And that is not right!

Mr Lawton—It is not right.

Mr BILLSON—One of the issues that we are grappling with is about where federal money hops on—if it is to hop on. We have had put to us views ranging from the need for regional, state and national types of facilities—better quality facilities at the top end of the hierarchy—to some fairly compelling local government arguments that that end of the hierarchy will look after itself and that what we need are local community facilities. It is a bit of an each-way bet with you as well. Is that a reflection of the different circumstances that each university faces in the community it sits within?

Mr Lawton—From my own perspective, I do not see it as an each-way bet, because our facilities are not what you would call international or even state standard training facilities: they are very modest facilities. Our gymnasium has two different heights in the roof, because the planners put the first stage too low. If we were to build a swimming pool, we would want the facility to be of international standard for water polo or swimming. But that is just the hole in the ground that needs to conform. What you put over it might be a very cheap Hardie's roofing structure.

Some universities have what they have identified as international standard facilities. Some of them have been bypassed by technology. A lot of the tracks that are around universities are not international standard training facilities, let alone international standard competition facilities. We have been more modest

in our approach to SOCOG. We have identified a number of smaller sports, such as archery, badminton and the martial arts, for which they could use the training facilities at Macquarie University, if they chose their times. And there is some student housing available, et cetera. Macquarie University's greatest contribution to the Olympics will be as a parking facility. The university will be closed down for the 16 days of the games. There is a lot of parking space there and, with shuttle buses straight through to Homebush, that would solve some of your traffic problems.

Mr Cross—I would take an each-way bet. I looked at the 53 universities I deal with, and it would depend on the university. If I can pick out one in central Melbourne, RMIT is negotiating currently with the national volleyball group to make sure that its facilities are of a national volleyball standard—and of an international standard, for that matter.

The site that has just been built at Toowoomba has three indoor basketball courts. It is an international standard facility, with international scoreboards and so on. Out at Nepean, the University of Western Sydney would have a different focus. It really depends on the municipality: where it sits, what it is trying to achieve and also what the strategy of the university is. If it is trying to promote itself as an international university, it will probably go more strongly down the national and international standard facilities path.

Mr BILLSON—So you would indicate that the Commonwealth should not constrain itself to local, regional, state or national facilities but that it should be looking for the opportunity for a broader role.

Mr Cross—Yes: across the mix of universities and the position that they are in, their pecking order relative to their local communities, and what they focus on. You have to have that flexibility. La Trobe University have written to me to say that they fall between the funding gaps. If they go to Sport and Recreation—on a Victorian scale—they are told to go to Education; when they go to Education, they are told to go back to Sport. If they go to local government, they can put in a submission but, because their land is not council owned, they go way down on the priority list. So they end up not falling anywhere and we do not get in that region the best facilities that we could get.

Mr MARTIN—How many of those 53 universities run courses in human movement studies—the old physical education?

Mr Cross—I do not have all the figures for you, but more and more are certainly running them. The sport management and the human movement and sports science types of things have been explosive.

Mr MARTIN—Are their facilities appropriately meeting the demands?

Mr Cross—Again, I have not seen the facility—and I came from aquatics—but, at the Ballarat facility, they have built a pool based on the American Olympic site in Denver, where they do a lot of sports science: underwater videotaping and so on. They have set up a facility that operates basically as a sports science lab.

Mr MARTIN—Why?

Mr Cross—As a selling point for the university, a means of attracting students to the campus.

Mr BILLSON—Technique development.

Mr MARTIN—I know what they do, but I am asking why would you do it there when you have the same facility, for example, at the AIS?

Mr Cross—That is the question. It is not coordinated; it is not planned. They are looking for a competitive advantage to complement their sports studies unit down there.

Mr MARTIN—You give an example of Victoria where they go to one department and they say, 'Go and see someone else,' and so on. Why is it that, as you have said, more and more universities are getting interested in making human movement and sports management types of programs part of their degree courses? Surely, not every university should do that. Perhaps we should be looking at some managed way in which university courses are approved at the various universities around Australia and, as a consequence of that, developing sports facilities at those different locations.

I am sure that this is the case in the United States. If you want to do aquatics, for example, you know that in Denver at the university there is a brilliant facility that has the underwater cameras and everything else, and that the best coaches are there and are going to be able to improve your techniques; and so you go and do your sports studies there. And likewise, if you want to do something else: I think Duncan Armstrong went to a university in Florida not only because he was offered a scholarship there but also because the coaching and the facilities at the university were quite appropriate. Maybe that is something that we, in Australia, need to copy. We should not simply say that, because universities are wanting to offer every course that is known to man and woman today or that is being thought of for the future, as a consequence there should be a constant demand for improving the available facilities.

Mr Cross—I hear what you say, but I think you are assuming that all 53 universities have the desire to pick up what is being picked up by a few universities in terms of getting that international standard of facility. I would say that all 53 of them would want to have the best facility that they could possibly have available for their students, in order to sell their university to their local community, in the first instance. There are a number of rungs of universities. If they are in the elite sports science or sports management group that is offering those sorts of courses, then they are trying to compete in order to position themselves with, say, the best available sports science facility. That is a decision they are making. That pool—irrespective of whether it has a window and a videotape facility—is still very much a facility that can be utilised by the local community of Ballarat.

Mr MARTIN—Don't get me wrong: I am not disagreeing with that. I am not saying that the 53 universities may not have a genuine need to have facilities. If we can get the community interested, particularly with the newer university campuses that are developing, and if, as we said earlier, we can explore the possibility of the community and the university doing something together with open access and all the rest of it, that is not a problem. My other concern, though, is whether all of those 53—or even half of those that want to develop sports science or sports management types of courses—should be allowed to do so, in terms of upgrading the quality of the equipment that is going to be necessary to get that competitive edge.

I have not got a particular view, but I wonder whether that is an issue that needs exploring as well, particularly as it impacts on whether the Commonwealth government or anyone else should find that additional funding. To use your example, if you build a swimming pool that is going to be used for the sports association at a university somewhere and for the local community, that case is completely different. The cost is completely different from that of building a swimming centre such as you have talked about doing in Ballarat and such as exists at the AIS down in Canberra, where there is the camera and the underwater viewing and all the rest that goes with it.

Mr Cross—It is a question of where the top-up money to turn that facility into an international facility is to come from: whether it comes on top of a community based funding program from the university, where they plough the extra money into it to go that extra step because they want to position their university in a particular way—as opposed to the university that does not choose to do that but wants to position its university as a relevant community facility for its particular region. If you have a base funding level, the universities could top it up, and corporate money and facility usage could go on top of that.

The University of Canberra sent me some material and indicated that, as a requirement of any funding submission, you should at least have the parties talk together—and if you have not heard that already, I would be very surprised. The key point is to at least get the schools, the tertiary sector and all the people who are going to benefit from this together, as part of the compulsion with the funding submission, so that it can be coordinated and planned and so that we do not end up competing where we do not need to.

Mr McDOUGALL—You said in your submission that you were providing support for research into existing sporting infrastructure within the university sector. When is that research going to be available, and is it going to be available to the committee?

Mr Cross—To answer the first question: we are not specifically funding it. I wish we had the resources to do so. Deakin University have, of their own volition, received some funding at a state government level to look at an Active 2000 program, and that is where they are drawing those funds from. Within that research, they are looking at what facilities are available and are measuring how that ultimately affects student participation on campus—and student fitness levels, ultimately. I am happy to come back to the committee with that information in writing, but I do not have it at hand. It will be, ultimately, the property of Deakin University.

CHAIR—That kind of research information will certainly be of considerable interest to the committee. Thank you for coming. Your presentation today has been of particular interest to us, because tomorrow we are visiting the University of Newcastle and we will certainly be looking at the interaction between the local community and the university in the use of the facilities at that complex. I do not know if you have any comments about how well the Newcastle university does things.

Mr Cross—If I can be of assistance, through our facilitating or coordinating role at AUSF, in helping the committee to choose some of those facilities, I would be happy to do so. It would be very competitive, and I am sure Newcastle are very pleased and a bit chuffed to have the committee actually visit them. In terms of looking at the diversity of the sporting facilities that are about, I may be able to assist the committee with some opportunities there, but I would leave it to the committee's selection, ultimately.

CHAIR—Thank you for that offer; we may well avail ourselves of it. Thank you again for your help.

[2.24 p.m.]

KEATS, Mr Michael, National Executive Officer, Scout Association of Australia, PO Box 325, Fivedock, New South Wales 2046

CHAIR—Welcome. We have received your submission and authorised its publication. Do you have any changes to the submission that you would like to make?

Mr Keats—There are no changes but perhaps I could just reiterate some of the comments.

CHAIR—If you would like to make an opening statement, you are welcome to do so.

Mr Keats—Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. The association supports the concept of the Commonwealth government providing dedicated funding for local government sporting and recreation facilities. The association believes that it owns and operates a decentralised community-based structure which is an ideal vehicle for identifying sport and recreation needs at a community level, and more importantly, for coordinating sporting and recreation resources at a community level. I think the detail in the submission gives you an idea of just how diversified and how spread around Australia we really are.

On the subject of funding—and I listened with great interest to some of the cross-examination that you made of earlier speakers—we have a variety of ideas including recurrent grants and subsidies, and taxation concessions to a range of individuals, corporations and local government. This is not only for provision of facilities but also for maintenance of facilities. I got the message loud and clear, that facilities have been allowed to decline or that facilities have not been upgraded because the resources have not been there.

There is also the question of Commonwealth funding being used for payment of overheads, or partial payment of overheads, in order to provide affordable access. I think that is another important area of getting Commonwealth assistance through to providing community groups with sporting facilities that they need in their communities.

There is the issue of a lottery that I heard talked about before, and the problems of conducting a lottery. We still think that is an area where the community is willing to give money without imposing any additional tax burden on the community as a whole.

We would like to see the payment of a capitation fee to local government to ensure that facilities are funded in local government areas where they are needed. Earlier on I heard you talk about whether we should be going for sporting facilities at the top end or whether we should be going for the bottom end. I think that was your line of questioning. I think we need sporting facilities at all levels, and not only sporting facilities. We are very much into the recreational end of the business as well. I want to talk about the National Parks and Wildlife Service and perhaps that is a mechanism of getting more people out to go abseiling and do other activities which are really outdoors rather than in organised, traditional sport as we see on TV all the time.

I also heard talk about tax levies on tobacco and alcohol. There is also an opportunity there to perhaps

siphon money off for sporting purposes in that area, if we are still going to have those products available as legal drugs of addiction.

As for payment to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, we see this as a way of making very large tracts of Commonwealth and crown land available to more and more people for recreation. We would like to see national parks opened up for abseiling and similar activities. We are not in favour of seeing national parks opened up for four-wheel drives where there is destruction of the environment, but we are keen to see canoeing, white-water rafting, abseiling, cross-country skiing and those sorts of activities, where there is no destruction or diminution of the value of the asset.

I would just like to recap four points from the submission. Firstly, the association believes that the Commonwealth government should endorse the Scout Association of Australia fitness and recreation programs, which are delivered to literally tens of thousands of young people every week, every year. Secondly, we believe the Commonwealth government should be providing funding for Scout specific facilities and infrastructure and communities across the country. Indeed, a lot of that has taken place in the past.

Thirdly, we believe that there should be taxation and other benefits for the construction and maintenance of scout facilities and infrastructure. Fourthly, we believe that there should be an introduction of a grants system, which would assist small communities to establish scouting activities which would lead to increased fitness in such communities, and the provision of sport and recreational facilities for members of those communities generally.

Just on that last point, we are very much in favour of sharing facilities with others. We have done it since we came into existence in 1907. In fact, we are looking at sharing facilities with Guides Australia and also with the Boys Brigade and with some of the other organised, uniformed youth movements.

CHAIR—When you talk about tax concessions for facilities, what do you mean?

Mr Keats—Anything that is going to reduce the cost of the service being offered to the user. That can be done in a variety of ways. It can be done by making it cheaper for the person or the organisation offering the facility—making it more cost competitive for them—or it can be done by subsidising the entry cost, if you like, into accessing a particular type of service.

CHAIR—Except that Scout activities are not taxed now.

Mr Keats—No. We do not enjoy sales tax exemptions, for example. We are not a PBI.

CHAIR—So that is what you are looking for, sales tax exemptions, rather than income tax benefits?

Mr Keats—Yes. In another place, we have recently made a submission to that effect. This is based on the Leewin school decision, where we liken ourselves very similarly to that. That is in fact a sailing ship school which has been granted sales tax exemption. I do not think you want to get sidetracked into that particularly.

CHAIR—It is a very difficult area. Certainly, scouts is not the only area where there is argument about what should be allowed and what should not be allowed. The fine line seems to be extraordinarily fuzzy.

Mr Keats—People who make donations to us get a tax benefit. We do enjoy sales tax exempt capital equipment, except for safety equipment where we do enjoy special concessions. How you define safety equipment in the broad, I am not too sure. I think we get fire engines without paying sales tax but there are some things I am not sure about.

CHAIR—When you say that you have a policy of sharing your facilities with others, is that an official policy? It does not seem to always work so well at the local level.

Mr Keats—Regrettably, people are human, and sometimes we get some personality clashes taking place. But the overarching policy is certainly one for sharing facilities.

CHAIR—I find it particularly strange that, at local level, frequently, Girl Guides and Scouts are struggling to maintain separate facilities and yet there is no willingness to cooperate.

Mr Keats—I cannot account for all of the idiosyncrasies that take place out there. But, in some cases, there is very close cooperation. One of the things that did not help was a decision by our board in the 1980s to open up the movement to girls. That was seen as outright war by the guide movement. There are still groups that are wholly male but more and more are completely integrated.

CHAIR—When you say that your facilities are open for other groups to use, is that community—

Mr Keats—Both.

CHAIR—What sorts of facilities are you able to offer to the community to use?

Mr Keats—Particularly camp sites, of which we have several thousand. I think some of them are documented in the submission. We have major sites which have conference facilities and live-in facilities. They are well-equipped with all of the gear that you would want, whether you want to put on a sporting activity or whether you want something in broader recreation—bushwalking and that sort of thing. We have access to large tracts of country where we have dubious tenure in terms of ownership but we certainly have responsibility to make sure that it is looked after and maintained. We work very closely with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in all states.

Mr MARTIN—How do people become aware of the sorts of facilities that are available to them? Let us say that a conference planning agency was looking for something slightly different.

Mr Keats—One of the things that I have picked up from the earlier discussions is the need for a central booking agency for all sorts of facilities. I think that is something that could be done to great advantage, to let everybody know what is available. One of the things that annoys me intensely is the amount of effort that goes into developing, say, a jamboree site when there are plenty of good sites already developed

around the countryside. Why do you need to start off with a green field option all the time? The reality is that you do not need to. I think if we knew what was available—I am taking this right across the board in a very general sense—there would be a lot less need to re-invent wheels, and we could get on with the delivery rather than the planning phase all the time.

Mr MARTIN—Why does the Scout movement not do that in terms of jamborees?

Mr Keats—We are looking at that in respect of jamborees. I think the one coming up in Queensland in two years will be the last of the green field sites. The next time, when it will be back in New South Wales, we will be using our site at Cataract Park, which is 7,000 acres.

Mr MARTIN—What a great choice!

Mr Keats—It is in your electorate.

Mr MARTIN—It used to be; it is now adjacent. But, on the issue of how you might publicise the existence of those sorts of things, does the Scout movement do that? Do you have a brochure that people can become familiar with that shows the different locations around Australia where you might be able to have conferences? Associated with that, would there be access to walking trails, sporting facilities, training camps that, say, a representative rugby union, rugby league or a soccer team might want to use?

Mr Keats—You have given me the opening I need. We have a web site on the Internet. We are looking for a subsidy to put all that information on the Internet so that the whole lot is there. From what we have put up so far about many of our activities, the response has been overwhelming. We are getting about 19,000 inquiries a week on the Internet, for all sorts of inquiries relating to scouting, which is a very high strike rate. We would be delighted to have the resources to put that information up.

The other thing that we are looking at internally is where we have groups looking to do different activities but have not got that immediately available in their own areas. We see the idea of a central booking agency, where you are able to exchange information for a minimal cost. It would be possible to say, 'We could do sailing, if we were able to access a suitable group.'

Mr MARTIN—You mentioned the National Parks and Wildlife Service in each of the states, are they showing an interest in this?

Mr Keats—In New South Wales, a very strong interest. Of course, they have their own agendas and there are people in the National Parks and Wildlife Service that I have put at the ultra-right of conservation, who believe that national parks should not have the footprints of any people in them, at all. They are just for looking at, from a distance. But I think a lot of the pragmatic people are saying, 'We should be working closely together and we should be doing this.' We also acknowledge that, in something as sensitive as national park areas, the volume of traffic needs to be controlled. That is another reason for booking, so that you are not going to overload the area.

Mr MARTIN—What could the Commonwealth contribute as part of this inquiry into facilities

provision?

Mr Keats—If the Commonwealth was able to provide some resources for us to put all the information on the Internet, it would be enormously helpful—probably paying for a skilled operator for, say, six months to key in the data and get it on the net. It probably would not be all that expensive. We would be more than happy to have additional information put on it that did not just relate to our facilities but related to all the facilities that were available in all communities. When you go to a small community everybody knows the available cricket fields, soccer fields, scout hall and all the other facilities that are available, but when you go to the larger conglomerates such as Wollongong, Newcastle, Sydney and other major cities, you just do not know what is there. I listened with interest about the facilities available at the Peter Board School. I was not aware that that was there. That is why we need this central data point where we can all exchange information.

CHAIR—Do you think the activities of the scouts, which is an organisation that is famous for its bush craft, doing it tough and all that sort of thing, has been limited by a lack of facilities in recent times or is it more a lack of leadership or different changes in the attitudes of youth?

Mr Keats—I guess it is a mix of all those things. It is not a clear-cut situation. I think one of the problems we have is with communication with young people. For the last 30 years, we have not latched on to the imperatives of television and the impact that television has made on young people. That is why we are making a lot more use of the Internet because we realise that that is a place where young people are going to seek information.

We believe that the various activities that we offer are very relevant. You name it; we offer it. It is just a question of telling people that it is there. Very often, we can offer it at a cost competitive situation for parents. As you probably picked up from the submission, we look after young kids these days from the age of six through to 26, and that is a pretty wide spread.

With some of the big events that we have participated in—for example, the Moomba Festival and other activities—we put on a climbing wall or an activity like that. The number of inquiries from those events which result in people joining the movement is very high. At the last Moomba activity, I think we had about 40,000 kids through the facility we had there over a two-day period. Nearly 10 per cent of those joined the movement because they enjoyed what they did.

Mr McDougall—What percentage of the scouts' facilities throughout Australia are on local government land?

Mr Keats—To be honest, I do not know the answer to that. We have got a whole lot of varying titles to land, ranging from Torrens title right through to perpetual lease.

Mr McDougall—Is there a way that you could give that to the committee?

Mr Keats—Yes. I could certainly provide that for the eastern states without any trouble because each of the branches of the organisation has a legal department that looks after property.

Mr McDOUGALL—I know in Queensland it is very large.

Mr Keats—Yes, it is.

Mr McDOUGALL—I just do not know about the other states.

Mr Keats—In New South Wales there are over 900 property sites.

Mr McDOUGALL—What sort of money do you spend as a movement on facilities each year on, say, capital and maintenance?

Mr Keats—The short answer is not enough. We are always running behind the eight ball in terms of keeping things up to scratch.

Mr McDOUGALL—I am more interested as a percentage of your total expenditure.

Mr Keats—I am hard-pressed to tell you real figures, but probably of the order of \$40 million a year Australia wide.

Mr McDOUGALL—Which you would spend on?

Mr Keats—On capital and upgrade.

Mr McDOUGALL—And on maintenance?

Mr Keats—And on maintenance.

Mr McDOUGALL—What is that as a percentage of your total budget?

Mr Keats—Probably about ten percent.

Mr McDOUGALL—Ten percent.

Mr Keats—And a lot of that is subsidised by the use of volunteer labour to do things and often subsidised goods to carry out the maintenance work.

CHAIR—A lot of your facilities are ageing.

Mr Keats—Yes.

CHAIR—They have been around a very long period of time. But they have also been purpose-built for scouting, haven't they?

Mr Keats—They have. The newer ones are, of course, being built with multipurpose activities in

mind. I think there certainly is an air that we ought to be involving ourselves less in purpose-built activities. We have been looking very closely at the American model. The Boy Scouts of America do not own any facilities at all. They use community facilities. Scouting is conducted in schools, shopping centres and all sorts of locations, and they bring in whatever is required to conduct an activity. We are certainly looking at that very closely because we are not in the business of being landlords or maintenance engineers or anything else. We are supposed to be in the business of giving kids a good time. That is what we are really on about and too much adult effort is being put into maintaining buildings.

CHAIR—I can understand the comment but, if you bow out of that, who takes over the role?

Mr Keats—This is the whole thing; we cannot bow out under the present circumstances. Just going back to the American example: the Boy Scouts of America are organised on the basis that, if you want to establish a scouting group, you first of all get your community supporters to identify the need and they find their supporters. You put forward a budget for how you are going to fund the operations of the group. Over there the groups are largely self-supporting. They, in addition, pay for professional people to deliver scouting in that country a lot of the time. We do not see ourselves going down that track all the way, but we would like to do something about shedding the burden of owning facilities the way we have them at present.

CHAIR—What bothers me about that is, if you go down that track and show to other recreation and sporting organisations that you bow out of facilities and everybody starts bowing out of facilities, where do we go from there? We are already saying that the three levels of government have not got enough money.

Mr Keats—When I say bowing out of facilities, you are looking at things like meeting halls. Why shouldn't we be using a public school or a high school to stage a meeting rather than have a purpose-built structure for it?

CHAIR—Because usually you have your ropes and your tents and your boats and everything else in it as well.

Mr Keats—But why can't we have lockers and storage areas like any other group, and perhaps a dozen different groups use it, whether it is the YMCA or the YWCA?

CHAIR—Have you approached the education department?

Mr Keats—We have been talking to the education department, but so far have got a very lukewarm response. People look at security issues and things like that and say, 'Can we trust the little devils?'

Mr McDougall—Everybody who talks to the education department gets a lukewarm response. I am trying to find out why.

Mr Keats—Yes.

Mr Billson—The management of land is coming increasingly under the microscope from a scouting perspective because you have vast tracks of real estate under your control—as you have said—

through a range of arrangements and weed problems in a number of them. *Pittosporum* in Victoria particularly is a difficult issue for scouting managed land. Is there an argument about the government's or the public's investment in trying to address what are often the last remaining areas of remnant vegetation or high conservation value land?

Is the public investment in that enough to say to the scouting movement, you really need to make these facilities more widely available? They do leave the impression, when you come to these facilities, that they are private property. They are generally fenced; they are generally behind locked gates. They generally do not have any distinctive characteristic that lets people know they are not private. Is there an argument that says the lack of public use of them is a direct result of the way they are presented?

Mr Keats—Let me take an example back in Queensland. With the Eprapah facility just out of Brisbane, where the issues of weed infestation and land management have been very real, the scout movement has taken the step of involving experts in the field to assist it in developing a management plan for that land—I will not say to bring it back to its pristine condition—to ameliorate the degradation which has taken place.

Mind you, a lot of the time the conditions that have developed are not necessarily the responsibility of the scouts alone. Watercourses start higher up and people drop things in them, birds drop seeds, and all the rest of it. But I take your point about total management.

We are very interested in working in close cooperation with a whole range of people to ensure that any land under our control is maintained in proper condition. Even with our tens of thousands of supporters, I do not think we have enough to bring the land back to a state that it ought to be in, but then neither do the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the farming community, come to that as well. But we are very interested and very open and willing to look at different ways to do things.

Mr MARTIN—We are charged with the task of trying to establish where the federal government fits in or should fit in and how. I sense from your submission that is a good idea because the scouting movement could do with some money to address some of the issues that are going on. How would you approach the scouting movement's requirements for often low use facilities, compared to other demands being placed on all levels of government for the sorts of facilities you have heard a lot of people talk about today? It would be a tough call to put money into scouting properties when they might get a couple of wanders-through a year.

Mr Keats—Yes. We would be prepared to accept shared use. I do not think there is a problem there at all. We are all living in the real world today and we understand that you cannot have closed preserves which are exclusive. We would want to think that people who shared use with us were sympathetic to what we were on about. Even though the submission talks specifically about scout facilities, I do not think we have a problem in terms of sharing those facilities with others. For example, if you came up and said, 'We're prepared to put \$100,000 into project X on the basis that you share it with five other organisations,' we would not have a problem. We would want to know who they were and we would want to talk to people. On the other hand, if you were to say to us, 'We're prepared to make a large investment and we want the scouts to have it open to the community as a whole,' I do not think we would have a problem with that either,

providing we knew the parameters of that use.

Mr BILLSON—Eyes open stuff?

Mr Keats—Yes.

Mr BILLSON—In the high country, you could quite conceivably see the seasonality of the scouting movement's requirement for property sitting very nicely alongside your nordic skiers who might find themselves in a part of the world they would rather not be in and looking for some shelter. Are you saying that, as long as those sorts of things were discussed upfront, you could take it or leave it, if it suits your needs?

Mr Keats—Yes. There is the pressure of people on the environment and the pressure of people to share resources. We would be less than honest if we said we wanted to maintain exclusive use. I do not think we do. We want to have the experience and we want the kids to have the experience. We think it is just as important for kids everywhere to have that experience. I think it is a shame that scouting is only perhaps accessed by two per cent of the youth population that is eligible to use it. We would like to think that the other 98 per cent of the population had those same opportunities. If that means changing the way we do some things, we are open to propositions to look at how we achieve that.

Mr BILLSON—Where the government is putting resources into developing coaching programs, administrators and those sorts of things, is the scouting movement well enough resourced to address its own needs in that respect, or are there opportunities to reorientate some of those programs to bring in a wider group?

Mr Keats—I am glad you raised that. We are very active in the Outdoor Recreation Council of Australia. We have had two of our leader training courses accredited by ANTA, the Australian National Training Authority, and we are leading the field in adventurous activities in developing the competency-based training standards for seven of the courses that are being proposed. So we feel very confident that we have got a leadership role there, and we would certainly like to do more. Our courses are open to anyone who wants to do them. In fact, just this week we started marketing our accredited training courses.

Mr BILLSON—For tour operator training and those sorts of things?

Mr Keats—Yes. It is a first for us to actually get our noses in the commercial trough in that regard. We believe it is a way we can actually raise some resources to do other things.

Mr BILLSON—It is a credit to you.

Mr Keats—It has not been easy; we have spent about \$40,000 so far.

CHAIR—In your submission and also in your opening remarks you asked the Commonwealth to endorse the Scout Association of Australia fitness and recreation programs. What do you mean by that?

Mr Keats—We actually have programs—

CHAIR—Yes, but what do you want the Commonwealth to do?

Mr Keats—I suppose when I say ‘endorsements’, I would like the Commonwealth to agree that they are a good thing for the youth of Australia.

CHAIR—Right.

Mr Keats—We do not want you to put any money in in that respect in that one.

CHAIR—I am not aware of any accreditation program that the Commonwealth runs in relation to that. You are just asking for a friendly statement of—

Mr Keats—Support.

CHAIR—Cooperation and support?

Mr Keats—Yes. When it comes to competency based training for leaders, the Commonwealth has already put its seal of approval on that by issuing us with a certificate that says, ‘For three years you are accredited to deliver these courses. You can market those courses. You can charge fees. We will recognise the graduates of those courses.’ We have to keep working on that and keep the quality standards up, but we think we are capable of doing that.

CHAIR—As there are no other questions, thank you again for coming. Talking to the Scout Association puts a different perspective on the inquiry, and it demonstrates that we also have a role in recreational facilities. We very much appreciate the submission that you prepared for us and the excellent background information about your organisation as well. We also appreciate the comments you have made on the issues before the committee. Thank you.

[3.11 p.m.]

BERGMAN, Mr Malcolm, Chairman, National Technical Services Committee, Tennis Australia, National Tennis Centre, Batman Avenue, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

JACOBY, Mr Albert, Secretary, National Technical Services Committee, Tennis Australia, National Tennis Centre, Batman Avenue, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

POLLARD, Mr Geoff, AM, President, Tennis Australia, National Tennis Centre, Batman Avenue, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

CHAIR—We have received your submission and authorised its publication. Do you wish to propose any changes to the submission?

Mr Pollard—We are not proposing any changes.

CHAIR—Would you like to make some introductory comments before I invite members to ask questions?

Mr Pollard—I would like to say a couple of things. Firstly, as we see it at Tennis Australia, there are two issues to be addressed: whether the government should be funding sporting and recreational facilities and, if yes, the second question concerns the modus operandi of this funding. The Tennis Australia submission prepared by our National Technical Services Committee has concentrated on the second issue and essentially recommends that governments get together so that clubs and associations only need to do what might be described as one-stop shopping for all government assistance. It also recommends utilising the facilities of local government authorities, which are already financial contributors and have the staff to assist and supervise.

I want to spend my couple of minutes addressing the first issue. Basically sport and recreation in this country needs government support, including that from federal government, to grow in support. In fact it needs the support of all governments—federal, state and local. Currently the federal and state support is primarily directed at the elite level whereas local government support is at the participation or grassroots level. However, local government support varies tremendously, and we are particularly concerned by the increasing number of councils, acting in the so-called interests of efficiency and good management, that have doubled, quadrupled or increased even more their lease charges to local clubs and associations while granting only short-term leases, a practice which obviously limits investments by clubs in their facilities.

Our concern is primarily for the quality, rather than the quantity, of sporting and recreation facilities to enable sport to compete effectively with television, video and computer games, fun parlours and so on, especially amongst the younger generation who thus engage in an increasingly sedentary and unhealthy lifestyle. The major participation sports in this country are seeing a drop in participation levels, which not only means less talent at the elite level—and athletes at the elite level are the ones in whom government and national sporting bodies are investing heavily—but also means serious health and social consequences, and the health and social welfare problems are federal government, big-ticket items. Sport and physical recreation

are a positive way in which we can tackle the ever-increasing health bill, and represent a good investment by the government in preventive medicine. Sport and physical recreation provide individuals with the highs and lows of life in a most healthy and positive way and encourage team work, family participation, social intercourse and other quality attributes that have a most positive effect on society.

Most of our clubs and associations have the ability to run programs of events and coaching with national association guidance and to maintain their facilities, but not to make the investment in upgrading their facilities to modern standards. Left to separate individual local government councils, we will have an ad hoc approach that will take this country nowhere in sport, or in health, or in attacking social problems. This is where federal government assistance is vital in providing funds and providing direction and, as we have said, you can then utilise local government for its implementation.

Finally, it would be wrong if I did not offer a little plug for tennis, which is the only sport which covers both sexes, male and female, of all ages, from under eight to over 80. It is truly national, equally in all states, the country and the city. It is a wonderful social attribute through its clubs and associations, and a most healthy sport—there are very few injuries. It is reasonably cheap so it is a cost-effective investment and it is really accessible to all in this country.

CHAIR—I can see a lot of people shaking their heads in the background. They do not agree with you.

Mr BILLSON—Geoff, you are absolutely right on every front.

Mr McDOUGALL—I will put the plug in for swimming.

CHAIR—Would anyone else like to make opening remarks?

Mr Pollard—Malcolm would like to add a little bit to my remarks. He has got some specific examples.

Mr Bergman—Thank you, Mr Chairman. As Mr Pollard has said, the submission mainly covers the second term of reference. It is in relation to this second term of reference that these figures may be useful to this committee. Part of that second term of reference is to determine as far as possible, the existing and future requirements for local community sporting and recreational facilities.

The State Technical Services Committee of Tennis New South Wales circulated all New South Wales local government bodies in January this year, informing them of the following assistance available to them: assessment of courts within their municipality; the latest technical advances and developments in tennis facilities; sample purchasing specifications; contractors information; and assessment of tenders, et cetera. The response has been encouraging, with a total of 47 replies to date. They are broken up as follows: 26 shires and councils requesting meetings and/or discussions with the New South Wales Technical Services Committee; three shires and councils requesting additional information; nine referring the circular to local tennis associations and clubs; seven requesting contact at a later date; and a whole two suggesting no assistance was required. This initial response from the shires and councils appears to support the submission

of Tennis Australia that funding of community sport is required by local government in regard to feasibility studies, development of new complexes, maintenance of existing facilities, and upgrading of existing facilities. The National Technical Services Committee, through its state bodies, could assist local governments by offering advice and technical information on the above items in the preparation of their facility requirements for federal funding. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr Jacoby—The Tennis Australia submission is directed to those sports which are dependant upon the support of individual clubs throughout the country to provide the grassroots support. These clubs might be large or small, and they may indulge in social or interclub competitive activities, but they are the grassroots of the sport. They are the organisations that need the financial support and the administrative training to help them become financially viable operations. This submission suggests methods whereby this support can be forthcoming. Using tennis as a typical example, there are probably somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 tennis clubs in Australia, with the club memberships varying between 20 and 4,000.

We accept that the Tennis Australia submission is limited in so far as it does not address the funding of local community recreational facilities, and schools and university sporting facilities. The submission does recognise, however, that for a given sport supported by a number of clubs and associations there are two different approaches for possible federal funding. They are the facilities requirements for the individual clubs on one hand and the facilities requirements at state and national level on the other. These two approaches are covered separately in the submission.

Although we have taken about 12 pages to elaborate on this discussion, in the case of the facilities funding at club level, the principle is very simple. We can summarise that in a few words. If the federal government is prepared to provide financial support to clubs and associations, it should do so through the well tried and proven procedure adopted by most Australian local government authorities—councils—and not by setting up a separate and possibly competing network. The submission discusses in detail the mechanisms of this suggested support based on the existence of a long range, structured program for each club concerned.

In the case of the federal government, at the state and the national level, the submission suggests that each project should be examined on its own merits through the appropriate state government to the federal government. The advantage of this approach, from the club's point of view, is that, knowing the long range, structured program some years ahead, the club is in a position to organise its finances to meet its financial obligations when the time for the next project comes along.

From the council's point of view, the council, with its long range, structured programs for each sport, is in a stronger position to allocate its own funds to the various sports and clubs. The additional federal funding, through the council, allows it to considerably widen its funding support to all sports in the municipality and, further, the structured program is less likely to be drastically amended each year.

From the federal government's point of view, firstly, it has the unique advantage of being able to predict and improve the growth of each sport, since it has the knowledge of the individual structured 10-year programs from each council. These, of course, are subject to amendment each year.

Secondly, the federal government would be seen to be supporting those areas which need it the most.

Furthermore, this is backed up by the council support. Lastly, and by no means least, the federal government can take advantage of the councils' control of their funding projects to ensure that the federal funding is wisely and economically spent by the adoption of proper tendering and procurement procedures. In other words, the federal government would not need to set up a supervisory infrastructure to see that its money was being properly spent.

With regard to the case for federal funding of individual clubs and associations, the position of the state governments in relation to the councils being funded by the federal government would need to be examined. Because of its complexity, this question was not addressed by our submission, but it is still felt that all alternatives should be examined.

CHAIR—Perhaps you could begin by telling us about Tennis Australia—how you are structured and what your aims and objectives are.

Mr Pollard—Tennis Australia is the trading name of the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia, which is the association made up of the six state associations and two territory associations. They, in turn, are made up of all the clubs and associations in each state or territory.

CHAIR—All the clubs? Is every tennis club in Australia affiliated with one of the state organisations?

Mr Pollard—Not every club, no. It is primarily those that compete in inter-club competition or are of a reasonable size, although some very small ones are members. It is a large proportion of the clubs, but there are lots of little one- and two-court clubs that would not be affiliated.

CHAIR—I was interested in your earlier comments when you said that probably there were between 3,000 and 5,000 clubs. I was a little surprised that you perhaps did not know how many clubs there were.

Mr Jacoby—We do in Victoria and I think they do in New South Wales. I think some of the other states have not done quite as much work. In Victoria, for example, there are roughly 1,500 or 1,600 tennis clubs of which about 1,100 are affiliated with the state. That is why we are not definite regarding the number of clubs—it is between 3,000 and 5,000.

CHAIR—Do the clubs pay a fee to their state affiliates or is it per capita?

Mr Pollard—Each state does it slightly differently. That is the history of most things in this country. Likewise in tennis, we had state associations long before we had a national association and the structure under which they existed has continued. So New South Wales, for example, has lots of clubs join a district association—particularly in the metropolitan area of Sydney—and the district associations join Tennis Australia, so you don't have the individual clubs joining Tennis New South Wales. It is the district associations that join.

In Victoria, it is much more a case of the individual clubs joining the Victorian association. Other states do it slightly differently. In Queensland, it is done more on an individual registration basis; players become a registered player when they take part in competitions, so it is the players who are registered rather

than the clubs. That is the history of the structure.

CHAIR—Does Tennis Australia provide any tennis facilities?

Mr Pollard—Tennis Australia, which is the national body based in Melbourne, does not own but operates the National Tennis Centre, which is its sole facility. We do not run any other facilities in Australia. We leave that to the state associations. Most of those either own or operate headquarters. In New South Wales, it is at White City; Victoria and Queensland each operate two.

CHAIR—Milton is about to be sold, isn't it?

Mr Pollard—Milton is sold conditionally at the moment, that is correct. But they have one at Hope Island as well; likewise, Adelaide has got Memorial Drive; Western Australia has got the new Burswood complex, partly funded by the federal government—and by Tennis Australia, who put \$600,000 into it as well. Then there are the clubs and associations. The states do not normally operate more than one complex; they allow clubs and associations to operate complexes.

CHAIR—Getting back to Tennis Australia, how did you fund Melbourne and also raise the \$600,000?

Mr Pollard—Apart from being the headquarters of registered tennis players and clubs throughout the country, we own the Ford Australian Open, which we put on; it is a major tournament. We own or part own other tournaments around Australia and we operate Davis Cup and Fed. Cup. We are hugely into junior development with what used to be the McDonald's program—it is currently unsponsored. We send lots of kids overseas and do all that sort of thing. Virtually all of our income apart from some sponsorships comes from the success of the Ford Australian Open.

CHAIR—Which is permanently domiciled now in your facility?

Mr Pollard—It has got a finite period. There is a 25-year lease arrangement which has, I think, 21 years to go.

CHAIR—That is fairly permanent. It is obviously a superb facility and you have got very good reason to be proud of it as well.

Mr Pollard—It is state of the art.

CHAIR—Has the fact that Tennis Australia has concentrated the vast majority of its financial resources in one facility been a contributing factor to the decline of the facilities in the other states?

Mr Pollard—Not at all. If we had not put our resources into getting a national stadium of the status that we have, which has enabled the Ford Australian Open to truly become a grand slam event—all the top players in the world now come here; the world wants to see it on television—we would have a very low key event still going at Kooyong, with only half the players in the world coming. It would have half the prize money it does now and we would be losing money in trying to operate it. At least now, we have an event

that we are all proud of and it is profitable, which enables us to spend a couple of million dollars a year on developing young players. It enabled us to contribute \$600,000 towards Western Australia's development. We have spent money in Sydney at White City, and also we spent money at Milton. It has been a very positive step forward.

CHAIR—What is the future of—

Mr Pollard—Tennis Australia used to have the view that participation was a state responsibility. Tennis Australia was very elite—Ford Australian Open, Davis Cup, Fed. Cup type of thing. In the last couple of years, we have recognised our need to get involved in participation, encouraging more people to play tennis through lots of programs, like national tennis fun days and other things, and also in developing facilities.

We introduced a program a couple of years ago which we started with a few hundred thousand dollars. We lend it to clubs and associations, generally in \$10,000 lumps, to enable them to do things like convert a court to synthetic grass, redo fences, do some lighting, or whatever it might be. We lend it to them at a good rate of interest so that the club executives do not have to give personal guarantees to banks. This is what has been most effective. It is still small—a couple of hundred thousand dollars does not do much throughout Australia, but it has started very well and we hope now to build on that over the next couple of years.

CHAIR—I think the committee is very interested in that, all the same, because we are looking at funding of facilities. I take it that you are saying you are using the revenue that is created from a prestigious international event to fund local sporting facilities many miles from the venue.

Mr Pollard—Yes. The big lumps have so far been with state headquarters—the examples I gave you. It has only been in the last couple of years that we have started the next step, which is encouraging more people to play tennis and helping local clubs and associations to upgrade their facilities.

CHAIR—Do you see that as a policy decision that will lead to further expenditure in that area? Do you intend to extend that so that every tennis club in Australia may one day benefit?

Mr Pollard—We would like to get to that stage. The demand currently exceeds what we have, so we give preference to clubs that are putting in some of their own resources, because it is obviously a safer loan in that sort of situation. So in order to encourage those that are spending some of their own money, we will help them.

Mr Jacoby—We have discussed the mechanism of this facilities loan scheme in our submission. Our National Technical Services Committee is pushing it all the time to try and get this facilities loans scheme built up. It gives the clubs something with which to approach their council. They have got some part of the assistance they need from the council.

Mr JENKINS—Perhaps we need to clarify the way in which the national facility was actually provided and what Tennis Australia's ongoing commitment to paying that off might be.

Mr Pollard—The basic arrangement initially was that Tennis Australia would play the Australian Open there, that we would get \$500,000 out of it, which was roughly the money we were making out of the event at Kooyong, and the government would take the next \$4½ million towards paying the costs of the thing. Above that, we would then start splitting the revenues—35 per cent to Tennis Australia and 65 per cent to the government, up to \$10 million, and above that 60 per cent to Tennis Australia and 40 per cent to the government, to pay for the facility, which cost a lot more than the original plans.

CHAIR—Which government?

Mr Pollard—The Victorian government. That is basically the arrangement. It chops and changes every couple of years. The government comes to us and wants to restructure their side of the financial arrangements but, whichever way you restructure it, the numbers have stayed basically the same.

Mr JENKINS—And that was the same for the expansion?

Mr Pollard—Yes, the expansion was incorporated in the overall funding so that when we did one of our restructures it was always part of the initial conditions that this would be part of the overall plan. There was going to be a stage 2. Anything further we will only pay a hirer arrangement on.

Mr JENKINS—Is Tennis Australia directly involved in the management outside of the period of the Australian Open?

Mr Pollard—Tennis Australia is the manager of the tennis centre for 12 months of the year.

Mr JENKINS—So you have an agreement with the basketball, you arrange with promoters of the concerts and things like that?

Mr Pollard—Yes, we have a separate staff of Tennis Australia that run the tennis centre for concerts, basketball or whatever it might be and we get a fixed amount of \$300,000 of the first \$2 million profit that other activity makes and 35 per cent of any profits above that. This is all currently subject to discussions with the Victorian government at the moment.

Mr JENKINS—In the development and redevelopment of any of the state facilities, to what degree have you looked for multi-use of those facilities—a la Flinders/Melbourne Park?

Mr Pollard—It is very difficult to make multi-use of an outdoor tennis court without damaging the quality of the thing through having multiple lines. Synthetic grass might be very popular in New South Wales, but it makes it very hard to play basketball on. The opportunity of the tennis centre with an opening and closing roof and so on was pretty unique. There are not too many examples of being able to use a tennis court for other sports without damaging the quality, and that then detracts from its use.

Mr JENKINS—What about joint facilities—associated pavilions and stands and things like that—without having to use the playing surface, to use the associated facilities?

Mr BILLSON—The exhibition facility you have there now is first class—it is brilliant.

Mr Pollard—On the one hand you are looking at a \$100 million-plus investment at Melbourne Park, and we are talking more about facilities that might be worth a million dollars, give or take a bit.

CHAIR—Except that the community is interested in how things are being funded, and here you have got \$100 million together for a particular project, and we are interested in what that may be able to offer to other organisations as a model.

Mr Pollard—With anything like this, there is a risk involved and sport is not big enough to take the risk—the government has got to take the risk. In Victoria, the government took the risk and it ended up costing them a lot of money because the original plan was for a \$60 million complex at 10 per cent interest and to produce \$6 million a year—that was the basic equation under which John Cain said, ‘Gee, this will not cost us anything.’ They took the risk. In fact, the only thing that was right in that equation was that it produced \$6 million a year.

The building, because it was not designed and constructed at a fixed price, which was a government decision, ended up costing \$84 million, and the interest rate, which was 10 per cent when the feasibility study was done, hit 18 per cent. You can do the sum on 18 per cent of \$84 million instead of 10 per cent of \$60 million, and the difference was capitalised for a few years, so the figures went from 84 to 94 to 104 to 114.

We have continued to pay what we had promised from the beginning, which was that we could fund that level of support from the Ford Australian Open and from the other activities that took place because of the multipurpose nature of it. The government, in the end, paid for the risks that they took and they paid the extra.

CHAIR—Have they now written that off?

Mr Pollard—They have now written that off. They have built stage 2 and put it back to the \$60 million that we were supposed to fund from the beginning, and we will fund that over the next so many years.

Mr JENKINS—Mr Chairman, that is another hare I wish that I had not let run out. I want it back again: that is the second time today! I want to ask my next question on that basis and I want to change the subject. Now that Tennis Australia has taken over the role of encouraging participation—and I note the attached report for the Maribyrnong municipality about a long-range program for what appears to be maintenance of the courts—

Mr Jacoby—This is a case of a council which approached our Victorian Technical Services Committee and asked them to do a survey of their 10 clubs and to come up with what was actually a six-year program: I took a little poetic licence and added a few figures on for the rest of it, too, so it is a 10-year structured program. It is about the third or fourth time that this has happened in Victoria. From what Malcolm said earlier, the chances of doing this in New South Wales are pretty high, too. There seemed to be a lot of interest.

Mr JENKINS—Would you involve the creation of new courts within a program like that? I am wondering whether you have a benchmark for the provision of courts for certain demographic areas.

Mr Jacoby—It is pretty hard to have a benchmark when the sizes of the clubs vary enormously.

Mr BILLSON—There is one, though.

Mr Jacoby—The answer to your question is no, we do not have a benchmark.

Mr JENKINS—One of the problems that local government has, especially in developing areas, is where people come and say, 'We would like a tennis club,' but there is already a tennis club just around the corner. How can you convince them that there is already sufficient provision of courts? One of the real problems is how you set a level.

Mr Jacoby—The only way I think you could set a level would be by the number of members they have. If a club has about 100 members, then 2, 3 or 4 courts would probably be sufficient, whereas a club like Kooyong, which has 4,500 members, has 40 courts. That is the only way that benchmarks have been set in the past.

Mr Bergman—And there is also the supply and demand of the local courts, as opposed to clubs, which you are referring to. For the municipal or shire courts, it would depend purely on how much demand there was for those courts and, if it were a new developing area, on how far away it was from the existing precinct.

Mr BILLSON—There is a Land Use Planning Association guideline linked to per capita figures. It is a notional one—X number of courts per 1,000 head of population—which is often used for recreation planning as a basis of need.

Mr McDOUGALL—Is that especially for Victoria?

Mr BILLSON—No; you can get them anywhere.

Mr McDOUGALL—The land use plan that I was involved with did not have one of these.

Mr Pollard—The National Technical Services Committee is only a couple of years old, and we have gone into this whole field. They are gradually developing manuals and all sorts of things and they will have a close look at that question as well. That is one they have not really addressed yet.

Mr JENKINS—The type of work being done with municipalities is good. There was an inquiry that the chairman, Mr Cameron and I were on, about another program that a former government had, and it would have assisted us to have had those sorts of programs to tick off against.

Mr BILLSON—My question relates to the return on investment that the sport makes in its up-and-coming stars and whether there are mechanisms for those successful players who benefited from the programs

the association and the sport runs. When I was a youngster, there were Coca Cola, Little Masters and all those sorts of you-beaut, good things, and when they do get into an elite sporting level there is some expectation of returning some of the proceeds of their earnings back into the sport in recognition of the earlier investment. Is that something that is being canvassed through the sport?

Mr Pollard—It is an issue that has been addressed. I think the major return that we get from our players, is the fact that they do all play Davis Cup and Fed. Cup for their country at a fraction of the cost that Americans and others would pay their players. A good Davis Cup or Fed. Cup match like the one in Sydney against France or the one in Adelaide against the Czech Republic can earn us \$100,000. So there is a return in kind.

Our players are pretty good at coming to press releases, functions and other things that we do, for no charge. So they are pretty cooperative. We have only just introduced a new scheme which will not affect the current players but will affect the younger ones when they come through, which will further reduce the amount we pay players to appear for Davis Cup and Fed. Cup. So I think they are making a return that way rather than saying, 'Give us 10 per cent of your earnings.' We would rather get it the other way, I think.

Mr BILLSON—The other question I had related to the coaching profession. TCAV and everybody else, their representatives, tell me that if only the clubs would get out of the road the clubs could make tennis a truly wonderful experience and have the clubs running profitably and up the participation rate. Coaches as facilities managers, as your pro-shop equivalent, if I could use the golfing analogy: has that got a life to it or is that an argument that is being put forward at a time when coaches are being asked to pay for use of premises as they undertake their profession?

Mr Pollard—It varies from pro to pro and from club to club and it depends whether you have got a 20-court complex or a four-court complex, or some pros even work on a one-court complex. I think a large complex like a Kooyong or a Royal South Yarra or White City and others can have a facility for a pro. For the smaller ones, there is an investment required in developing the facility, the pro-shop and other sorts of things there which no-one seems prepared to make.

If the clubs have only got a three-year lease from council, they can only give the pro a three-year lease and he is not going to invest, unless he has got a longer period. It is a complicated issue. Whilst our direct affiliates are the state associations and through them the clubs and associations, Tennis Australia does integrate the pro coaches into the arrangements and we have just made plans to substantially increase that integration. That has made a lot of progress over the last six months.

Mr BILLSON—Night competitions and private competitions like the 787 series down my way, for instance: are they having an impact at all on participation rates? Is that something that we have got a handle on as a sport?

Mr Pollard—I think the clubs and associations which still depend very much on volunteers to run them, in most cases, stick to weekend competition and, with a few exceptions, generally allow the pro coaches and the centres to do what they like with mid-week night competition. They have not been all that active.

Mr Bergman—That is definitely being rejuvenated, night tennis. There is a push in New South Wales to have the coaches, the professional side of it, more integrated into the state body. There is a very close relationship developing, and that will definitely increase the participation level of tennis in this state.

Mr Jacoby—I think, to answer your question, there is no doubt that if a club with about eight or 10 or 12 courts goes about it the right way they can turn themselves into a profit making organisation. This has been done quite a few times. My experience is in Victoria. Take the Camberwell Tennis Centre, which is a partnership between the council and the state tennis body. That has been going for about 13 or 14 years now as a public centre with privileges for the state body when they want to use it. That has returned almost \$2 million profit to the two partners, namely, the ex-Camberwell, now Boroondara Council, and Tennis Victoria. That has got 23 courts, certainly, but it can be done if they have got the right training and it is done properly.

Mr BILLSON—Would it be fair at a federal level, if federal money was to be made available, to actually expect clubs to pass some core viability tests so that in the longer term they can be self-sustaining at least? I have been involved with tennis clubs for 25 years and it is hard to get people to even share courts. Every club has got its four or five or six courts and, unless you get a darts association or something like that where the liquor licence pays for everything else, it is very difficult to pay your way.

Mr Jacoby—I know a lot of them fall by the wayside but there are quite a few clubs—and I am just talking about Victoria now because that is where my experience is—that have gone about their coaching in a businesslike manner, have invested in lights—there is the other thing that is a money bringer—and that combination effect plus the normal club activities have been enough to make them into a viable operation.

Mr Pollard—That is the sort of test we would put on before we would lend some of our money to them, so we are making the same requirement.

Mr BILLSON—That is one of the things we will grapple with if we do arrive at a conclusion that Commonwealth money should be made available. You do not want to forever keep forking out money, putting good money after bad on non-pliable venues, purely because we have not bitten the bullet in the first place.

Mr Pollard—We would support that one hundred per cent.

Mr MARTIN—Does Tennis Australia get any funding from the Australian Sports Commission?

Mr Pollard—Tennis Australia does get funding from the Sports Commission. The majority, up to 50 per cent anyhow, is through the fact that tennis is one of the sports at the AIS, and the value of that is about \$560,000, the tennis component there. And then there are a few other things that they have helped us with. There was some money in player development which does not come any more. There was some money to enable us to employ some people for participation and something on gender equity and one or two other things, but the majority is through the inclusion of tennis in the AIS.

Mr MARTIN—And is there an expectation that those funds flowed down to improve participation rates?

Mr Pollard—I think the two staffing positions were participation orientated in that the gender equity position was half elite and half encouraging women to play tennis—or to keep playing tennis—and the staff member who does tennis for people with disabilities is essentially participation based as well.

Mr MARTIN—For any of the players that are in the AIS scheme is there still a requirement that a percentage of their winnings goes back to the AIS or to tennis?

Mr Pollard—Yes, it is still a requirement. I think it is 25 per cent of their earnings goes back to the AIS and that was used to fund the clay courts that are in Canberra. Of course we have now moved the AIS program to Melbourne, as of last year, and we have built a clay court there, but the money, 25 per cent, goes to the AIS.

Mr MARTIN—Right, so the Commonwealth assists in the development of our elite athletes in tennis—

Mr Pollard—Yes.

Mr MARTIN—And they give something back to the sport, and that funding is put back into improving facilities for the continuing refurbishment of our teams.

Mr Pollard—I know that is what happened with the first lot in Canberra. I think that the current lot, to the best of my knowledge, is currently going into reserves until they decide what to do with it.

Mr MARTIN—The AIS reserves?

Mr Pollard—Yes. I do not know where it is going, but—

Mr MARTIN—But it is not going to you.

Mr Pollard—It is not going to us. No, no, it is not going to us. We do not get any of that money, no.

Mr MARTIN—That is the point.

Mr Pollard—The 25 per cent per cent goes back to the AIS. I will have to take it on notice and get you an answer if you wish. I know the first lot was held and held and held, and then they used it all in one go to put in two clay courts, and that is four or five years ago. So what has happened with the next four or five years of earnings, of 25 per cent of the players' prize money, I do not know.

Mr MARTIN—If it was to go back in to the AIS program generally for tennis, there would not be a problem, in your view?

Mr Pollard—I think that is probably what is going to happen to it, yes, and we would support that.

Mr MARTIN—Right, but not if it meant that there was going to be a commensurate reduction

somewhere else to AIS funding?

Mr Pollard—Well, the program is designed to develop players, so you should commit to a program that does that. Any prize money they earn and your percentage of it is a bonus.

Mr MARTIN—Is a bonus and therefore should go back into tennis, in this particular case, since your players are the ones that are earning it on behalf of the AIS.

Mr Pollard—Yes.

Mr MARTIN—And if you can also put some of that into facility development to continue that improvement process, you would probably support that.

Mr Pollard—Yes.

Mr MARTIN—According to the submissions we have received, you are the only peak sports body to suggest that the Commonwealth government should institute a program dedicated to the development of infrastructure for each sport, each with its own annual allocation of funds. Did you have in mind how many sports that might affect? Were you talking about the 15 that might be at the AIS? Were you talking about the 150 that people talk about as being the number of sports in this country that people participate in? Are we looking at the super 7? Are we talking about tennis alone, or what are we talking about?

Mr Jacoby—It was meant as a principle to cover those sports that are reliant upon clubs for their successful operation.

Mr MARTIN—Okay.

Mr Jacoby—And if you did this allocation through the councils, I think you would find that for a given council there are not that many different sports that they are supporting.

Mr MARTIN—I tell you what: I would reckon some of those 150 would form clubs very quickly if they thought there was going to be an annual allocation coming from the Commonwealth government. They are not in clubs at the present time. I just wondered from tennis's perspective, it being such an important part of the Australian scene and an important sport in Australia, whether you think that perhaps there are too many sports in Australia that put their hand up and expect levels of government to give them support and, if there are, should there be some criteria developed which determine how different levels of government determine which of those sports they will support?

Mr Jacoby—That is exactly what our submission says. It says that the councils at the present time are not having any trouble. They have got a limited number of sports and, if you were putting your money in through the council and you are getting their structured program, I cannot see how it would change very much.

Mr Pollard—I think, in the end, there should be a critical mass of participation, that you should at

least have a certain number. I do not know what the number is—I would need to do a bit more research into other sports before I comment on that—but my personal view is, and I think Tennis Australia's view is, that there should be at least a critical size below which the administration would eat up any real value. So I think there should be a critical mass of participants in that sport.

And above that, whether they are Olympic sports, or whether they are non-Olympic sports, whether they are more recreation than sport, I do not think is important; it is the critical mass of participants.

Mr Bergman—And that they do have a level of self-sufficiency too.

Mr MARTIN—So you think those sports that can demonstrate a capacity to help themselves are the ones that also should be given that additional help?

Mr Bergman—Yes, some level of that.

Mr MARTIN—So do I.

Mr McDOUGALL—You mentioned in your opening remarks some concerns about short-term leases with local government associations around Australia or local councils. We know that local governments throughout Australia are different in every state and operate in different ways. If you had been here earlier this morning, you would have listened to three or four local councils from the north side of Sydney tell us how poor and broke they are, how there is a lack of land, how they have got nothing, how they cannot fund anything because they do not have enough rates, and how, now that the Victorian government and the New South Wales government cap rates, they have got no money to spend or to invest in capital infrastructure. We then had the Confederation of Australian Sport tell us that the best way to raise funds—I am not talking about Tennis Australia in Melbourne; I am talking about down at the participation level—is to put a cent a stick on cigarettes or run a national lottery. What is Tennis Australia's position on those sorts of things?

Mr Pollard—A national lottery is, in fact, how they are doing it in Great Britain. The national lottery is raising hundreds of millions that are to be devoted to sport and to culture for Great Britain.

Mr MARTIN—It has not helped them in any of their sports!

Mr Pollard—It has only just come in, so—

CHAIR—Are they going to knock down Wimbledon?

Mr MARTIN—They have been here twice to look at the AIS and the Australian Sports Commission—sports ministers from the UK have been there.

Mr Pollard—They are going to copy the AIS concept. The raising of the funds is not an issue that we have addressed. You are more expert than we are as to whether you would do it through national lotteries, through sales tax on sporting goods—which is already there—or through other methods. It is something we have not addressed, but—

Mr McDOUGALL—No, but you made reference in your evidence today that you expect local government to supply you at the participation level with the facilities. Certainly Mr Jacoby mentioned several times that he sees it as the responsibility of local government to supply courts.

Mr Bergman—They have been doing that.

Mr Pollard—Historically they have done it that way, and it is—

Mr McDOUGALL—Right across Australia?

Mr Pollard—Right across Australia. It is the sudden change that is hurting sport; it is the sudden change from an historical way of doing it to suddenly saying, ‘There’s a tennis complex that we have been getting a peppercorn rental for. Instead of \$5,000, we now want \$50,000,’ or ‘Instead of \$1,000, we want \$10,000 rental from that tennis complex. If we convert it to something else we might be able to get that,’ or ‘We think you have made enough money to pay yourself to convert clay courts to hard courts or synthetic grass. If you are making the money to do that, we should be getting some of that.’ The tennis clubs have been hurt by a sudden change in the game.

CHAIR—But if your tennis players were playing squash they almost certainly would be paying the full cost of providing the squash facility and paying for the profits of the squash court owner.

Mr McDOUGALL—There are not too many public squash courts around.

Mr Pollard—That is why they have all gone. If you do that then you will lose them all. If you do the same thing with tennis you will lose them all. If you do the same thing with ovals and make cricket clubs and football clubs pay the full costs of maintaining ovals, then they would disappear too. That is why I have said from a health and a social aspect to keep those things there and not have them go the way of squash courts and disappear. There is a requirement for—

Mr McDOUGALL—What is the level of responsibility of sport towards the capital infrastructure cost?

Mr Pollard—Generally, we would say dollar for dollar.

Mr McDOUGALL—That is better than where you started from two minutes ago. I was getting the impression that Tennis Australia was saying that the public had to supply all the courts.

Mr Pollard—No.

Mr McDOUGALL—But now you are saying, ‘No—

Mr Pollard—Tennis has a wonderful record of helping itself, whether it be the tennis centre in Melbourne or—

Mr McDOUGALL—Sure, I am looking at—

Mr Pollard—Mostly, what councils have done is said, ‘There’s some land. You raise the money. Maybe we will give you a loan and you’ll pay us back, but you have got to raise the money to build the courts and put the fences up and do all that sort of thing.’ That varies substantially, but I think you will find the record is that whilst tennis has got help, tennis has also put a lot of money of its own into local clubs and associations. The issue that you started on was the need for a longer lease. Many of these clubs operate on three-year leases and things like that. In fact, many operated on almost verbal agreements. The classic case was Penrith council which invested \$100,000 on court resurfacing on something they had a verbal agreement on and wondered why it ended up in the courts.

I understand the maximum lease that councils will give is 21 years. The advice we are getting from, for example, the successful David Lloyd centres in Great Britain is that you need about 30 to 40 years—probably 40 years—to make a big investment pay.

Mr McDOUGALL—There are many sporting organisations in Brisbane that have done very well financially and put a thing together on a 20-year lease. Obviously, if the infrastructure is still operating at the end of 20 years and the place is financial, they have met their business plans. If they have met their programs that they submitted at the time of signing the lease, then the chances of them being thrown off the lease are going to be very slim. They have got something to report on. Excuse me if I was wrong, but I got an impression from Mr Jacoby—I accept your point that a club leases land and puts in the capital facility, and I support that. But I was getting a distinct impression that there was a belief that councils should be supplying the infrastructure and that the club should then run the infrastructure. That was the point I was trying to get to.

Mr Bergman—There is evidence of that happening in New South Wales.

Mr McDOUGALL—On the basis that that has happened, do you believe it should continue to happen or that the club should make a contribution to the capital facility? I think Mr Pollard answered ‘Yes, it should be and it should be on a dollar for dollar basis.’

Mr Jacoby—It is enormously variable right throughout Australia. It goes from one council who will not have a bar of supporting any sport to other councils that provide grants. The very good ones are on a dollar for dollar basis. Some of them put in loans. All that is spelt out in the submission, giving all these examples. But it is very variable from one side of Australia to the other.

Mr McDOUGALL—When we are looking at creating a national policy in conjunction with state and local governments, we have got to end up trying to come to an overall plan that relates to the whole of Australia, not to spasmodic bits of Australia all over the place. What has been the experience of Tennis Australia or the clubs or the states or the associations in dealing with education facilities in relation to being able to do a joint funding and management program on facilities?

Mr Pollard—A joint one would be Barry Masters’ example at Hornsby Girls High School.

Mr Bergman—That is where he has taken over a lease.

Mr Pollard—He has taken over a lease. There are not too many examples. Not that many schools have got tennis courts. If they do, it is normally one, two, three or four courts, which is not enough and we would probably encourage them to utilise the nearest tennis complex. There are programs, like the adopt a school program, that we encourage clubs to do to get to the local schools and encourage the kids there to play tennis. They do not necessarily need to build facilities on school grounds if there are some readily available.

The only real specific example I know is the one up at Hornsby where a few of them got together, resurfaced all the courts at Hornsby Girls High School and operated a tennis complex there, where the school had certain hours and the investors had the rest of the time. It has not been a success story.

Mr Bergman—No, not at all. The investors certainly have not made any money out of it.

Mr Pollard—It would be far better if the schools could go to the complexes, if we had the complexes. That way we get better use out of them.

Mr McDOUGALL—The reason for asking one of the questions is, that we have local government telling us they have not got enough land. If they have not got enough land to be able to lease out to sporting organisations to build capital facilities, why not, in conjunction with the education department build them in schools. You also get an opportunity to develop a sport amongst young people at the same time—or the club and the association do—and work together in both capital terms and also in sport development terms.

Mr Bergman—A lot of those complexes that are built in schools are multipurpose, like basketball and other facilities. That is where you get this multi-lining, and it is very hard to use that for competition.

Mr Pollard—If they end up multi-lining, they end up being bitumen surfaces instead of quality surfaces and the change rooms and other facilities that go with it. That is why the school ones have not worked.

Mr McDOUGALL—You really do not see any opportunity?

Mr Pollard—The opportunity is there, but I think it would probably be easier to look at encouraging the schools to use the existing facilities and finding a way to upgrade the existing facilities to make them more attractive for adults and kids to play on.

Mr Bergman—The tendency is that school facilities are not maintained as well as private facilities, so therefore, they are not attractive to the people who want to play the sport.

CHAIR—One of the ideas for raising funds that has been put to us is a levy on tickets sold to major sporting events to go to a fund which could then be used for facilities. You would, obviously, with your major events be a potential source of revenue from that kind of an idea. Does it appeal to you?

Mr Pollard—The trouble is that a lot of events are privately owned and the profit goes into a person's pocket. In the case of sport, whatever profit is made is already going into the sport. You are not really generating any extra money. If that is possible, let us add another dollar to the ticket price and we will put it in. But we are already doing that. The extra dollar is already on the ticket price to provide the funds for us to invest in facilities, player development and participation.

CHAIR—But if the government was to do it by way of a tax, it would apply then to the private promoters as well.

Mr Pollard—Yes.

Mr BILLSON—It would be frightfully popular.

Mr Pollard—It would be.

Mr MARTIN—It would be nice to have private promoters—

Mr BILLSON—Is the idea to show it on the ticket?

CHAIR—You are underwhelmed by the suggestion of GST?

Mr MARTIN—No, like the reef tax, I was thinking.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for coming. Your evidence has been of particular interest coming, as it does, from one of the major Australian sports. We have appreciated learning something about the way in which you have been funding your own operations and the contribution you are making also to facilities at the community level. Thank you for appearing before the committee today.

Mr Pollard—Thanks for the opportunity and good luck with your deliberations.

[4.16 p.m.]

SACZKO, Ms Sue Jennifer, Secretary, Bike North, c/- 3 Kokoda Avenue, Wahroonga, New South Wales 2076

STEWART, Mr Douglas, Publicity Officer, Bike North, c/- 3 Kokoda Avenue, Wahroonga, New South Wales 2076

WATTS, Mr John, Member, Bike North, c/- 3 Kokoda Avenue, Wahroonga, New South Wales 2076

CHAIR—Welcome. We have received your submission and it has been authorised for publication. Do you wish to propose any changes to the submission?

Ms Saczko—No. It is fine.

CHAIR—Before we ask you any questions, would you like to make any brief opening statements?

Ms Saczko—Yes, I would. First of all, thank you very much for your invitation to attend this hearing into whether or not the Commonwealth government should fund local and regional sporting and recreational facilities. Our particular interest is cycleways. We see cycleways as sporting and recreational facilities; they are also transport facilities and therefore benefit local and regional areas in two ways. On Saturday and Sunday they are sporting and recreational facilities primarily, while on Monday to Friday they are transport corridors.

The people who are using the facility to ride during the week reap all the benefits of healthy exercise which sporting facilities offer, but are doing so as a part of their normal journey to work or to school. The British Medical Association strongly recommends cycling on health grounds. BMA studies show that the life years gained in terms of fitness from cycling are 20 times the life years lost through accidents, even given the current high traffic figures for cyclists. Cycleways will provide a safe means of cycling for the whole community.

Dr Harry Owen, the new president of the Bicycle Federation of Australia, says that spending on infrastructure that generates daily, moderate, incidental exercise is an investment in health. If daily exercise was the norm, the reduction in heart attacks could save the community \$1.2 to \$1.6 billion per annum and the incidence of stroke could fall 10 per cent. People cycling also helps the environment—82 per cent of a primary component of smog in Sydney comes from motor vehicle emissions, with light vehicles contributing about half of this. The New South Wales state Department of Transport smog action plan suggests developing cycleways and inducing people to use them as one of the strategies for addressing the problem. The benefits of cycling have become widely accepted around the world, with plans to increase bicycle use in many major cities. Most of these plans include dedicated cycleways as a component.

Bike North's vision is that all capital cities in Australia will have extensive, high quality, safe and continuous cycleways that will encourage more people to cycle and, at the same time, result in health and

quality of life benefits to everyone in all small and large communities. As a first step we propose that a safe, high quality, continuous cycleway be constructed in the very poor northern area of Sydney, utilising the railway corridors as detailed in our submission. This will provide a safe cycle highway through a quite difficult cycling area. We believe it will attract a great number of cyclists to participate in healthy exercise for both recreation and transport purposes.

The rate of cycleway development throughout Australia, and in particular in New South Wales, is too slow. We think that there is a role for the Commonwealth government to speed up the implementation of cycling facilities. In particular, we request the Commonwealth government to take this opportunity to help create a premier example of a sport and recreational facility in Sydney for people who choose to ride bikes. I hope that was not too long.

CHAIR—It was great, thank you very much. We do have, in Canberra, a copy of those appendices to your submission; we have not actually got them in front of us. Perhaps I should ask you: how far is this proposed bikeway, and have you costed it?

Ms Saczko—We are a bike user group. The length of it is from Milsons Point, near the Harbour Bridge, to Asquith, which is just north of Hornsby, and then from Hornsby back to the Olympic site. So it is basically covering the main northern part of Sydney. We think it is about 41 kilometres.

CHAIR—It might be 50 kilometres, just for—

Ms Saczko—Yes, it is long. We think it is useful because it is long.

CHAIR—How much of it is in place at the present time?

Ms Saczko—Little bits—not much.

Mr Stewart—The proposal is that we use the railway corridors—the existing land alongside railway lines all around the country—which are currently used for maintenance of railway lines, but most of the time are just not being used at all. At the moment, none of those corridors are being used as cycleways. There are some sections which would necessarily have to go onto roads. To our knowledge, none of those sections are marked specifically as cycleways.

Ms Saczko—There might be a few little passages, between a paling fence and a chain wire fence, where people walk. But, basically, none of that would be in place, I would say.

CHAIR—Are the railway corridors sufficiently wide to fit in a cycleway without running into trains all the time?

Mr Watts—They are very wide.

Mr McDOUGALL—Including the tunnels?

Mr Watts—Tunnels would be places where you would have to go around.

CHAIR—And cuttings, for that matter, too.

Ms Saczko—That is right. We hoped that you had had a copy of the proposal in front of you, because we would have been as sceptical as you at first about looking at making the railway easement into a bikeway. When we saw what Bike West had done we changed our minds. We saw plans that would give us a way of doing something that was very practical and would use a lot of pieces of land that exist. Everyone is saying, 'Look, it is all there. You go past in the train, you look at it and you can see it every single day. Why aren't we doing something with that? We do not have space. Why not use this space?'

CHAIR—I suppose the obvious question from our committee's point of view is: why should the Commonwealth fund such a thing? Isn't that a state or local government area of responsibility?

Mr Stewart—We think it depends on how you view it. In Australia, cycleways are behind much of the rest of Europe and some parts of the United States. We would hope that the Commonwealth would use a project such as this and other projects as a kick start, if you like, to get moving to have cycleways built in cities all around Australia.

Mr McDOUGALL—There has been considerable federal and state government funding in relation to cycleways for a long time, usually through the department of transport. In my city of Brisbane a lot of bikeways, both recreational and commuter, have been built over the years. Have you been able to get any realistic figures in relation to the difference in volume between recreation and commuter use? I know there is a perception about commuter use. Let me suggest that one you might be able to refer to is the bikeway that goes from Griffith University into the CBD of Brisbane and out to Queensland University. Frankly, recreation-wise, you are lucky if you can get on it. Three pedestrians have been killed on it by bikes in one particular section.

But in one of the other sections, the longest section, if you got knocked down by 20 bikes a day that were commuters you would be lucky. The only time it gets used for recreation is on weekends. It hardly gets used during the week. And it was delivered at enormous costs, including about five bridges that go over major roads alongside freeway bridges.

Ms Saczko—We do not know about that one. We only know about the population areas that exist along the corridor that we are proposing. In our proposal I have outlined the number of people who live there. You would find that it is not just going to one university; it is actually going to businesses, to sporting and recreational facilities, to tertiary institutions. We have 70 schools on the North Shore line, I think we have an equivalent number on the main northern line, and we have the Olympics site, so we are not looking at a facility that just goes from home to uni. We are looking—

Mr McDOUGALL—The one in Brisbane, while it goes between two unis, delivers a lot along the way as well.

Ms Saczko—Right. We are talking about North Sydney, Chatswood, Epping, Hornsby; we are talking

about major business and commercial centres. We think there are about half a million people who live in the feeder area. I cannot remember the exact number, but there are about 150,000 cyclists in the Kur-ring-gai area. I am not quite sure of the numbers—I would have to look them up—for the other area. But potentially, it seems to us, there is a huge demand for a facility like this.

Mr McDOUGALL—I have to be a bit biased. This is a sport and recreation committee conducting a hearing into sport and recreation facility funding. When one is looking at something that is proposed to be a commuter replacement for traffic, one would immediately look at the transport department and say, ‘How much are you going to contribute towards it?’

One of the questions that was always being brought up with me in relation to bikeways during my nine years in local government constructing bikeways was that, while these bikeways went past all the facilities such as schools and shopping centres, they also tended to run through parks and follow creek systems, so they did not get used a lot because parents were terribly worried about children using them as a commuter bikeway because of safety issues. You raised the issue of using the railway corridors. The first thing that would ring in my mind would not be safety issues in relation to trains—you could fix that—but safety issues in relation to protection of younger children using such a bikeway.

Ms Saczko—Definitely.

Mr Stewart—The Bike West proposal in Western Australia deals with those issues. They particularly talk about appropriate lighting, with attention to where people might be coming out from under underpasses, to try and reduce the places where people might be surprised, and so forth. It is an issue and it needs to be addressed. One would hope that the design people would take account of that.

Mr MARTIN—According to our friends from local government this morning, you would be competing, would you not, with other sporting organisations in the northern suburbs of Sydney for council funds for this proposal?

Ms Saczko—We would expect that the council would have to make a contribution.

Mr MARTIN—Okay. They were telling us this morning that most of the funds that the council got for the provision of community based sport and recreation facilities in their local government area came from section 94 contributions under the Environmental Planning Assessment Act. They were telling us that they do not have enough money and opportunity from that, and that there is a competing need within their communities from both active and passive recreational and sporting users. If this proposal of yours was to go to each of the local government areas that it goes through, obviously there would be that competition element as well. You agree with that?

Mr Stewart—Yes.

Mr MARTIN—How many people, in your view, are going to be users of this, as compared with, say, people who play cricket or swim in the swimming centre up in the northern suburbs?

Ms Saczko—They might do both, Mr Martin. In fact, they probably would.

Mr MARTIN—I am sure they will; they will probably ride to get there.

Ms Saczko—In relation to participation and cycling rates, we already know that the percentage of commuter cyclists is low. The last survey of bicycle statistics that we are aware of in New South Wales was undertaken in 1988. It showed that 1.9 million people, or 30 per cent of the population aged five and over in New South Wales, rode a bike. So it is quite likely that they will swim, play cricket and use the facility.

Mr MARTIN—I do not disagree. But my point is that, for the people in your part of the world, you are going to have to be a lobby group, for example, lobbying against the cricket association from the northern districts, the rugby union clubs that are there, or the rugby league clubs if we have any at the end of this season. They are all going to be in there lobbying the councils in the northern suburbs to provide them with some sort of funding for their facilities.

The indication I got from the local government people this morning was that, largely, it was passive recreation facilities that most people wanted in their local government areas. If you are going to lobby against all these other groups, you have to be able to say them, 'There are X number of people out of your whole area who are bike riders, bike users, and will utilise this facility. Do you have those sorts of figures?'

Ms Saczko—I need to have my proposal back, please, to get the number.

Mr Watts—While Sue is looking that up, I might add that she has recently addressed Ku-ring-gai Council and they adopted the proposal as something they would support. They are recommending to the adjoining councils that they do likewise.

Mr MARTIN—Okay. One of the issues we were exploring as well was a regional approach to the provision of sporting and recreation facilities, not simply adopting a very myopic, 'this is my local government area' type of approach. With something like this proposal, you might get one, such as North Sydney, deciding to support it and then you might get one up the top and none in the middle, so it would be very difficult to do it.

Ms Saczko—We found that the total of all cyclists in lower northern Sydney and Hornsby and Kur-ring-gai was 154,800. Of these, 62,800 cycled weekly, 29,100 cycled monthly, and 63,000 cycled less often. The other thing you would find in Kur-ring-gai, as an example, is that the percentage of teenagers and people aged between 10 and 19 is exceptionally high. That is basically because of the location of the schools. So it would be something that would service a large number of people in that particular area. And with the other one that goes down to Meadowbank, the same thing happens.

Mr MARTIN—Has your organisation explored other sources of funding and potential sources of funding to assist with this?

Ms Saczko—We have taken the proposal to the state government to see what kind of response we would get there.

Mr MARTIN—Were they supportive? They have \$3 million to spend on cycling facilities in Sydney alone this year, don't they?

Ms Saczko—For \$3 million you do not get very much at all. For example, in our own area Bike North is looking at a section that goes between Kissing Point Road and across the creek and it costs nearly \$800,000. We are getting not much, just a little bridge.

Mr McDOUGALL—How many kilometres?

Mr Stewart—It is about two kilometres of off-road cycleway and about four kilometres of marked road.

Ms Saczko—So you can see if we are trying to build a network of cycleways of use to the people of Sydney—

CHAIR—There is a bridge.

Ms Saczko—Yes.

Mr Watts—This will connect the Pacific Highway at Turramurra with Macquarie University.

Ms Saczko—If you think about it, and if we have only \$3 million to spend, you can get a picture of just how much cycleways are going to be built and why we need assistance, especially as it is going to reap national long-term benefits by changing community attitudes.

Mr MARTIN—What about the federal Department of Transport?

Ms Saczko—I do not know that they contribute anything. I am not aware—

Mr McDOUGALL—They contribute big dollars. Local governments get most of their funding for bikeways through the federal Department of Transport, and they have done for years.

Mr Watts—I wonder if they spend it on bikeways?

Ms Saczko—I wonder if they do. We—

Mr McDOUGALL—The council that I was a member of did, and in big licks.

Ms Saczko—We know that the state government can fund percentages of cycleways.

Mr Watts—Most councils have a bike plan, and Ku-ring-rai Council certainly has one. For those projects that are approved by the RTA then they will fund them dollar for dollar. However, there is still an upper limit, a pretty low limit, and that is why you do not see very much happening.

Mr MARTIN—That same sort of principle that you just mentioned there was also the basis of the former federally sponsored community recreation, cultural facilities program that was run before. There was an upper limit of \$200,000 or \$250,000 but most projects got considerably less than that, and you could only get one dip into it.

This committee is investigating whether a program like that, but with a regional and a national focus, might not be required. Obviously, the amount of money that you are talking about is quite considerable when you think about the infrastructure that needs to be built. If there was such a program available and funded from whatever source—which we have not worked out yet but there are all sorts of ideas—and your organisation applied in a regional sense then as it went over a number of local government boundaries there might be an expectation that you would get a little bit more rather than a little bit less.

If that happened then you are still going to be short of funds to do what you want to do, notwithstanding all the great benefits that clearly are there and the number of people that are going to use it. Where do you get the additional funds that therefore pushes your project across the line?

Mr Stewart—One of the aspects of cycleways which is particularly valuable in terms of this partial funding is that they are linear structures. You can build a bit of it and then some more and some more, and if we have use of the cycleway, which justifies more expenditure, then it could be built up over time.

One of the reasons we are talking to this committee is that it is a sport and rec facility, but it links into health. It links into transport. It links into changing the way that the whole community operates. We can look overseas for examples of visions we might head towards. One of the best examples is the Netherlands situation, where 28 per cent of all journeys are undertaken by bicycle. That saves the government an enormous amount of infrastructure for cars, for example, because it is a lot cheaper to provide infrastructure for bicycles than cars. If you have a look at the area of the Netherlands, it is about equal to the urban areas of Australia. Most of the urban areas of Australia are flat. Sydney is an exception, and there are others.

Mr McDOUGALL—There are 71 hills in Brisbane.

Ms Saczko—Sydney and Brisbane are exceptions.

Mr Stewart—We all ride bikes, and we can tell you that the modern bicycle with lots of gears is not a problem when it comes to hills.

Ms Saczko—It is not.

Mr BILLSON—Every uphill has got a down side.

Mr MARTIN—The problem is, as you identify, that there are health benefits, transport benefits, and recreation benefits—that is three different departments—but if you dip into the funds in one of them, the rest of them would say, ‘Oh, I see our colleagues have already funded that, so you can’t get anything from us.’ So you are still left with a problem. Even with the former sports facilities program that was administered by the Commonwealth government, you were only, supposedly, allowed to get one dip into it. You could not get

any more.

Ms Saczko—It is a shame that our federal and state governments cannot coordinate to do things that are useful for the whole country, is it not?

Mr Watts—We are really trying to address a problem which has built up over many years. Cycleways just have not attracted any funding to speak of, not compared with building expressways and so forth for motor vehicles.

CHAIR—I am surprised to hear you say that. Have you looked at other capital cities? Is Sydney especially poorly served by bikeways?

Mr Watts—Sydney is especially poor. Melbourne is in fair shape. Canberra is in wonderful shape.

Ms Saczko—Perth is great.

Mr Watts—Perth is great. Adelaide is not bad.

Mr McDOUGALL—There is nothing wrong with Brisbane.

Mr Stewart—It depends on what you call a lot. Certainly, in dollar terms, there is a lot but, if you talk about proportional terms, if we really want 20 per cent of people to use cycling as their major form of transport, we need to put 20 per cent of the money that goes into roads into cycling. For instance, the RTA is putting, I think, \$4 million per year—

Mr McDOUGALL—I am on a current road funding inquiry. The total that the three levels of government in Australia spent was \$10 billion a year on roads. Are you suggesting that it should be 20 per cent of that?

Mr Stewart—Yes. I am suggesting that if you want the result—

Ms Saczko—We are suggesting that a fraction of that should go to cycleways instead.

Mr Stewart—The result you would get is based on the amount of funding. We are not talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Netherlands government spent I think it was \$240 million a year.

Ms Saczko—It was \$240 million a year for 10 years to establish the cycleway network, because they could see that they could not possibly afford to have 28.5 per cent of trips that are made by bicycle made by car. That is why they did it.

Mr MARTIN—That is fine, but—

Ms Saczko—Which makes sense.

Mr MARTIN—But how much of the Netherlands do you fit into Australia?

Ms Saczko—You would fit it all into our urban areas. They exactly match, plus population-wise it would be pretty much the same.

Mr MARTIN—Exactly. But if you are talking about providing every other form of infrastructure across Australia, everybody that lives at Bourke wants exactly the same telephone system they have got in Redfern, at exactly the same cost, and so it goes right through government provisions. So it is always very difficult when you are comparing very small nations with Australia. Notwithstanding that, as a concept and as this committee is concerned, it is just how you come up with that funding formula to provide a fair and equitable distribution of funds to all sports in Australia—if, in fact, this committee decides that it wants to recommend that there be some sort of a fund established.

Then the question arises, in your case, as I think we agree, about the 40-odd kilometres of cycleway just for this particular proposal. For all the merit that it has, and the delineation of a route using railway infrastructure and so on, nevertheless, we are still going to be in that difficult position of saying, ‘Well, all right, there is a source of funding, but where else are we going to get it from?’

Mr Stewart—When we approached the state government we had a similar break-up—there is the Department of Transport, there is the RTA, there is the SRA, who have control of the line at the moment—and the question was that we need to get coordination. We need to have a whole of government approach within the state and we would need to have a whole of government approach within the Commonwealth, to do these things. We are talking about major changes to the way we operate. This facility would be an example. It is a lot of money but it would be only one of the facilities of the type that we hope there would be right across Australia.

Mr Watts—We would see it as a demonstration project, just to show that something like this can be done and it can be successful. Obviously, we cannot solve all of the problems in the life of one government, or maybe even in the next 20 years, but if we have a clear idea, a clear vision of where we want to go and then have some successful demonstration projects, perhaps we can attract a lot more support for the balance of it.

Mr BILLSON—I am surprised you did not allude to the project as a way of avoiding duplication of recreational infrastructure. In my former life, that is exactly what we used bike path money for. I was in a fringe urban area where every community wanted its own basketball stadium, swimming pools, et cetera, the argument being, ‘How are our kids going to get to these facilities otherwise?’ I said, ‘Fine, let’s build some bike paths.’ The only problem we had was that we could not build them fast enough. Everybody wanted them so they could get to the beach, get to school, get to the basketball stadium, get to everything. That might be an issue that you would want to explore.

In Victoria, though, Melbourne Parks and Waterways, as it was then known, actually levied a rate on everybody and re-invested some of that money in linear parks, to include bike paths. Is that something that your fair city could consider doing also?

Ms Saczko—That is not a question for us, I think. We are a bike user group.

Mr BILLSON—Yes, but none of us can get away from the fact that someone has got to pay for it.

Ms Saczko—That is right.

Mr BILLSON—I think what Mr Martin so eloquently put is that it is hard yards spending a squillion on a bike path when there are all these other issues that are popping up and requiring funding.

Ms Saczko—I guess the beauty of the bike path is that so many people do benefit. As I said, you are competing with other sporting groups but everyone has got a kid that owns a bike, so it is a universal thing. We have got 1.8 million bikes in the garage.

Mr BILLSON—There are a lot of sailboards in our city, down in Melbourne, too.

Mr McDOUGALL—I take your point on that. You have said that there are 63,000 people that use a bike once a week—

Mr Stewart—In that area.

Mr McDOUGALL—What is the total population of the area?

Ms Saczko—Hornsby has 141,600, Ku-ring-gai has 106,350. If you are going all the way through Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Willoughby and Ryde—and this is not including Parramatta, which this cycleway actually connects to—the total is 482,800 people.

Mr McDOUGALL—How does that compare with people who play other forms of sport? What I am trying to get to is this: the two other gentlemen have talked about cracking open the dollars and dividing it up. Where are you sitting in the pie, as a percentage of the total number of people in other sports and recreation pursuits which you would then be able to compare yourself against for the requesting of funding? Bear in mind then what some people might be looking for. For an absolutely flat, level, two-metre wide concrete bikeway, if you could run it flat without having any bridges, culverts—simply plain, on top of the land—you are looking at \$3.3 million for 41 kilometres. If you add in all the other infrastructure that goes with it, I do not know where the bill goes but it can be enormous. What I am trying to do is come up with some sums as to where you rank in relation to other sport and recreation pursuits in relation to the dollars they are asking for, for the numbers of participants in relation to the percentage of the total population.

Mr Stewart—We do not have figures on other sports. We would presume that when they came to talk to you, you would have those figures.

Mr Watts—There is one way you might get at that. Ku-ring-gai council ran a needs survey some years ago, and I think that cycling facilities were second or third from the top of the unfulfilled needs.

Ms Saczko—We have to say, too, that it is not just cyclists. These facilities can be used by

pedestrians.

Mr BILLSON—And rollerbladers.

Ms Saczko—And rollerbladers and wheelchair people. What is to stop that?

Mr BILLSON—And dog walkers.

CHAIR—Do you think many people will ride their bike to the Olympics?

Ms Saczko—We think they might have to.

Mr Stewart—I think an enormous number would.

Mr Watts—It might be an attractive way to get there.

Mr McDOUGALL—It is interesting that, as you just made the point, you do not have any objections to multiple use by rollerbladers and others on the track. What is the width of track that you would need if it was multipurpose?

Ms Saczko—Austroads gives various widths of bikeway for various speeds and locations. We would be looking at about 2½ to three metres of width.

Mr McDOUGALL—To be able to accommodate bikes, rollerbladers and pedestrians?

Ms Saczko—Plus, if you are thinking about a railway cycleway, you want to be able to have people going in two directions at the same time in safety. We are looking at top class facilities. You cannot provide a piece of asphalt and expect people to enjoy using it. They will not.

Mr McDOUGALL—Do not use asphalt.

Ms Saczko—You cannot use a skinny little, poor thing that breaks up. It has got to be good quality.

Mr McDOUGALL—They have got to be concrete. Asphalt costs too much in maintenance.

CHAIR—Personally, I would have some worries about using the rail corridor, I have to say.

Mr BILLSON—I was going to say that in Victoria they insisted—we did do that, brilliant—that we had to get over the safety issues first.

CHAIR—You have got electric cables; it is quite common to have sound walls, two metres high—you have to get around all those sorts of things. You have got the embankments and the cuttings, let alone tunnels. It just makes me wonder whether it really would work. Anyhow, that would be a local problem; you could solve each problem locally.

Mr Watts—Engineering issues.

CHAIR—There is certainly a lot of support in the community for bikeways and they are increasingly popular. Even in rainy Sydney I am sure they would be very popular.

Mr Watts—I wish it would rain!

Mr MARTIN—Mr Watts, you mentioned that Ku-ring-gai council has done a needs based survey and that cycleways came out as No. 2.

Mr Watts—Somewhere in the top two or three.

Mr MARTIN—I think they were referring to that this morning.

CHAIR—Yes, they did make mention of their survey.

Mr MARTIN—It seemed to be a couple of years old, at least. Has anything happened based on that information? Have they made any endeavour to channel some of their recreation funding into cycleways?

Mr Watts—They put together a bike plan but they have not really implemented very much of it. In the course of researching it I found that they had a few other bike plans on the shelf in the library, but this one has had a bit more teeth in it and we have got a few councillors who are supportive.

Mr MARTIN—But nothing is on the ground?

Ms Saczko—No. These things do not happen. They plan them but nothing happens unless there is an impetus to make them happen. If we can get the state government to make a contribution, and the federal government and the local council and private businesses, then we can have a bike plan. Maybe we cannot have the whole thing at once, maybe we can have bits, but we need contributions and we need—what is the word—

Mr Watts—Leadership.

Ms Saczko—Leadership from someone to say, ‘Get your act together, guys. Get together and make something that everyone can use.’ You have got to get a lot of departments from different places together and you have got to get them all to think in the same way. You need direction. Bike North just says that we need someone to assist us to actually make it work.

CHAIR—Thanks very much for coming in and talking to us. It has been of great interest to us to hear about your project and to learn more about the recreational side of the inquiry. That is where I think your evidence has been particularly helpful. We are not talking just about the well-established major sports but about recreational use of facilities as well. In your case the facility also has a commercial role as a transport link, and that certainly has to be acknowledged. We appreciate the fact that you have thought of this committee in putting together your proposals and bringing them forward. We will certainly take on board

what you have to say. We appreciate the fact that you have taken the time also to appear before the committee today.

Ms Saczko—Thank you very much for giving us the time.

Resolved (on motion by Mr Billson):

That, pursuant to the power conferred by paragraph (o) of standing order 28B, this committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 4.49 p.m.