



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION AND THE ARTS

Reference: Funding of community sporting and recreational facilities

PERTH

Tuesday, 22 July 1997

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

CANBERRA

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

Members

Mr Truss (Chair)

Mr Anthony	Mr Harry Jenkins
Mr Robert Brown	Miss Jackie Kelly
Mr Billson	Dr Lawrence
Mr Eoin Cameron	Mr Martin
Mrs Crosio	Mr McDougall
Mr Entsch	Dr Southcott
Mr Hockey	

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

ARCHER, Mr Michael, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Katanning, 16-24 Austral Terrace, Katanning, Western Australia	600
ASH, Mrs Denise Ann, Secretary, Carine Calisthenics Club, c/- 3 Mica Court, Carine, Western Australia 6020	637
BARRETT, Mr Peter Lance, Manager, Facilities, Policy & Planning Branch, Education Department of Western Australia, 151 Royal Street, East Perth, Western Australia 6004 ...	576
BENNETT, Mr Neil, Geraldton Council, PO Box 101, Geraldton, Western Australia	600
BRIMAGE, Mr Graham, Director, Recreation, Ministry of Sport and Recreation, PO Box 66, Wembley, Western Australia 6014	576
BUSCH, Mr Jack, Executive Director, Ministry of Sport and Recreation, PO Box 66, Wembley, Western Australia 6014	576
HALL, Mr Graeme John, Recreation Services Coordinator, City of Melville, PO Box 130, Applecross, Western Australia	600
ILFIELD, Mr Peter John, Elected Board Member, WA Sports Federation, Stephenson Avenue, Claremont, Western Australia	623
MORRIS, Mr Darryl, President, Calisthenics Association of Western Australia Inc., Gray Drive, Midvale, Western Australia 6056	637
MORRISSEY, Mrs Coralie Anne, Member, Board of Directors, Calisthenics Association of Western Australia Inc., Gray Drive, Midvale, Western Australia 6056	637
OSBORNE, Mr Malcolm John, Manager of Development Services, Shire of Katanning, 16-24 Austral Terrace, Katanning, Western Australia	600
PECH, Mr Kenneth Ernest, President, Western Australian Municipal Association, 15 Altona Street, West Perth, Western Australia	600
PLESTER, Mrs Jillian, Treasurer, Carine Calisthenics Club, c/- 3 Mica Court, Carine, Western Australia 6020	637
QUINLIVAN, Mr Patrick George, Manager, Recreation Services, City of Armadale, Orchard Avenue, Armadale	600
SHANAHAN, Mr Timothy Michael, Executive Director, Western Australian Municipal Association, 15 Altona Street, West Perth, Western Australia	600
RYAN, Mr John, President, WA Sports Federation, PO Box 57, Claremont, Western Australia ...	623
STUBBS, Mr Roger, Vice-President, Western Australian Municipal Association, 15 Altona	

Street, West Perth, Western Australia	600
WELCH, Mr Robert, Executive Director, WA Sports Federation, PO Box 57, Claremont, Western Australia	623
WILSON, Mr Gratton, Committee Member, WA Sports Federation, PO Box 57, Claremont, Western Australia	623
WYATT, Mr Cedric, Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Affairs Department of Western Australia, First Floor, Capita Centre, 197 St Georges Terrace, Perth, Western Australia 6001	576

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

Inquiry into the funding of community sporting and recreational facilities

PERTH

Tuesday, 22 July 1997

Present

Mr Truss (Chair)

Mr Billson

Mr Eoin Cameron

Mr Entsch

Mr McDougall

The committee met at 2.15 p.m.

Mr Truss took the chair.

BARRETT, Mr Peter Lance, Manager, Facilities, Policy & Planning Branch, Education Department of Western Australia, 151 Royal Street, East Perth, Western Australia 6004

BRIMAGE, Mr Graham, Director, Recreation, Ministry of Sport and Recreation, PO Box 66, Wembley, Western Australia 6014

BUSCH, Mr Jack, Executive Director, Ministry of Sport and Recreation, PO Box 66, Wembley, Western Australia 6014

WYATT, Mr Cedric, Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Affairs Department of Western Australia, First Floor, Capita Centre, 197 St Georges Terrace, Perth, Western Australia 6001

CHAIR—Ladies and gentlemen, I declare open this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment, Recreation and the Arts for its inquiry into the funding of community sporting and recreational facilities. Since this inquiry was advertised last November the committee has received over 280 submissions and has visited New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia for public hearings and inspections. At its public hearings, the committee has had before it state and local government, sporting organisations and providers of facilities.

Today the committee will hear from similar groups in Western Australia about their views on the provision of sporting and recreational facilities. The witnesses today represent the government of Western Australia, the Western Australian Municipal Association, the Western Australian Sports Federation, the Calisthenics Association of Western Australia and the Carine Calisthenics Club.

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 a 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 consider such a request.

I now call the representatives of the government of Western Australia. We have received submissions from you and authorised their publication. Do you propose any changes to the submissions?

Mr Busch—No changes but I would like to add some comments to put matters into context.

CHAIR—If there are no changes, I now invite you to make an opening comment.

Mr Busch—Thank you for the opportunity to attend today. In Western Australia we have had a sustained history of more than 20 years of providing funding to community facilities. During that time the funding program has been known as the community sporting and recreation facilities fund. It has been approached on the basis that local community needs are identified and they drive the project development. The state government has provided funding of up to one-third of the cost of a project with the remaining funding coming from local government, community groups and other sources. What it does mean, of course, is that there is a multiplier effect in terms of the value of the projects that are generated as a result of those state government fundings.

Whilst there has always been an emphasis on the importance of planning and design for community facilities that has been given greater priority over the past four years and there has also been a particular emphasis on management of those facilities. That approach has, from our point of view, been based very much through publications, seminars, advisory services—I mention here that we have regional offices throughout the state so we provide those advisory services on a state wide basis—and then also the expectations and requirements that we have associated with our community sporting and recreation facilities funding applications. Graham Brimage will briefly discuss and make available some examples of publications that have been used as part of that campaign.

An important part has been the degree of confidence that there will be future funding, so that we work on a rolling triennium funding. That means, for example, that funding will be made available for 1998-99 and for the two years thereafter. People are already aware that funding will be made available so they can plan and look ahead to the fact that there will be funding. Part of the campaign has been to encourage planning knowing that funding will be available and time can be taken to ensure that a project is well researched rather than having to run for what might be an unduly tight funding deadline. I believe that is an important part of the process.

We believe the state government is best placed to work with local government and community groups. We then have the resources and expertise to ensure that, in fact, we do end up with well planned, well designed and well managed facilities which actually meet the community's needs. It has been our experience in the past that perhaps the Commonwealth funding has not been as effective as it might have been in providing a coordinated approach to the availability of funding and achieving the best outcomes.

I will now briefly outline our process. When an application is prepared it is either by a community group or a local government authority and we strongly encourage them to do that in consultation with ministry staff. All applications, whether initiated by local government or not, are then submitted to the local government authority for consideration, comment and priority. Our regional staff also view the applications and provide comments and priorities. Where relevant, the state sporting associations are also given the opportunity of viewing all relevant applications and providing comment. All of that material is then made available to the committee which considers that information and makes recommendations to the minister.

If funds are provided from the Commonwealth, and those funds are provided at a different time or on a different basis than in the past, this can cause difficulties. For example, a consortium which has gone through the stream I have just outlined may or may not get funding and then another project could receive Commonwealth funding—which has occurred in the past—causing confusion and other concerns in the marketplace as to what the priorities are, who is making those decisions and what really is meeting the needs of the community. Sometimes there may be competing facilities in that outcome.

Moving away from community facilities, which clearly is your primary thrust, the point we would like to present—which we made in our submission—is that we believe there is a real need nationally to continue to ensure a good stock of international and national standard facilities throughout the country. Over the years state governments have made considerable investment in international and national standard facilities, as has the Commonwealth government from time to time. In more recent times Commonwealth funding has, of course, concentrated on the need for facilities for Sydney 2000. Increasingly, major facilities are more costly,

a number of them are not viable, and there are substantial costs involved. We believe it is an area for consideration according to a national—and Commonwealth government—perspective to ensure that there is, in fact, a good stock of the right facilities to meet requirements at international and national standard.

We believe that facilities are required for the optimum development of high performance sport, for the ability to attract and conduct major sporting events, to allow our athletes every opportunity to perform in front of their home crowds and for the Australian community to see sport at its best. As indicated in our paper, our views are that local government very much has a responsibility for facilities at local and regional standard, and by regional I mean servicing more than one local government area. State government has a responsibility from local level through to international level and we would be encouraging the committee to consider the importance of the Commonwealth government's role in the area of national and international standard facilities.

Mr Cedric Wyatt will be addressing you regarding Aboriginal remote communities. We believe this to be an area of very special need, and deserving of special consideration. We support the submission being made by the Aboriginal Affairs Department.

I will now ask Graham Brimage to expand on our approach to ensuring improved planning, design and management of facilities.

Mr Brimage—Mr Busch mentioned a very substantial funding commitment by the government of Western Australia. We have also had a commitment that has been raised in energy levels in the last five years to the planning, design and management of sport and recreation facilities. Some of these publications will give you some insights into those. These range from a recreation and planning guide, which is the first of our two kits in a series of resources. These work through from the needs assessment, project justification stage through to feasibility study, then past the procurement stage into the actual design process of sport and recreation facilities. These are resources which we have developed, and I believe a number of other states and territories are also now producing similar resources.

One of those examples was the feasibility kit one of which I have provided to the committee today. There is also documentation regarding the community sporting and recreation facilities fund through which the state government commits approximately \$8 million per year into our sport and recreation infrastructure. That details the application process, the decision making process, and we would hope that if something is initiated it would be compatible with those state based programs rather than something which comes in over the top.

The other documentation is a set of seminar papers. We conduct approximately five seminars each year on a range of issues regarding planning, management and design of facilities. That has been a deliberate process to raise the expertise and industry knowledge levels rather than just having a single agency, whether it be our own ministry or any other organisation, being the font of expertise. We have endeavoured to raise the levels of planning, design and management capability across the whole system.

The final publication is a focus paper on joint provision and shared use of sport and recreation facilities. That relates very much to your term of reference three. We have had a sustained commitment to

community and local government sharing both usage and the management and planning of sport and recreation facilities. They are a community resource and Peter will, in a moment, speak a little further from the Education Department's perspective in terms of that community.

Mr Barrett—In carrying forward the Education Department's commitment to the provision of facilities for the community, a few years ago we developed a document on capital resource sharing between local government and the Education Department. This is a signed agreement between the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Education and the Premier putting an obligation on both local government and the Education Department to negotiate whenever capital facilities were being provided in order to ensure that a better amenity was provided in the end. I guess it is on the basis that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, as perhaps has been the situation in years gone by where each authority—namely the local authority and the Education Department—on occasions, provided their own facilities for their own purposes. These days there is an obligation for those facilities to be provided jointly.

In planning schools, the Education Department works closely with the Ministry of Planning to ensure that school sites are collocated with public open space in order to provide the base for a better amenity which will be developed in the longer term. Our schools have an obligation to provide their facilities for the use of the community at large. We have a document entitled 'The community use of school facilities' for the use of schools and principals to ensure that their facilities are made available to the community so that not only will sporting, recreation and cultural facilities be developed co-jointly between local authorities and the Education Department but also the usage of those amenities and facilities is provided to an optimum level.

We are conscious that a number of these facilities are managed, in some cases, by a joint agreement between the Education Department and the local authority concerned. That legal agreement sometimes provides for an on-site manager—not an Education Department employee—and those on-site managers ensure that there is equity in the use of the facilities between departmental requirements and community requirements.

In relation to funding, the Education Department does not diminish the amount which it provides for the recreational and cultural facilities on school sites just because there is an agreement with the local government to put in some extra money in order to provide something better but rather we provide the amount of money for the standard facility. This is then supplemented by the standard amount which the local authority would provide. As I indicated, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and hopefully, as a result of that, we can ultimately provide better for the community at large.

We do have issues which are relevant to remote communities and the Chief Executive of the Aboriginal Affairs Department, Cedric Wyatt, will undoubtedly explain that. Whilst the Education Department is conscious of the need for provision in remote communities, the department does not, in fact, have schools in every remote community. I am sure Mr Wyatt will be able to take up that point.

Mr Wyatt—Mr Chairman, I will just address the special needs of Aboriginal communities. Regarding the response to the 1996 Commonwealth budget cuts, ATSIC had a prime funding role for Aboriginal community sport and recreation facilities. That has now been terminated by the commission's decision to terminate that program and transfer funds to an elite sports persons program.

In the past the state Aboriginal Affairs Department, the Lotteries Commission, the Department of Sport and Recreation and ATSIC provided the major sporting infrastructure to Aboriginal communities. Such funding from ATSIC has been undertaken with little coordination with the state or local government leading to some poor investment decisions, duplication of resources and recurrent funding problems. Funding of sport and recreation facilities in Aboriginal communities should be viewed as an investment strategy to attain improved social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

As mentioned by Mr Barrett, the demonstration project is an example of the state undertaking investment with a planned approach for the development of services and infrastructure for Aboriginal communities, and I understand that New South Wales has followed our lead. The difficulty is that the high level of infrastructure requirements for Aboriginal communities combined with the ATSIC withdrawal from programs has limited the ability of the state to respond to the degree it would wish to in developing facilities. We would suggest that in your considerations you think about the state approach: that Commonwealth funding of facilities should be directed at state, national and international projects and not go directly to funding of communities. The state, with its very strong local planning approach, should address local, regional and state needs. The exclusion from this general approach is the issue of funding for Aboriginal communities.

We can provide further written information about the demonstration projects which this state government has embarked upon, addressing a whole range of infrastructure needs in communities. This is a 10-year strategy. There will be another three demonstration projects this year to address all the infrastructure needs in the community over the 10-year period, enabling the state to budget in a far more coordinated and coherent manner. These address all infrastructure needs from roads and bridges to community planning, beginning with an involvement with local government. It addresses health needs, education needs and some economic and commercial undertaking needs in remote communities.

We are somewhat like the Northern Territory, and some parts of Queensland, in that we have some 70 to 300 Aboriginal communities. The population of those communities is essentially Aboriginal people. The old Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and now ATSIC, embarked on an uncoordinated approach of creating out-station communities and homeland communities without any consultation with local government or state authorities to have a coordinated approach to infrastructure development. The demonstration project is designed to bring those large communities—with populations between 100 to 800 people—into line with existing local government planning frameworks, existing local government council boundaries, and also with a view to having an impact upon the way in which the grants commission calculates its funding to the state in relation to local government needs. It has been quite a new project to address those large communities with a whole of government approach in order to address some of the imbalances between mainstream communities and those Aboriginal communities which were created by government many years ago.

In the planning process it has been quite successful. However, there are sometimes difficulties when dealing with the number of different agencies—there are 31 state agencies and a great number of federal agencies. It is not just about a coordinated approach to deal with infrastructure difficulties but also it is about mainstreaming services to Aboriginal communities and eliciting from commonwealth agencies, in particular, a particular coordinated approach to that infrastructure development.

CHAIR—It is clear from the literature you have provided that a lot of work has been done and that your programs are highly developed. It is particularly pleasing to have someone here representing Aboriginal sporting interests because that is an area where we have not had a lot of evidence before the committee. It is also good to have the Education Department here because one of the very topical issues of our inquiry has been this concept of shared use. I have no doubt that there will be questions in both of those areas. I would like to begin by talking more generally about the Western Australian government program—that is, \$24 million over 3 years. What sorts of projects can be funded by that?

Mr Busch—A wide range of projects can be funded, ranging from refurbishment or rejuvenation of existing facilities, through to construction of new facilities. It can be used for very small projects up to the larger projects. It could be for a major new sport and recreation facility—wet and dry facilities of \$6 million to \$8 million—or it may be used to replace the surfaces on a tennis court in a small country community.

CHAIR—So it can be a few hundred dollars to fix up something—if that's perceived to be a need—or even millions?

Mr Busch—The smallest grant is \$750, which is up to a third of the cost. So we are talking at the very small end. We have also provided grants of over \$1 million for individual projects.

CHAIR—Is the money only for facilities or can it be for ongoing management costs and things of that nature?

Mr Busch—All for facilities and none for ongoing management.

Mr Brimage—There is a contribution that can be made to the planning process. For example, if there is a feasibility study then there can be assistance to ensure that the project is practical.

CHAIR—So the capital element can be part of it. If the facilities are on a school ground, is it eligible for funding?

Mr Barrett—It can be, yes.

CHAIR—So, it could be part of a school facility?

Mr Barrett—It could be a joint project.

CHAIR—I note that the amount of money available in this triennium is \$24 million whereas the previous triennium was \$26 million. Does that suggest that the job is almost complete and less money is required or was it related to priorities?

Mr Busch—Certainly the job is not close to completion, and I believe there will be continuing needs. The first year of a new triennium was 1995-96 and before that there had been a different funding approach where funding for three years was allocated in one lump sum and there were no new approvals for the remainder of that three-year period. That was revisited so that we now have a rolling triennium approach. It

was felt at that time that there was a need to pick up some of the real needs that had developed over a couple of years where there had been no new approvals. So there was \$2 million extra—which meant \$10 million in the first year of that triennium—and then \$8 million and then \$8 million. This triennium there are three lots of \$8 million. So it was a special injection of an extra \$2 million.

CHAIR—When choosing a project to be funded what consideration is given to the planning processes that have been undertaken by the state to establish which types of facilities should be located in particular areas?

Mr Busch—Essentially the project and planning processes have been driven at the local level so there has been very much an emphasis on the proponents doing their homework to identify the real need, doing the feasibility and so on. We have been encouraging them to look at matters such as available facilities and potential competitors—the real need across the boundary, so to speak. However, there has not been a broader plan which they could actually be compared against. We have been doing some work to address that area.

Mr Brimage—The assessment process is generally spread over a three-month period and is very comprehensive. Firstly, the individual projects are assessed in terms of their specific design aspects—for example, whether there is disabled access or whether there are opportunities to share the facility between a number of groups. There is also the assessment of the project viability from both a capital funding perspective and also from subsequent recurrent costs. A thorough analysis occurs. We also seek comment and input from other key stakeholders.

Firstly, state sporting associations are asked to comment on specifics from their sport's perspective and we also ask the local government to rate the projects because they often have many projects within one municipality. Additionally there are projects submitted by a local authority as well as by community groups within a municipality. These are rated separately so local government ones do not finish up on the top always.

There is also comment from Ministry of Sport and Recreation regional staff in offices spread throughout the state from Kununurra through to Albany. They have considerable expertise in the design, management and planning of projects. We have also taken that a step further in recent times, moving towards local and regional planning of sport and recreation facilities so that they are not considered in isolation but with regard to the impacts they will have within a given locality. That will have an increasing emphasis over the next five years. We will be looking for more integrated planning from the local and district level through to regional level, and to state, national and international level.

Further, regarding funding programs and the program we are discussing now—the community sporting and recreation facilities fund—a separate commitment was made by the state government with respect to those facilities which are of national or international standard. They are, in fact, not funded from this program we have been discussing; separate commitments have been made directly from consolidated funds.

CHAIR—They are basically one-off, on-budget items?

Mr Brimage—Yes, items such as the State Tennis Centre, which is our most recent major facility.

CHAIR—Has any of the money for the Western Australia Alive program come from poker machine revenue or gambling or things of that nature?

Mr Busch—No, it is all from the consolidated funding source. In fact, the name WA Alive has been comparatively short-lived—despite its name—and it has reverted back to being the community sporting and recreation facilities fund.

CHAIR—Is gambling revenue in Western Australia hypothecated at all?

Mr Busch—Lotteries Commission money is hypothecated and two per cent of that is available for sport development but that is not used, except in very rare cases, for any facilities assistance. So that is essentially for sport development. It goes to state associations, the Institute of Sport and those sorts of sources. On the odd occasion, it has been used to assist in a small way in a facilities need area, on a special case basis, but it is not part of the primary funding source for the facilities fund which is additional from consolidated funding.

CHAIR—Apart from that small example all of the gambling taxes and the like just go into consolidated revenue?

Mr Busch—When you say gambling taxes—because we do not have the gaming machines here in Western Australia, of course—we are talking, first of all, of lotteries. The lotteries are managed here through the Lotteries Commission and their disbursements are partly to the sporting community, partly to the arts community and partly to a range of other specific areas.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—I am delighted that in Western Australia, once again, we are leading the way—especially with these publications that Peter Barrett has shown us. In the evidence that we have heard across the country so far we have found varying degrees of cooperation between the education departments, and various local authorities and so on. We have had accounts of situations ranging from open hostility to ones where there is very good cooperation. An example of the latter is, I think, the case of Golden Grove in South Australia, from where we heard evidence the week before last. In that case the sporting facilities at a new residential development were built alongside the school, and are being shared by the community plus the public school, and two private schools and this is apparently working most satisfactorily.

However, we heard some examples in New South Wales where it was not working out quite so well because the headmasters were in control of the use of the sporting facility at the school and were not keen to allow outside use of it. What has been your experience generally with what has happened in Western Australia? I am interested to see that you have the policy and guidelines on that. How is it working?

Mr Barrett—In the past there have been occasions when some principals have had the attitude that the school was their personal property and that no-one should darken the doorstep after 3.30. By dint of a substantial amount of work done from within the department, I believe that we are significantly overcoming that attitude. In combination with the provision of joint facilities, and where there is an obligation on the part of the principal to share the facilities, the attitude of our schools is getting to be very positive towards the sharing arrangements.

When a new school commences, as I indicated, there is an obligation on the part of the Education Department to negotiate and liaise with the local authority to provide better amenities for the community. As a foundation that means that those particular schools get off to a very good start. We have some very good examples of large scale shared facilities which include sporting, recreation and cultural facilities. The two largest ones are at Leeming Senior High School, with which we have an agreement with the City of Melville, and at Lakelands Senior High School with the Cockburn City Council. They are both recreational facilities worth in excess of \$2 million to \$3 million and include aquatic facilities, double basketball courts, music and theatre arts facilities.

They are very well-managed by the local authority on an equity basis, ensuring that there is a manager on-site. One of them is making a profit which is rather surprising these days because, whilst there is a charge for use in relation to that, the charge tends to have to offset the cost of management and, to a certain degree, of maintenance.

However, to answer your question, I believe we are moving in the right direction—even on the very small scale—of ensuring that schools must make their facilities available after hours to the community.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—The two you have mentioned are newer facilities, what about in the older established areas?

Mr Barrett—In cases where we are adding to schools, either by the construction of additional classrooms or by the provision of a special facility such as a hall or gymnasium, again, there is the obligation to liaise with the local authority and with the Ministry of Sport and Recreation to ensure that the facility provided is one which will benefit not only the school but also the community at large. In relation to the addition of amenities and facilities to schools in the older communities, there is the policy and guidelines promotion which tries to ensure that schools are active in going out into the community and ensuring that their facilities are promoted; that they are included within the directory of amenities and facilities which are available to the community at large through their local authority; and that schools promote the use of their facilities after hours.

CHAIR—With regard to the memorandum of understanding which was signed in a state wide expression of intent, what happens at the local level? Are there specific contracts to guide who can use the amenities or is it just a handshake arrangement?

Mr Barrett—No, there are two levels. There are the official agreements where there is perhaps a licence for use of the facility. But there are also many agreements which are perhaps, as you suggest, at the handshake level, agreed between either an individual community group or a local authority and the principal. At the macro level, the state has established a strategic asset management plan within which it ensures that there is an obligation on the part of the department to ensure that the facilities are at least planned for use by the community. As well, we have a vigilant Auditor-General who annually asks the Education Department what progress they are making in relation to community use of school facilities.

Mr ENTSCH—The Australian Sports Commission referred to the staffing arrangement at Geraldton High School, which was designed to facilitate community use. I understand that is a trial program. How is it

going?

Mr Busch—I cannot comment specifically on it in the sense that it is very much a pilot scheme with one staff member operating during the afternoon through to about, I think from memory, 6 p.m. The concept is to encourage that staff member to work in the school community and in the community at large to develop pathways for students to be involved after school in sport activities. At this stage the primary target group is the students, and trying to encourage them to be involved in physical activities and sport outside school hours—as well as those that happen in school hours—and to help make it possible for the community to get involved with the school in providing a range of activities.

It is still very early in the pilot but so far it has generated interesting developments in the availability now of activities that were not previously available for students; one that comes to mind, which was not previously available, is martial arts. It was identified as an area of interest by the students and the community has come forward to make it available. It achieves a number of things: firstly, the increased usage of the school and, secondly, it also broadens the range of opportunities available to the students.

Mr ENTSCH—Are there people outside the school community accessing those opportunities or is it solely students at this stage?

Mr Busch—I understand it is essentially the students but I am not aware of all the fine details of the project so it may be that some of the community is accessing benefit from that as well. It is part of a broader view of ours that, in terms of the delivery and provision of sport and recreation, the more we can grow across local government, the education system and the sport system—have the three working more and more in concert not just in the availability of facilities but in the actual provision of activities and competition and so on—the more that will realise a far more effective system across-the-board. So it is one of a number of things. An example of that is a club funding program which has just been announced. It is basically a push to try and say we believe that liaison across those three sectors is fundamentally important and can be improved. So we are moving on a number of fronts to try and improve that.

Mr McDOUGALL—One of the documents you have provided was written in 1993 and the other in June 1997. Was there one between those two, before June 1997?

Mr Barrett—There was a less well-presented document which expounded the principles. The document on resource sharing with local authorities dates back several years but it is the principle upon which we continue to operate—that it is an obligation on the part of the department and the local authority to negotiate on the provision of those facilities.

Mr McDOUGALL—In your 1993 document you refer to such facilities as libraries, ovals, recreation facilities, meeting rooms and cultural facilities. With regard to sporting facilities, how big a component of all this activity that you have got going is sport and how much is all the other areas? We have heard a lot about the involvement of the state, of the Education Department and local government. Where does sports administration come into this? How much say do they have in this?

Mr Barrett—In answer to your question about amounts, without analysing the figures, it would be at

least 75 per cent that is given over to sport and recreation and possibly more, as distinct from cultural facilities which include better arts facilities and libraries. The majority of the money would go to sport and recreation.

In relation to the provision of input from sport itself, this comes either through the local authority—particularly through local sporting clubs—or through the Ministry of Sport and Recreation in relation to the assessments of the need of those particular districts. Each one will be assessed differently in relation to its requirements.

There is one situation at present where the Education Department was very keen to participate with both the basketball association and the local community to provide an extensive basketball facility on the school site. However, both the association and the local authority decided that it was better to place those facilities elsewhere. So we have a single high school basketball court on our site and they have a rather better amenity elsewhere in the municipality.

Mr McDOUGALL—Which you decided to build on your site rather than help fund and share the use of the other one?

Mr Barrett—We had to provide something on our site but it is a much lesser facility than would have been the case if we had been able to get the project jointly developed.

Mr McDOUGALL—Is that good economics?

Mr Barrett—No.

Mr McDOUGALL—Before all this started, did anybody create a database in Western Australia of what sporting facilities existed—not just local government or state owned facilities, but also those at private schools—within the Education Department or private facilities?

Mr Busch—We have not created a database and, in fact, our approach has been very much to encourage the proponents to look at what is available, what impacts there are in the area and the specific activity that they might be contemplating. That way it tends to be, firstly, current and, secondly, in looking at it, it encourages contacts and community consultation. We have seen it as part of that needs assessment and community consultation process: they find out what is available, what might be impacting, what might be relevant and what they need to be aware of in the area. We have not done it in the formal sense that you are suggesting.

There have been some broader projects which have given us some ideas. Three to four years ago we did a quick assessment which showed that the replacement value of sport and recreation facilities for which local government was responsible was in the order of \$2 billion to \$3 billion so that type of broad brush exercise has been carried out. We see it as very important at the local level that people do that sort of exercise—knowing what is available and what marketplace they are operating in in terms of any facilities proposals—but it is not in the overall database sense that you have raised.

Mr McDOUGALL—Based on the example just given by Mr Barrett—when a school and the community did not come together and just went off on their own tack—are you sure that when somebody comes to you for funds that they have adequately investigated what alternatives there are available? Do you know whether it is the case that there is not a facility which, if upgraded or extended or expanded, would do the job rather than them wanting to create something and ignoring that the other facility is there. Would not a database be more helpful to you in knowing that, rather than have some section of the community wanting to duplicate an existing facility?

Mr Busch—There is always the potential risk that that will happen and that people will have their own objectives when they are looking at a facilities proposal. Important in managing that is our own staff because they are, particularly in the country areas, very close to the localities and they know what is available; they know where certain things should be looked at. If they can see a potential for that sort of situation—and it certainly can and does occur—then those questions are raised as part of the assessment process that we go through. We make sure that, if it looks as if all aspects have not been adequately addressed, that has been done, that the questions have been raised. We make sure that they go back to be considered.

There is one other thing that I should mention, and it bears on your earlier question about the involvement of sports. We have been working with several sports and certainly have been encouraging them more to look at their strategic needs. For example, the state swimming sporting association is looking at the number of aquatic facilities, where they are likely to want their main pools, where they are likely to want a 25 metre space versus a 50 metre space, et cetera. That means that they are more able to contribute to the process in terms of what is really needed and what would actually fit into a bigger context as far as those decisions are concerned.

Mr McDOUGALL—Your submission states that the Commonwealth government should focus on funding state, national and international facilities and leave all regional and other facilities to state and local government. Can I tell you that you are the first state government that I can remember who has ever said that. In saying that, and if we are to fund all those other major facilities or part fund them with the state through your general budget, on-line revenue, where are we going to raise the money? Have you got any suggestions?

Mr Wyatt—Yes, I have got one: tax reform, so the states get a fair share of the cake.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—Hear, hear!

Mr McDOUGALL—It has been suggested by the Confederation of Australian Sport that we should put 2c on a cigarette; someone else suggested a lottery. Someone tells me cigarettes are going down in use so I wonder what happens to the 2c if the volume does go down; someone suggested we up it to 3c, 4c or 5c if it does go down. I do not know how much that could take. Someone else suggested we can take the rights off the states and create a national lottery. With all the gambling we have in this country, how do you think a lottery would go?

Mr Wyatt—Not very well. I think there would be lots of problems. Take a massive Commonwealth

department such as ATSIC which costs \$400 million a year to administer—with that, we could resolve in a week all the problems in Australia of recreational facilities for Aboriginal communities. There are far too many Commonwealth agencies doing things without coordinating or consulting with state planning authorities. Essentially, assets come on stream: one example in particular involved a recent initiative of the previous government in providing accommodation for the elderly and seniors throughout the state of Western Australia—especially in regional Western Australia—but there was no support to maintain the asset. It is about everything: it is about maintenance of the asset and ensuring that communities are regionally resourced through both human and financial infrastructure to maintain the asset so that we actually get greater and far more economical use out of it.

We understand that the Commonwealth Grants Commission looks across at Western Australia, and what ATSIC spends in this state is calculated as part of the Western Australian untied grants, even though we have no control over it in being able to respond to the needs of the communities, particularly in regional Western Australia. At the moment, there is a fair amount of capital expenditure going on through the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services in this state today but no-one is looking at who is going to maintain the asset.

With the recent HIPP program, in relation to ATSIC, we said that it should be done together so that the asset gets maintained. We have a cyclical replacement of housing in Western Australia because there is no strategy to maintain the asset. It did not happen that way. The management of the HIPP program could have been largely handled through the state housing authorities, who have all the expertise and the planning requirements. Instead it was handed to a firm of consultants in Brisbane who then administer, from Brisbane, a regional and remote area housing program. So coordination between the state and the Commonwealth is not good. The same applies with the provision of recreation equipment.

I would like to give some credit to a previous minister, Clyde Holding, who made recreation and sporting equipment an essential service for both remote and regional Australia and metropolitan and urban centres. That infrastructure is just as important as water, power, roads, bridges and so on for the social betterment of the whole of the Western Australia community and the Australian community in general.

One of the great initiatives of Minister Holding was swimming pools for remote and regional Australia, which did a lot for health care, particularly in the area of sore eyes and ears. As soon as Mr Holding left, the bureaucrats in Canberra chopped that initiative out. It had become a real essential service for our state, in particular, which has an enormously high dust environment in those places where 62 per cent of the Aboriginal community—and, in fact, a very large section of the non-Aboriginal community—live.

Until we sort out what the Commonwealth Grants Commission is doing, what other Commonwealth agencies are doing and what tax reform is all about, I do not believe that any progress will be made. And the reason that cigarette consumption is down is that the smokers are all dying!

This is something that is high on our agenda and which seems to be on the agenda for our political leadership but, as an administrator, I believe very strongly that tax reform is essential—especially in terms of the needs of such a large and expansive state. No-one has any idea until they actually get out into rural and remote Western Australia what it is like—we could throw Queensland into our state four or five times.

People have no understanding of the difficulties of regional Western Australians, particularly with regard to the issue which you are following up today.

Mr BILLSON—I suggest that a discussion on the Grants Commission and tax reform might create more dust in Western Australia, given that I am from Victoria and we pay more than the lion's share of it!

I am grateful for the introduction because, when I read the two submissions, I was wondering what the Western Australian government's corporate position was. Your two submissions cover the whole spread of all the submissions we have regarding Commonwealth funding and state, national and international facilities. Some organisations say it should be funded federally, others say locally or through remote communities or Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal or whatever. That is the spread we have and I found it confusing that you covered both. You say that the Commonwealth should fund state, national and international facilities, that we should apply this rigorous test of viability or need—those sorts of things—and that we should make an exception for remote communities. Why don't you do that?

Mr Busch—We have highlighted the remote communities to say that it is an area of special need and that it would be valuable for all to work together to provide funds in that area. It is not that there has not been state government funding in that area but what we are saying is that it is an important area of shared need and that there is value in seeking Commonwealth support in that area.

Mr BILLSON—Are there plans for the Western Australian government to embrace that worthwhile suggestion in its own funding guidelines? I share Mr Cameron's view that it is good to see these sorts of things happening. We have been looking for these sorts of things as models, as being very useful in being able to say to other parts of the country, 'Look, it is happening in Western Australia.' I wonder whether the Western Australian government plans to embrace the approach it has advocated for remote communities in its own funding guidelines and therefore strengthen its call to have the Commonwealth do likewise.

Mr Busch—One of the difficulties that has occurred—Cedric raised it in relation to the cut in the ATSI funding source—is that the state government assistance is available for up to one-third of the cost of a project. The problem is where the proponents cannot find the rest of that funding source. In some cases in the past it has been through ATSI funding and things have been able to happen in those communities. By reducing the resourcing on that side, it has meant that some projects can now no longer aggregate the sort of funding that is required.

So it is, firstly, an area of special need and, secondly, there is a need for additional funding because those communities are not really in a position—either because of where they fit in relation to a local government authority or the community infrastructure or whatever—to generate the sort of funding that is available in other communities to allow them to access the funding through our existing programs.

Mr BILLSON—There is nothing stopping the Western Australian government reflecting that in its funding guidelines. As I read your submissions, you are saying, broadly, 'Here is what we are on about but we think there is a special case for remote communities and that there should be a different set of criteria to evaluate what gets up and what does not.' I am sure the opportunity is there for the Western Australian government to do the same in its programs and, notwithstanding that extra resources would be helpful, surely

some progress could be made within your own jurisdiction on that front.

Mr Busch—It certainly could, but the point of emphasis is that there is less of that funding available and that a different set of circumstances applies in those remote communities. Therefore, additional funding will allow things to happen which otherwise would not happen.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—Because of the expanse of those areas, I do not believe the Western Australian government can afford to do it without Commonwealth support. I mean, we are talking about really remote communities. People from Victoria consider Geelong a remote community but we are talking remote remote.

Mr BILLSON—I appreciate that.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—There is a lot of expense involved.

Mr BILLSON—If the degree of remoteness—distance, catchments, sparsity of population et cetera—becomes the criterion, then that, as a policy setting, is fine. That is something that is defensible right across the nation which we represent in the nation's Parliament. In that respect, I was just looking for a lead, more or less, from the Western Australian government. The opportunity is there for you to take that lead and I am just querying why you have not. Perhaps it would help convince us poor southerners or south-easterners about the need for a change. Your encouragement is well received there, Mr Cameron.

There is a question about the private sector and local government and every council wanting its own you-beaut aquatic centre, which is a constant drain on the ratepayers of the fair city for as long as it exists and, as well, it usually wipes out two or three private sector operators. In terms of your project justification and evidence of consultation, does that go to the question of private operators, of tax-paying people who run their own facilities—do they require all that? Does it go to questioning where those fit in the picture?

Mr Busch—First, it can provide opportunities for the private sector because many local authorities will contract out for the management of that facility externally. So that is one option. Secondly, in many situations—in a number of country towns, for example—it is quite often not an issue. However, it can be in some of the larger country towns. It certainly is looked at as a factor and it has been a vexed question in some areas—for example, gyms. It is looked at and at times it will be a value judgment as to what will best meet the community's needs overall. Sometimes it will mean some competition. There is a very genuine awareness out there. Local government is usually aware, either because of their experience in the past or because the commercial operators have made sure that they are aware of it. That is usually very much in their minds.

Mr BILLSON—Let us look at the criteria that the Commonwealth would apply. I am taking out of your submission this suggestion of a two-pronged approach, one concerns national facilities and the second is largely an equity driven argument about remoteness which it can apply in a number of different ways. Would you see the third-third-third or the quarter-quarter-quarter-quarter model applying or would you be looking to the Commonwealth to provide the lion's share of capital costs, operating expenses and renewal of the asset itself? Is that the sort of thing you had in mind?

Mr Busch—On the matter of the major facilities, just by way of clarification, our program provides up to one-third, so not necessarily a third. The other two-thirds can be put together in a range of ways—for example, the local authority might decide to provide the remaining two-thirds. So it is a combination of who the proponents are, and how they can actually bring that together, including voluntary contributions as well as cash contributions.

On how it might apply in terms of a joint funding approach, you have raised a very crucial factor, which has become increasingly an issue as far as we are concerned, about the ongoing operation of those facilities. Any deliberations should take account of the fact that there is not only an up-front cost but also an ongoing cost. Some facilities cannot operate on a break-even viability so I believe there is ground for discussion on that. We do not have a predetermined recommendation of a funding formula on that but we do believe it is a factor that should be looked at in the future.

Mr BILLSON—‘National facilities’ is something that has amused all of us as we have travelled around the country. I think there are six or more ‘national’ swimming centres, as if by putting ‘national’ in front of something it becomes the nation’s centre. How would the Western Australian government feel about a good number of the national facilities being on the east coast? Or would it argue that, in order to see your own home-grown sporting talent performing at an elite level in its own environment, in its own state, a sub-national facility would be justified on all corners of the continent? Everyone understands what you are saying but as long as it is in their own jurisdiction. How do you think that would go?

Mr Busch—I think I would draw an important distinction between the national centre and a national standard facility. For example, we have the Challenge Stadium here which has hosted a number of international and national standard events. Most states could, quite rightly, say that they also need a facility of that standard because they will host aquatic sports at that level, whether it is a national championship or an international meet or whatever it might be. So there is a need for national standard facilities—not necessarily in every state and territory, but a number of them—for different sports. It really is an overall assessment of what sorts of facilities are needed in particular sports to meet a range of needs. They will not necessarily be replicated in every state and territory but they will be to varying degrees.

Could I just clarify a couple of points made earlier on the question on a national lottery. There has always been a Western Australian government view that a national lottery is not favoured on the basis that the Western Australian lottery has been so successful. We can boast the best per capita contribution to lotteries in the world in Western Australia and sport, of course, benefits with its two per cent.

CHAIR—So you do not want to share your good things!

Mr Busch—It is seen as a very healthy model that has done tremendous things for the Western Australian community and it is very difficult to see that in the international standard. The only other comment I would make is that there has been a significant and very valued Commonwealth injection into major facilities over three years for Sydney 2000 with \$150 million over three years. So that provides a basis and there was, of course, an international standards facilities fund some years ago.

CHAIR—How many of the projects that you decline to fund, or to give a one-third contribution to,

proceed anyhow?

Mr Busch—Unfortunately I could not answer that. There would be some that would continue but I could not give you a percentage figure on that.

Mr Brimage—The success rate is actually quite high in terms of projects. Again, I do not have the exact figures but the success rate is fairly high and often those projects which are not funded are, in fact, not funded because of inadequate planning and the gestation period for many projects is often anywhere from three to 10 years.

CHAIR—So they have a go again later on?

Mr Brimage—There are many instances where projects might apply two or three times and when they finally get funded it is because they have done more homework on the project.

CHAIR—I would like to ask some questions about Aboriginal sports facilities. The Australian Sports Commission told us something about the sports facilities that have been provided in a number of Aboriginal communities—I think through the ATSIC program that you were referring to. I think they were mainly indoor sports facilities. It was reported to us that nearly all of them had now fallen into disuse. They particularly mentioned that some of the design was not suitable, they did not withstand the weather conditions, they were poorly managed and maintained, and even that the local communities did not know how to play the sports for which they were built. Would you have any comment on the quality of the Aboriginal sports facilities that have been provided?

Mr Wyatt—The comments you make are fairly accurate, although I believe it has been largely the case in this state that sporting facilities—recreation facilities—have not been particularly high on the agenda, and that goes back to the old Department of Aboriginal Affairs. One case that I am familiar with is the Jiggalong community, 130 kilometres east of Mount Newman, where a very large recreation and sporting facility was built but the ceiling was about six feet from the floor and they had ceiling fans. So, that was the game, I suppose. That was built by Australian Construction Services or under their supervision. There have not been a large number of these because, under the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, recreational and sporting facilities were never seen as a priority. Housing and water and power were the greatest priorities to the community.

CHAIR—Would an Aboriginal community prefer a grassed area to play football on or would they prefer an indoor sports facility?

Mr Wyatt—Grassed areas are always attractive and get widely used. Some of the old hard red dirt ones are great sorting out areas and people enjoy them. I mean, it is part of the culture. In our surveys of Aboriginal communities, in relation to the demonstration project, nearly every community has listed as their number one priority sport and recreation activities—before clean water, before 24-hour power, before roads. That is because the communities are emptying out. The young people are going to where the facilities are and, generally speaking, they are coming down to Perth and many of them end up face-to-face with our criminal justice system.

I believe it is a real priority in regional Western Australia in particular. Interestingly, if you check the election results, in the federal seat of Kalgoorlie, the vote number was down by 10,000 compared to the 1993 election. This means that a lot of people are leaving because young people are not staying in remote rural Western Australia where their parents have reared them. They have been away to school and when they come back the facilities are not there which attract young people to keep themselves occupied. It is really quite an epidemic.

CHAIR—Is there then any difference between an Aboriginal community and European communities that have only 100 people or 500 people living there?

Mr Wyatt—I suspect it may be the same but I think that in the non-Aboriginal community there is a particular problem: it is more visible in the Aboriginal community. Generally speaking, contact with the criminal justice system is far more prevalent than, say, in the non-Aboriginal community.

CHAIR—Can the CDEP program be used to provide sporting facilities in communities?

Mr Wyatt—Absolutely, but the CDEP is a bit of a fraud really. I had a meeting out here at an Aboriginal community in Perth yesterday about CDEP. In the Kimberley it is a fairly fanciful sort of an affair. It is a great concept, there is no question about that. Its administration is critical to support. It is not just about paying a living wage or replacement for the dole. It is about providing support for the exchange of skills but also providing some equipment and capital equipment which does happen in some communities. If ATSIC is not prepared to support it that way then it will peter out. Most of the communities who are on it are very keen and there is a great interest in expansion but they are not resourcing it well enough.

The federal government's move to work for the dole has to be resourced. If it is not resourced it will fail. We have had it here since 1979 with varying degrees of success. When the communities are resourced to do the sorts of things that they can do—such as make improvements to their own communities—it works really well. If they are going to skimp on providing resources then it is not going to work.

Mr BILLSON—Is that just on equipment and materials?

Mr Wyatt—Yes.

Mr ENTSCH—I am aware that there has been a refocus since the reduction of funding through ATSIC to Aboriginal sporting infrastructure. What was the funding like prior to that? Was ATSIC putting a significant amount of funding into sporting infrastructure in remote communities in the past, prior to these cuts?

Mr Wyatt—I cannot give you the figures, but they can be obtained. There was not a lot, but where it happened in large communities it was very effective and, prior to that, the old Department of Aboriginal Affairs had quite a significant capital works program in terms of recreational and sporting equipment and sporting support. It has tapered off. What happened is that it went more into the organisation of sport and recreation activities in communities which was also extremely successful.

Mr ENTSCHE—So, it was not a great amount?

Mr Wyatt—No, I do not believe so.

Mr ENTSCHE—I am certainly aware of CDEP programs in Cape York, in remote communities, where they have gone into the construction of sporting ovals. They have focused the CDEP programs into that very successfully and certainly there is an opportunity there to be able to utilise that through that source of funding. The indigenous sports program, as I understand it, has not been extended to fund facilities at all at this point. Do you expect that that will happen?

Mr Wyatt—No, I think that the refocus from community recreational activities and sports afforded through ATSIC has been redirected to elite individual involvement in sport. That is where their focus is at this time. I would not think that the idea is to provide any facilities of any sort but to concentrate on individual performance, perhaps through the Australian Institute of Sport and state bodies.

Mr ENTSCHE—Many of the remote Aboriginal communities are not able to utilise facilities, basically, because they do not understand the game. They do not understand how to play various sports. Is there any movement through ATSIC, or is there any program available, to teach people in the communities the different sporting activities, given that we here are primarily focussing on provision of infrastructure, and given that sport is a very important part of Aboriginal health?

Mr Wyatt—Lacrosse has just started in Broome, which comes as something of a surprise to me. In Western Australia it is very simple: if you are not an Aussie Rules supporter, then you do not play any sport at all. In the Kimberley, as in northern Australia, basketball is really an all year round activity. They are the two major sports amongst Aboriginal communities. Tennis is very rare. There is a smattering of hockey in the goldfields and the Kimberley but not a lot. The two main sports in Western Australia are football or basketball. Lacrosse is an interesting one but there are a number of very high achievers in that area. The sports that I see as I move around the community are mainly Aussie Rules and basketball.

Mr Busch—I can add to that. Thanks partly to state funding and partly to the young persons program, which was the original Deaths in Custody funding, we have a number of staff in country regions and we have actually used that to grow more resources on the ground through programs such as CDEP. Approximately five or six years ago a program, which is now nationally accredited, was developed through TAFE for people living in communities to gain a recreation qualification so that they could deal with the needs that you are talking about at a local community level.

There has also been a regional delivery model developed in the Kimberley area, through the establishment of the Garnduwa group, again using some of those fundings like CDEP to put more people on the ground in some of the towns such as Halls Creek and Wyndham. So we have been able to develop, in addition to our own staff, other people, who are more from an Aboriginal community base, to address the needs you are talking about, and there really is a need.

Mr McDOUGALL—Mr Wyatt, you raised the issue of ongoing maintenance of facilities and Mr Billson asked Mr Busch what he saw as the definition of state and national facilities. I think it is fair to say

that the committee, going right around Australia, has seen a lot of uncertainty about what is a national, a state or an international facility. We have not found one yet that is paying its way. They are mostly costing a fortune. Brisbane is probably the best example. When it was built in 1980, it was built according to the third-third-third formula—that is, a third Commonwealth, a third state and a third Brisbane City Council. The Brisbane City Council is now totally responsible for the maintenance, capital and recurrent costs of those facilities and spends about \$3 million a year maintaining them to the standard they were built to. You said under your proposal that the Commonwealth should be responsible for building that level of facility. How do you propose the recurrent maintenance and capital costs should be provided? Who is going to pay for those facilities on an ongoing basis?

Mr Busch—Firstly, if I could just clarify, I was not suggesting that the Commonwealth government meet the total cost of those facilities. What I was suggesting was that the Commonwealth would contribute funds towards the cost. As there has been state government funding of major facilities in the past there would also be in the future so it would be a shared arrangement that might be developed. As far as the ongoing cost is concerned, again, I think it is a matter of working out where shared responsibilities can fall. I will use as an example the Western Australian government's responsibility for the initial development of what was the Superdrome and is now called the Challenge Stadium. The Commonwealth provided some funding for the additional pools. My recollection is that it was \$3 million at the time of the 1991 swimming championships but the ongoing cost of that facility, which is roughly about a \$1 million annual operating deficit, is the state government's responsibility.

So, the proposition that we were putting forward was that there would be shared responsibility in the future so it is a matter of looking at how that might be developed for particular facilities, taking into account costs, the usage and the priorities of where they fit in the overall major facilities requirements.

Mr McDOUGALL—Do you see the ongoing funding as a responsibility shared totally between state and Federal? Do you see the local community or sport having any input into it at all?

Mr Busch—It depends very much on the nature of the facility. Using the same example of the Challenge Stadium, there is a very substantial contribution from the community in terms of usage. It is not used just as an elite facility for elite sport. It is also used very extensively by the community and that has the effect, of course, of bringing down the operational loss. Beyond the usage, I do not see a way in which the community can contribute to reducing that operational deficit. It is really a matter of asking whether the facility is needed and whether it is important, why it is needed, what its uses would be, and then coming to some value judgments as to respective governments' responsibilities and contributions.

CHAIR—Thank you for your evidence today. You certainly have provided us with a great deal of interesting information, which we appreciate greatly. Thank you also for the five publications that have been provided as well. I propose that we take those five publications as exhibit No. 5. There being no objection to that, it is so ordered. We will treat them as a single exhibit from the Ministry of Sport and Recreation.

Mr Busch—There might be seven.

CHAIR—There are another two from the Department of Education which we will take as exhibit No.

6. There being no objection, it is so ordered.

Short adjournment

ARCHER, Mr Michael, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Katanning, 16-24 Austral Terrace, Katanning, Western Australia

BENNETT, Mr Neil, Geraldton Council, PO Box 101, Geraldton, Western Australia

HALL, Mr Graeme John, Recreation Services Coordinator, City of Melville, PO Box 130, Applecross, Western Australia

OSBORNE, Mr Malcolm John, Manager of Development Services, Shire of Katanning, 16-24 Austral Terrace, Katanning, Western Australia

PECH, Mr Kenneth Ernest, President, Western Australian Municipal Association, 15 Altona Street, West Perth, Western Australia

QUINLIVAN, Mr Patrick George, Manager, Recreation Services, City of Armadale, Orchard Avenue, Armadale

SHANAHAN, Mr Timothy Michael, Executive Director, Western Australian Municipal Association, 15 Altona Street, West Perth, Western Australia

STUBBS, Mr Roger, Vice-President, Western Australian Municipal Association, 15 Altona Street, West Perth, Western Australia

CHAIR—Welcome. Thank you for agreeing to appear before us today. The Western Australian Municipal Association did not make a submission directly to the inquiry but was a party to the submission from the Australian Local Government Association and made some input to that submission. Before we ask questions, I invite you to make an opening statement.

Mr Pech—Thank you. I have got a short address which I will read out but, before I do, I acknowledge the other committee members and also the officers of the committee. We also have with us today, sitting in the audience, members of some of the other councils in Western Australia. They include the City of South Perth, the Shire of Katanning, the City of Armadale, the City of Melville, the Shire of Toodyay and also the City of Geraldton so that gives us a fairly wide spread around the southern part of Western Australia. If I read my statement it will probably be clearer and more concise.

WAMA represents all 144 local governments in Western Australia including the Cocos and Christmas islands. Collectively local governments administer approximately \$1.3 billion of public expenditure in the state. We employ nearly 12,000 staff and express the voice of over 1,400 democratically elected community representatives—by any measure a considerable economic and political force. The role that local government plays in the provision of community sport and recreation facilities cannot be overstated. In WA recreation and cultural expenditure amounts to between 20 to 30 per cent of total government outlays, as much as \$300 million. To put this expenditure in context, the state government spends \$8 million on sport and recreation facilities.

Clearly, local government is a major player in sport and recreation and as such we suggest to you that local government's view should carry weight in your deliberations. In forming the views that are expressed in our submission, WAMA has consulted widely with individual local governments throughout Western Australia. The WA Municipal Association believes that there is a strong need for the Commonwealth to be involved in the funding of facilities within the following parameters. The responsibility of each sphere of government involved in the provision of sporting and recreational facilities must be clearly identified, that is, the Commonwealth government for regional, national and international facilities; state government for state, regional and local facilities; and local government for regional and local facilities.

The Commonwealth government must recognise that national and international sporting and recreation facilities incur significant operational expenditure, and funding support should be provided at the Commonwealth level rather than local government being required to make financial contributions where a facility is unrelated to the needs of the local community which in turn will result in minimal community use. Local government must be involved at the commencement of the planning processes in order to maximise the use of the facilities and resources and ensure that community consultation is undertaken to allow facilities to be effectively planned and located, based on local community requirements. The planning process must include provision for an examination of existing facilities to ensure that unnecessary duplication does not occur.

Funding needs to be allocated for projects which cater for mass participation rather than those which provide for elite level sport. These facilities tend to become white elephants in the local community and there is concern that local government should not be expected to utilise local funds to support such facilities. Funding should be allocated for projects which are able to attract additional financial support from the state government, the community and the private sector.

Existing frameworks for identifying current and future requirements for national and regional sporting facilities should be supported by Commonwealth funding rather than funding being allocated to establish duplicate frameworks. These are very key issues for local government in Western Australia. I thank you for your time and encourage you to be influenced by these views and welcome any questions that the committee may have for us. I reiterate that we do have the right representation of people here and we appreciate that they would be able to answer some of the questions that you may put forward as well.

CHAIR—Thank you for that introduction, and we certainly recognise the enormous role that local government does play in providing facilities. In a couple of places in your submission you refer to major facilities being provided which have minimal community use and in another place you talk about 'white elephant' sporting facilities. I wonder whether you could give some specific examples of where you consider that facilities were built that have no community role.

Mr Pech—One that would come to mind immediately, although I think it has been used more recently, would be a facility such as Perry Lakes which was set up for a specific purpose and has since had trouble getting the community in. I think that may well have changed and the state government might have changed its role in that and Tim may well have some other examples as well. But I know also there was the world swimming championships where there was a lot of money expended on putting down some pools and all that sort of thing, and next thing it all comes out again and the community do not gain a long-term benefit

from that, but if you get a facility where the people are living you tend to get wider and ongoing use of that.

CHAIR—Why cannot the community use those elite facilities?

Mr Pech—In the case of the world swimming championships they were just pulled up and taken away.

CHAIR—Yes, but the water is still there. The public use Chandler in Brisbane, for instance, where the Commonwealth Games were held.

Mr Pech—Maybe it has changed slightly but my understanding was the pools were actually pulled out of the ground.

Mr McDOUGALL—Some of them.

Mr Pech—Some of them, okay.

Mr Shanahan—There is also perhaps the issue in relation to the standard to which those facilities need to be maintained. To maintain elite sporting facilities to a particular standard which would attract international events requires a level of maintenance and management of the facility which if it were just a community facility would not be required to the same extent. So from local government's point of view, if they are the major funding contributor for that I think that is where the disproportionate—from the local government's point of view at least—investment in those facilities comes in. So many in those communities would think that they were contributing to the ongoing maintenance at a far higher level than what was justified from the community use.

CHAIR—On the other hand, they give the offsetting benefit of being the prestigious centre for that sport in the whole of the state and would attract the best swimmers, the best equestrians, or best whatever it may be, and probably even as a result contribute to the revenue earning potential of the local authority.

Mr Shanahan—I suppose there is perhaps a variety of views as to what the dollar value of having that reputation is worth.

Mr Pech—If I could just go on with that answer, local governments are looking at whole-of-community participation in sport and if a super-duper facility is too far away from where the community is based they do not have the same opportunity to participate at that level.

CHAIR—Is local government satisfied with the contribution by the West Australian government towards sports facilities?

Mr Pech—We do not believe there is enough money being spent on sports facilities.

CHAIR—Let me ask you the same question I have asked local government in almost every other state. The federal government provides local government with well over \$1 billion a year which you are free

to use for anything that you choose to use it for. If the federal government were to give you an extra \$50 million or \$100 million would you use it on sports facilities?

Mr Pech—I think a fair percentage of it would get used on sports facilities because at the moment those grants are getting used on a whole range of other things that are very essential to running a community, such as roads and other facilities. But I believe that sports would be very high on the list and I think the representative from Geraldton could perhaps enlarge a little on that if that is appropriate.

CHAIR—Let me pursue you a little further on it first.

Mr Pech—Okay.

CHAIR—So you are actually saying to me that if the Commonwealth gave Western Australian local government an extra \$50 million they would put it into sports facilities rather than roads or other such trivial things?

Mr Pech—No, not totally. I could not say that for sure but I do know—

CHAIR—Would they put any of it into sport or would they put it all into roads?

Mr Pech—No, a lot of it would go into sports facilities.

CHAIR—Do you think to be sure the only way of guaranteeing it would be for the Commonwealth to earmark it?

Mr Pech—We would be happy with that too.

Mr McDUGALL—So you would be happy with a tight rein?

Mr Pech—If it was not going to come out of grants that we are already getting.

Mr Shanahan—If I could say on that matter, particularly in relation to financial assistance grants, we are not in a growth environment for local government and I am sure you have heard that from every other local government association around Australia.

CHAIR—It depends on what state you come from. In some states there has been a growth.

Mr Shanahan—My understanding is that certainly in Western Australia we have suffered a \$900,000 reduction in financial assistance grants, which in terms of what moneys councils were able to put towards sport and recreation from their financial assistance grants has impeded that process. As we have indicated in the submission, councils are spending approximately 30 per cent of their current expenditure in those areas. That comes from figures—I am generalising now—kept by the WA Local Government Grants Commission.

So you would expect in any growth funding environment at least that proportion would be spent. I say

as well that the national competition policy that the federal government is pursuing and paying dividends to the states is not being passed on to local government. So the global amount of federal funds that local government is receiving and that it might be able to spend in relation to revenue replacement in other areas is decreasing at the moment. So whether it were a tight funding program or an addition to the financial assistance grants program it would be well received.

CHAIR—We will let you argue with the Western Australian government about the national competition policy because, as I think you know, some states are sharing it with their local government but that is something for a local argument.

Mr Pech—Indeed. Queensland is getting a good deal.

Mr Bennett—Geraldton is a good example because it is a major regional centre in WA and we are currently about to embark on building a \$5.5 million aquatic centre. Geraldton is very important because it is unique—I see you have had some submissions and I have just had a look at the one from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs—in the sense that it has 10 per cent of the state's Aboriginal population. It is also a fact that FAG money has been cut back dramatically this year. In fact, the city of Geraldton will have to increase its rates this year by 3 per cent just to offset the drop in FAGs money.

This is at a time when we want to build a sporting facility for the whole community, including our major sporting clubs, and have it at a high level of excellence, not only for those people of a high standard but also for the general community, including 10 per cent of the state's Aboriginal population. In a fair partnership role, the council is frustrated because it cannot enter into any negotiations, apart from at state level, for funding to meet those needs and I believe that is fairly typical of other regional centres in WA.

CHAIR—Geraldton has been listed with us as an example of a school cooperating with the community to provide sports facilities. We were first told about it in Sydney or Melbourne—one of the eastern states. Geraldton was held up to us as the ideal example of a pilot program of a community and a school sharing facilities. Would you like to comment on it, from a local citizen's point of view?

Mr Bennett—It is extensively used by all—it is a regional centre. There is only one aquatic centre and this is for all-the-year swimming.

CHAIR—No, we are talking about the school facilities.

Mr Shanahan—The schools extensive swimming program and—

CHAIR—No, not just for aquatic sports. We have been led to believe that there are extensive sporting facilities within the context of the campus of the school in Geraldton and that they are used by the whole community.

Mr Bennett—Yes, they are.

Mr ENTSCH—And it is a pilot program that is working there with physical education.

Mr Bennett—Yes, there is extensive use of the school's facilities.

Mr ENTSCH—The teacher has actually adjusted her working hours so that instead of starting normal school hours she starts later and extends through to after hours. You are not familiar with that?

Mr Bennett—I cannot answer the specifics to that.

Mr McDOUGALL—Can I just come back to your point about the \$5.5 million aquatic centre? What is the population base for \$5.5 million?

Mr Bennett—The aquatic centre will serve a region of 45,000 people with an input of around 300,000 users a year.

Mr McDOUGALL—Who is going to pick up the recurrent costs and the maintenance costs?

Mr Bennett—The recurrent operating costs will be picked up by the local authorities.

Mr McDOUGALL—How much do you think you are going to have to spend?

Mr Bennett—It is anticipated that, after the third year, we will be looking at about \$30,000 to \$50,000 per annum.

Mr McDOUGALL—And it only has aquatic facilities? There is no multi-sport use of the facility you are building?

Mr Bennett—Because of local circumstances and constraints of money in capital we had to come up with an alternative model. Yes, we would have liked to have had broader facilities in the facility.

Mr McDOUGALL—So you have got only aquatic facilities in it?

Mr Bennett—Yes.

Mr McDOUGALL—The reason I am asking is that we have not found anywhere in Australia a facility of that nature, of that expense, on such a small population base—frankly, I think you are hopeful even at \$50,000.

Mr BILLSON—We are wishing you good luck.

Mr McDOUGALL—Very good luck. I think you should have a little talk to the state person before you go home about some maintenance programs.

CHAIR—We look forward to seeing that in a few years time.

Mr Pech—Chairman, we have got two gentlemen from Katanning here today who have just completed a multimillion dollar facility and that is a much smaller regional centre. They have just opened

their facility within the last two or three weeks so they might like to expand on how that is going to happen.

CHAIR—Yes, certainly.

Mr Archer—We have just finished building probably the biggest recreational facility that has been built in the state in the last three years and it has cost the council \$4 million but our community actually contributed \$1.1 million in cash—that is just the community itself. The state government gave us a grant of \$1.1 million and the balance of funds has come from the shire council.

CHAIR—So is that a total of \$6.2 million?

Mr Archer—No, the total is \$4 million. It is a multi-sports complex. It does not have an aquatic centre—it has a function room, exhibition halls, change rooms, creches, gyms, the whole works. We are a community of only 4,600 people but we have raised \$1.1 million from the community. So it is not all bad news that communities cannot fund themselves because communities can fund themselves. We could do with some assistance from the Commonwealth government but our community actually raised that \$1.1 million. These are the things that should be happening when the communities go off and do it themselves. We received quite a bit of corporate sponsorship and big multinationals like Woolworths came to the party and gave big contributions.

Mr McDOUGALL—How is it going to be managed?

Mr Archer—The council is running the facility. We have employed our own staff and we expect to have an operating cost in the first year of about \$70,000.

Mr McDOUGALL—How do you work in a management relationship for use with sporting organisations in your town?

Mr Osborne—A management advisory committee has been associated with the complex and initially some of those members were on the building advisory committee and they are now forming part of the recreation centre advisory committee. So there are outside user groups such as the equestrian clubs and the football club. Some of the users who will be using the indoor facilities—the basketball, netball and gymnastics associations—will have a say. I think the Great Southern Sheep Breeders Association, who use the secondary pavilion for their sheep sales, also have a say on that advisory committee.

CHAIR—In developing the project did you use any of the publications produced by the state government in establishing whether you had a feasible project?

Mr Archer—We used the state government's form. We actually took most of the funding in the first round of funding from the state government two years ago but I know that the state government uses our documentation as the benchmark for future funding proposals. I can leave a copy of these with you if you are interested.

CHAIR—So did you do an economic feasibility study?

Mr Archer—Yes.

CHAIR—What ongoing liability do you expect to have for the maintenance and operation of the facility?

Mr Archer—We expect \$70,000.

CHAIR—A year?

Mr Archer—Yes.

CHAIR—That is excluding interest and redemption?

Mr Archer—Excluding interest and redemption and also excluding depreciation at a non-cash cost.

Mr BILLSON—You will be pleased to know that you have a good local government representation listening to you today, so you are amongst friends. The issue about viability is something that we get a different read on depending on where we go. The urban municipalities say, ‘If it is not viable, do not get involved,’ and that is just overwhelming news for people who are outside the metropolitan centres. In a policy context, would you argue that a rigid adherence to economic viability or at least locking in some third party to fund operating losses should be part of the Commonwealth’s consideration or are you looking for ongoing group feeding and operation subsidies, renewals, staff training and development?

Mr Archer—All we are looking for is a part of the initial capital cost up-front. That is all we are asking for.

Mr BILLSON—Is that a view that is shared by the association?

Mr Pech—Yes. Our association would say the same: we would be looking for up-front capital. You will find—Michael has alluded to this but has not quite said it—and I know from my experience, and you would know too, that in these rural areas there is a huge input of voluntary and complementary participation. People want to help. They clean up after themselves and you do not have this ongoing management problem that you do in the large urban centres. In my own particular area—this in a shire that has only got 2,000 people—the community has already raised over \$150,000 with a view to having some sort of facility. They are not expecting that the shire is going to pick up much of that at all in the ongoing maintenance. They are going to be running it themselves. They just need the assistance with the capital cost.

Mr BILLSON—In my former life, we had the big argument about the traditional sports versus the emerging sports. I mean, there is the situation of 12 gentlemen playing cricket on a Saturday afternoon, occupying all that real estate, getting away with paying \$500 per season to make their facilities available versus the basketball team having to pay \$25 per team, per hour, per night. Is that something that you come across? I am interested in hearing how you deal with the argument that first in gets looked after and tough times for the rest of you.

Mr Pech—I think I could speak better for rural Western Australia where you find that it is all about community participation. You might find that the cricketers will play cricket and that other members of their family would be playing basketball so you have a management organisation that oversees the whole sporting facility.

Mr BILLSON—So in terms of trade-off of operating costs you go by what feels right or is it, as I suspect, what you think the community will cop?

Mr Pech—It is left up to the management organisation, which is a volunteer management organisation in the main. I am not quite sure how Katanning's facility works but certainly in a lot of the smaller instances around the state, it is largely a volunteer organisation.

Mr Archer—Yes, we have a lot of volunteers.

Mr BILLSON—How do you go about setting fees? Let us say that the calisthenics association wants to hire the hall every night which costs them a stack. Being an advocate for cricket, I can understand the justification for it, to a point, but it is an historical anomaly that is very difficult for municipal councils to deal with and most do not.

Mr Archer—We have like a marketing strategy. We have sold in the three weeks since the centre has been open \$20,000 worth of what we call Gold Pass membership and it seems to be working. People are prepared to pay \$500 a year for a family to be able to get unlimited access into the gym, the creche, and the centre. We are just getting droves of people buying those memberships and people are prepared to accept that user pays.

CHAIR—Is it a regional facility?

Mr Archer—It is a regional facility built to international standards.

CHAIR—Yes. Do the neighbouring shires take some of the financial responsibility?

Mr Archer—No, they do not. Our community of 4,600 people has paid for it. The other 8,000 people around us have given us a contribution in some works in kind from the councils but generally it has been funded by our council.

CHAIR—So you were not able to persuade your neighbours that this was such an important thing for the whole of the region that they should pay for it?

Mr Archer—No, we were not.

CHAIR—Is that a fairly typical experience in Western Australia?

Mr Archer—Ken is one of my neighbours so perhaps he can answer that question.

CHAIR—Is there a spirit of cooperation between local governments to the extent that they are prepared to fund things in one another's shires?

Mr Pech—There is not to that extent but I suppose we have got to get things into context. You are talking about a place such as Katanning, where the next big town is practically an hour's drive away, anything up to 70 or 80 kilometres away. As Michael has said, there are two or three smaller shires close in around that have assisted, certainly in kind, but we are talking about fairly wide open spaces once you leave perhaps Toodyay. There are a lot of people here from Toodyay who have a difficulty because they are so close to the metropolitan area. If people going out to a sport for the day have to travel that just adds more and more time to it. Part of our problem is catering for a sparse population. If you are talking about figures, and whether it is viable and so on, those are the sorts of difficulties that we have. If the capital cost is dealt with, it does make it easier to run.

CHAIR—Are there any shires nearby that are proposing to build something similar?

Mr Archer—In our part of the world we got together with our surrounding shires in the great southern and worked out a strategy that we would not compete against each other when we went for the state government grants. We put ourselves into a list. We were obviously on the top of the list because we had our money ready to go. We have agreed not to go back for state government funding for another five to seven years, until our turn comes around again. We did not have three projects within our region up against one another, whereas the south-west put three up against each other and they all lost. So there is some strategy.

CHAIR—You will be being magnanimous and helpful for the neighbouring shires for their projects?

Mr Archer—That is right. We know that there is only \$8 million worth of state government funding. There are eight regions around the state. Each region is going to get about \$1 million each. There is no point in competing against one another within your region.

Mr McDOUGALL—Did you try to get funding out of the capital sharing through the Education Department? We have heard here today that it is a fantastic operation and they are prepared to give money, they are prepared to share in the capital expenditure and the maintenance.

Mr Osborne—We are actually dealing with the Education Department at the moment on another resource sharing operation. It has been put to us that we should be using it as a resource sharing tool. It is reticulating the oval at the Katanning District Senior High School, which in WA apparently is the only senior high school without a grassed oval. The council has made a commitment that with this new recreation centre the idea was to encourage as many user groups to come back to that one facility rather than to have a multitude of facilities spread all over the municipality, possibly at a substandard grade. As far as the Education Department goes, their campus facilities are all fairly contained or constrained by space and there was not the ability to locate our centre together with them or even close enough where those students could walk.

Mr McDOUGALL—Did you set about trying to come to an agreement with them or did you just decide that it was impossible?

Mr Osborne—I cannot answer that.

Mr Archer—We have three primary schools in town as well. At the end of the day we chose a greenfields site where we could build the centre which did not have any space constraints; in fact, all the schools are now coming to the recreation facility.

Mr McDUGALL—You can handle their requirements?

Mr Archer—We handle their requirements.

Mr McDUGALL—If you could handle their requirements—and this is the point I am getting to—and they want to use your facility, why did they not make a contribution towards it and make it a slightly bigger facility?

Mr Archer—Because it was not built on their grounds.

Mr McDUGALL—So there is a problem with the Education Department?

Mr Archer—Yes, there is.

Mr McDUGALL—Unless it is built on their grounds you are not going to get access to money?

Mr Archer—Yes, you cannot get access. That is right.

Mr Pech—If I could just follow that one through. We have attempted to negotiate with the Education Department and I know that other shires around the state have as well. It is not that easy unless you do something on their grounds. They like to say, 'It is going to be here. It has got to be such and such a building.'

Mr Osborne—It has to be adjacent to it.

Mr Pech—Yes. That is a difficulty.

Mr McDUGALL—Will they share in the ownership of the capital infrastructure?

Mr Pech—Only if it is on their grounds.

Mr BILLSON—Can I draw your attention to page 9 of this agreement that we have been looking at? It says:

When negotiating agreements regarding the site of a joint facility the parties must ensure that land titles clearly define ownership of the facility and/or components. It may be necessary to excise a portion of a school site and vest them in local government to enable a joint development to proceed.

That is in the agreement. Does that not happen on the ground?

Mr Archer—Representatives of the City of Melville are here. Perhaps they are in the best position to answer that one.

Mr BILLSON—Perhaps we need to get that somehow or other on the record?

Mr Pech—We will ask the Melville representatives to come up shortly if that is okay.

Mr BILLSON—They have practical experience of it actually working.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—Michael, just before you go, you mentioned some rural industry use of your facility. What was that?

Mr Osborne—The Great Southern Sheep Breeders Association. They assisted in the funding of the secondary pavilion which is used not only as an exhibition hall but also for their annual sheep sales, ram sales.

Mr ENTSCH—That is real lateral thinking. I think that is brilliant and certainly supports the viability of the centre. I commend you for that.

Mr Osborne—The commercial reality in the rural areas is not in just having the number of people coming through. The shires and the advisory management groups obviously have to look at any innovative ways to make the project work. The latest one that we have been involved in is in encouraging Optus to put up a digital phone tower adjacent to our oval. We can string some lights on it to replace—

CHAIR—I am sure they will love you because everybody wants to chase them away.

Mr BILLSON—A lot of these ideas are outstanding ideas in urban growth areas. If you are in a stable non-urban area where your population is not providing these new investment opportunities which you can pal up on, it gets pretty tough to use them. The same with development contributions. Could you reflect the WA experience, the northern Perth suburbs and Wanneroo, whatever it is I hear about, and contrast that with some of the more regional centres?

Mr Pech—It is a bit out of my depth.

Mr Shanahan—We are talking about private developers making a contribution to community sporting recreation infrastructure?

Mr BILLSON—Yes. In the state that I come from it is common, particularly in growth corridors—

Mr Shanahan—I understand the question.

Mr BILLSON—to say, 'If you want to survive you build a community centre, you build the

recreation facility. We will take whatever is open space. Thanks very much. Welcome to the neighbourhood.'

Mr Shanahan—I think the best way to describe the current situation in Western Australia would be 'uneasy'. The state government has what the local government would view as 'a narrow approach to developer contributions'. The WA Planning Commission has recently released a planning bulletin to guide councils in what are appropriate conditions that might be applied to contributions. Certainly you alluded to an example in the northern suburbs and the City of Wanneroo which has been something of a cause celebre in relation to this issue, but it does occur in other municipalities. The state government's major objection has primarily surrounded councils allegedly using their power to initiate a rezoning to extract an above market contribution, if you like, to the municipality in relation to how that money might be spent and whether it is tied. That is where the matter rests at the moment.

I think local government in Western Australia has probably got a broader view in relation to negotiating with developers to provide for more than just the local roads to be provided as part of the conditions. We have prepared a discussion paper using some consultants arising from the federal government's local approvals reform process on developer contributions. That has essentially languished in the state system. I think some councils will continue to extract those sorts of contributions. A number of developers see it as being a commercial investment to be making in their estate and are quite prepared to do that. On a number of occasions where developers are making that contribution the councils are asking for a letter from the developer to say that they are making this contribution free and without any sort of leverage, so that when it goes to the ministry they will know that this was done in that way.

Mr BILLSON—Do you have special rates available to you as well where you can define an investment, usually of a capital nature or as a service level improvement, that relates to a defined area of your community? Do you have that flexibility as well?

Mr Pech—I would consider that local government in Western Australia has some pretty flexible rating powers. They have the general rate. There is also a capacity for a differential rate. The council needs to give a reason for the differential rate. There is also a provision for a specified area rate if there is a particular service being provided in a specific area. Recently the state government has introduced the concept of a service fee. Currently that is limited to about four particular issues and it has to relate to a service provider to land. Whether recreation services would fit within that category is a moot point. It is certainly not regulated for at this stage.

Mr BILLSON—One last question before I hand over to my colleagues on the argument about sparsity and remote communities. We are getting a very strong flavour that says unless it is viable, unless it is fully self-sustaining do not put a zack into it. That is going to be very difficult for the smaller regional communities. Is it your view that if the federal government could win Tattsлото or whatever and find some extra money that there should be a two-pronged program: one which is at this fairly dry, fairly viability tested end of the market for regional and urban facilities and then something that deals with population sparsity? Is that the notion you have in mind?

Mr Shanahan—If I could suggest to you that whatever conclusion you draw it does provide for a capacity for the federal government to take into account that sparsity of population and essentially the

community service obligation that councils in non-metropolitan areas are undertaking in providing these facilities. I might just take this opportunity to hark back to national competition policy and indicate to you that, in Western Australia at least, the clause 7 statement has been struck in such a way that a number of recreation centres in local government, including the one in the Shire of Katanning, are going to be caught up in that area. The councils will be applying public benefit tests to those particular facilities. In the country it is highly likely that those public benefit tests will come down on the basis that this is not a business and that it will be able to proceed along.

In the metropolitan area, where councils are running golf courses and competing potentially with private providers of recreation services, I suspect there will be a far drier answer, if I can put it that way. The full cost attribution for providing those services will need to be looked at. I think the jury is out in terms of how councils will bundle those services and how they will apply the test. I think that will certainly be a factor in metropolitan and urban areas. It will not be the same strength of argument in the country areas.

Mr McDOUGALL—Could I just follow on from that development application. In some states, local governments have obviously stronger and greater powers in being able to apply development applications. I think it is evident from the inquiry that we have had so far that we are finding two distinct areas. In the greenfields sites there are obviously avenues open through the Education Department. There has been a lot of talk but I do not know whether it is going to work. There is evidence—and I am saying this after 10 years in local government myself. They talked about it in Queensland for 10 years but never did anything. I always have a question mark above education departments. You then have older sites which are desperately in need of upgrading facilities or replacement of facilities. As sport has changed from when the original facilities were built there is probably a need for new sports facilities—which, again, may not be able to attract development funds. If the whole area is not in a redevelopment phase then these funds are not going to be available.

Do you in the Western Australian local government see that if local government had the ability to apply what Mr Billson was talking about—development conditions of approval—that that would be coupled with your own money and state government money through the current funding process, which is a more feasible way of bringing private sector funding into development of facilities? If you do, would you be prepared through the ALGA to fight for it and try to get uniformity across Australia? I am looking for ways of raising more capital to be able to put into this area.

Mr Shanahan—In answer to the previous question, we are certainly not in the position where we are in a growth phase in Western Australia for applying developer contributions as a way of raising capital, full stop; in fact, we are in a reducing environment and the state government currently controls that. The only major power local government has in the planning process is to initiate rezonings, and that is the leverage which councils have used to arrive at these agreements with developers.

Other development applications, subdivisions and the conditions that apply to that are essentially controlled by the state government. In relation to an ALGA thrust to achieve this, I would have to say that battle would have to be run at a state level. Unless the federal government had an appetite to engage in state planning legislation to enable local government to have that uniform power throughout Australia, I cannot see how the ALGA would be terribly effective in making that argument. I do not—I could be wrong—detect an

appetite for the current federal government to engage in that sort of law making.

CHAIR—The federal constitution has a bit to do with it.

Mr McDOUGALL—We are looking at new and innovative ways of raising funds for capital facilities. Some local governments have the authority. When somebody applies for redevelopment of an existing housing area into medium density—you are not going to get your 10 per cent or 15 per cent open space because it is already taken up—they have the ability to do the leverage of up to \$3,000 per unit that is going to be built, which can then be directed to wherever the local government chooses. The state governments do not want us to bring in a federal lottery because that is going to upset their operations in raising taxes. If there is a need out there in the community, we have to find ways to raise more funds to be able to direct into this area for capital facilities and recurrent expenditure. How are we going to raise it? All of us have to make a decision on how we are going to do it. I am looking for ways.

Mr Shanahan—In response to that specific question, I am sure that local governments in Western Australia, as they would anywhere, would want to have as many ways of raising revenue to provide for these sorts of facilities. But it comes down to a public policy issue: whether you get it at the point of development or whether it comes down to the council borrowing the money and spreading it across. We would certainly be interested in exploring how that might happen. I suppose I am saying I am a little negative about it, as to how much wind might get beneath that kite.

Mr McDOUGALL—You said that you currently put in up to 30 per cent from local government. Does the Western Australian local government have total responsibility for water and sewerage?

Mr Shanahan—No. The state government or the corporatised state utility, the water corporation, is essentially responsible for that. About 18 councils have sewerage schemes, and there are the Busselton and Bunbury Water Boards, but it is nothing like in Queensland. Essentially, it is state government run.

Mr McDOUGALL—On that basis, do you think up to 30 per cent of your total funds raised is a reasonable share to be putting into recreation and sports facilities?

Mr Pech—It is a pretty high share when you consider all the other issues that have to be carried out by local government—developing road systems, for instance.

Mr McDOUGALL—It always comes back to roads, doesn't it?

Mr Pech—My word it does. Other community facilities have to be put in. It is a pretty good proportion—when you consider the proportion—that the state and the federal government put in.

Mr Shanahan—As a proportion of total local government expenditure, I think it also compares favourably to other jurisdictions that do not have responsibility for water and sewerage as well. I do not have those figures at my fingertips.

CHAIR—Is local government generally satisfied? Does the community generally believe that the

distribution of the Western Australian government funds is fair and not influenced by factors other than the merit of the projects?

Mr Pech—I can only speak from my personal knowledge and hearsay. I would say generally that the method of distribution seems to be fair. The problem seems to be that there is just not enough to go around.

CHAIR—The distribution is also not specifically associated with any central planning activity. Do you believe that the projects being funded are strategically, appropriately located or should there be more effort put into advance planning for the needs of the whole of the state?

Mr Pech—I think there is a certain amount of logic to the way it is happening, particularly some of the regional centres that are being funded—for instance, the effort that was put into Katanning. I know a big effort has gone into Kalgoorlie. I am not sure about some of the other regional centres, but certainly there does seem to be some sort of emphasis towards the regions. Mr Chairman, with your indulgence, I would appreciate having an input from Armadale—and Melville, particularly. They would perhaps be able to give a more metropolitan perspective on that particular aspect of it, if that opportunity was made available.

CHAIR—We do not have much time left but there is opportunity for Mr Hall and Mr Quinlivan to make a brief comment.

Mr Hall—I would suggest that in the last couple of years there has been a 70-30 country-metropolitan split. There is probably a fairly good reason to justify that with the facilities that are there. Our concern, from the perspective of a local authority, is that we have been asked to put a priority onto the applications that we submit. That priority does not seem to have been adhered to and certainly does not seem to have carried any weight.

CHAIR—You could be seen as being rather biased towards your own applications.

Mr Hall—We certainly could, but that is probably talking across a number of applications. I was with the City of Stirling for four years and have never seen a first priority actually funded.

CHAIR—Would you like to comment further on the school question that was asked earlier in the piece as well?

Mr Hall—Certainly. What aspect of it?

CHAIR—You indicated that you had a successful arrangement with the Education Department.

Mr Hall—Yes. Leeming Recreation Centre is an example. It has its problems with regard to the ongoing management. It was a facility that was jointly funded capitally. There are some operational costs which are shared. Obviously a fair percentage of them are taken by the local community because they take a major priority of the time. But, certainly, there are some management problems which exist basically on agreements of who is using what, where and how they are using it. It is not always a match made in heaven.

CHAIR—Who sorts those problems out?

Mr Hall—The manager of the facility.

CHAIR—The paid manager?

Mr Hall—The paid management of the facility.

CHAIR—There is no community committee or anything like that?

Mr Hall—There is a community management committee and that is probably the forum. But the headmaster of the school and the general manager of the facility would be the major forum.

CHAIR—The headmaster is the general manager, you say?

Mr Hall—The headmaster of the school and the general manager of the facility would be the major forum for a reconciliation process.

Mr BILLSON—They argue it out.

Mr Hall—A lot of the time.

Mr BILLSON—How far did you go in negotiating management arrangements prior to having the facility constructed?

Mr Hall—I was not at the City of Melville at that time, so I honestly could not tell you.

Mr BILLSON—Our evidence has been that if you sit down and have all those barneys before one sod of soil is turned they seem to operate a bit better.

CHAIR—Have you had changes of principals in your time?

Mr Hall—I would not be able to answer that question accurately.

CHAIR—Other evidence given to us suggests that the arrangement may go famously with one principal and then, when there is a change, it can hit the wall.

Mr Hall—I do not know. The CEO has changed but I do not know of any headmaster.

Mr ENTSCH—The facility is built on the school grounds. Has it been excised?

Mr Hall—I am not aware of that myself.

CHAIR—So it is actually on the school grounds?

Mr Hall—No, it is on City of Melville land.

CHAIR—In fact, the city could walk away from it then, if it got to an ultimate argument?

Mr Hall—No.

CHAIR—Why not?

Mr Hall—It is our facility; it is on our land.

CHAIR—It is on your land?

Mr Hall—It is on our land.

CHAIR—So you could tell the school to go and jump?

Mr Hall—Probably not, because they have a capital investment.

CHAIR—You have got the land?

Mr Hall—Yes, but they invested in the initial capital property.

CHAIR—It would seem to me that you have a stronger bargaining position than in most places where the facility is actually on the school land.

Mr Hall—I think we are talking semantics. It is a joint facility. The community have that expectation.

Mr McDOUGALL—Believe me, around Australia this is a very vexed question. If this is going to be a way that we can make a recommendation in a report—there are some doubts as to whether this really does work—is it possible that this committee could be given a copy of the original agreement between the local government and the Education Department? I think it would be very helpful to have a look at.

Mr Hall—Yes; no problem.

Mr BILLSON—On the same theme, is there experience within the room about a similar relationship with the university campuses? We had a fright, we went to one in Newcastle where we were told that everything was sweet and that the campus was working harmoniously with the local community. I think the first time they talked was when we had the meeting. They cleared the air for our benefit there and then, which was quite colourful. Have you had any experience with the university campuses in terms of their facilities?

Mr Hall—No.

CHAIR—Military facilities?

Mr Hall—No, sorry.

Mr BILLSON—I have one other question. In New South Wales the evidence provided to us was that there is a very novel way of allocating state government money for grants: you just give the same amount to every electorate and then the local MPs work through with the local authorities, the community groups—they can pool, they can stockpile, they can do what they like. That struck me as a frightfully unaccountable way of doing it. They like it, let me put it that way. Is that an option? Densely populated urban communities and a number of members can get together and pool their resources or, conversely, regional areas can have guaranteed access to money? Is that an idea that has any appeal to any of you?

Mr Hall—No.

Mr BILLSON—You are overwhelmed by the suggestion?

CHAIR—We have an additional representative. Do you have an opening statement?

Mr Quinlivan—Yes. Thank you, Mr Chairman. The City of Armadale is an outer metropolitan local government in the south-east corridor of the Perth metropolitan area. Our population is about 53,000. Our council was of the view that the priorities for any new federal government initiative that may be introduced should be for district and regional level sport and recreation facilities rather than your local community based facilities—those types of projects—could be funded from the resources of the community and by local and state governments. Those partnerships have generally worked quite well in the past. The federal government could play a very positive role in the higher level of facility. It is always much more difficult to find the necessary dollars for them to go ahead.

Also, in the overall planning context, priority needs to be given to projects which form part of the local government's strategic plan for recreation—this is coming back to some matters that have been talked about briefly before—projects which fit into the strategic context of the state's sport and recreational facilities. That would be a carrot type approach. If the federal government were considering contributing, any project must fit within that strategic context. They were a couple of priorities that the City of Armadale considered should be looked at in the context of any federal government program.

CHAIR—Thank you. Any further questions?

Mr McDOUGALL—On that subject, has the state government requested local government, either individually or on a regional basis, to draw up strategic plans for recreational facilities?

Mr Quinlivan—Two regional recreation groups—the south-east metropolitan region and the northern metropolitan region—are currently in the process of commissioning some fairly major studies which at the end of the day will see regional recreation plans drawn up for those two regions. That is an initiative of the local governments within those respective regions. The time frame on that is probably about the next six months or so, with the support of the state ministry for sport and recreation. That is certainly a very positive initiative that is currently happening in two metropolitan regional areas.

Mr McDOUGALL—Will that become part of a state strategic plan?

Mr Quinlivan—It has not been said in so many words, but I think the state government will use that as a lever for funding major recreation projects. If that region has not formed a regional plan then I think the state government will probably use that as a lever to say, ‘Get your act together, talk with your neighbours and form a regional plan.’

Mr McDOUGALL—Local government does that in conjunction with whom?

Mr Quinlivan—State governments are primarily the main players.

Mr McDOUGALL—What about sport?

Mr Quinlivan—Obviously the sporting associations—

Mr McDOUGALL—Is it ‘obviously’? Do they really get involved? I will ask them.

Mr Quinlivan—In recent times there has been a lot more cooperation from both local government and state sporting associations. Historically that cooperation has not been as good as it could have been, but certainly the signs are there that the two parties are coming together and talking more. There is a bit of a way to go, but we are on the right track.

CHAIR—I thank the Western Australian local government representatives for coming in such numbers today. We have appreciated the evidence that you have given. We will get an opportunity tomorrow, as a committee, to see some of the facilities in country areas. We are going to Northam and Bindoon and having a bit of a look around. The committee feels it is important to look also at some of the small town facilities rather than just seeing the grand edifices that each state is naturally proud of in their capital cities.

We are trying to be as thorough as we can. We are looking at what the current situation is. The fact that you have achieved so much in individual communities maybe suggests that we do not even need to be around, but I know that other people are looking for similar projects and would certainly appreciate the assistance. Thank you for your participation today. We have appreciated your evidence.

Mr Pech—Mr Chairman, thank you for allowing us to make the presentation to you. Toodyay were here today and did not have the opportunity to make a presentation. In your trip around the country tomorrow, from Northam to Bindoon, they would love you to call in at Toodyay. You would be on the road and they would be very happy to see you.

CHAIR—Thank you. I propose to take the three documents provided by the Shire of Katanning about their proposal as exhibit No 7.

ILFIELD, Mr Peter John, Elected Board Member, WA Sports Federation, Stephenson Avenue, Claremont, Western Australia

RYAN, Mr John, President, WA Sports Federation, PO Box 57, Claremont, Western Australia

WELCH, Mr Robert, Executive Director, WA Sports Federation, PO Box 57, Claremont, Western Australia

WILSON, Mr Gratton, Committee Member, WA Sports Federation, PO Box 57, Claremont, Western Australia

CHAIR—I welcome the representatives of the Western Australian Sports Federation. Do you have anything to add?

Mr Ryan—I have been the President of the WA Sports Federation for just over three years.

Mr Wilson—I have been on the board of the Sports Federation as their chair of facilities. I have recently resigned from that position but remain on the facilities committee.

Mr Ifield—I am the current member of the board of the Western Australian Sports Federation and have been for the last six months.

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

Mr Ryan—In broad terms, no. We do wish to expand on it a little.

CHAIR—I invite you then to make an opening statement.

Mr Ryan—I will just briefly kick off by pointing out that our submission is very much dependent upon the coordination of facilities in Western Australia. I am not quite sure what has gone before—I know you have had a lot said to you today—but I will just point out that a number of state based committees have put together a great deal of information on the planning, both short-term and long-term, of facilities in Western Australia. More recently, the minister put together a council, called the Sport and Recreation Council of Western Australia, to get a strategic directions document for the coming three years, and facilities certainly form a key part of that document. The point I make, before handing over to Bob, is that when we talk about the coordination of facilities in Western Australia it is an achievable object.

Mr Welch—Our submission basically supports the federal funding of facilities for sport and recreation purposes. The Federation, over a number of years, have worked very closely in partnership with our state government and our state sporting associations to identify the various gaps that we believe exist in facility provision and have put in place appropriate plans to secure those facilities over a period of time. We are supporters, as a Federation, of the CSRFF scheme which was outlined to you previously. That scheme allows development of local facilities through local government and various sports organisations. Having spent some considerable time in the development of government policy for the benefit of sport and recreation

facilities generally, as a result the Federation is strongly supportive of the views of government in those areas—having been involved in the development of those views, as I have said.

Essentially, we propose that a federal fund should be targeted primarily at those facilities which could be considered of major national or international standard. We have adopted this position primarily because such facilities are important, we believe, to the ongoing development of sport in Australia. They provide opportunities for economic benefit for the conduct of major events and through tourism opportunities, as well as enhance and perhaps lift the image of Australia on the international sporting scene and, of course, the international scene generally.

Such facilities should be designed, we believe, with multipurpose use in mind. If done right, such facilities can provide opportunities not only for major international events but also for local participation through recreational sporting programs. A number of examples do exist, two being the tennis centre at Burswood, which runs tennis programs from local school programs all the way through to national events, and the Commonwealth hockey stadium, which similarly runs club, grade and junior hockey, through to international events. Local grid iron is played on that ground as well. Both have been recipients of federal funding in previous grant schemes.

If we wish our athletes to compete on the world stage, they would need appropriate facilities in which to train and compete in order to reach that required standard, and such facilities should be available around the country for them to achieve that level of competition. The 2000 Olympics have given us an excellent opportunity of showcasing Australian sport and a great deal of support has been given to the development of facilities in Sydney over the previous couple of years, leading up to the year 2000. While an Olympic Games does not come around every day, international events are many and varied. We believe that the construction of a range of facilities around the country will enhance Australia's opportunities to secure those events and for the host states accordingly to benefit as a result of that.

We believe that responsibility for the funding of local facilities should remain with local and state governments. However, it should not discount the opportunity for some federal funds to support the development of such facilities, provided that those grants can be made in conjunction with established plans which set out the priorities for such development based on local recognised needs and the priorities of our state associations and our state governments.

Essentially, a federal funding program which contributes to state government and sporting association priorities and, of course, our national sporting association in that regard as well, for the development of major facilities will maximise the opportunities for the construction of these facilities. We believe it will also demonstrate federal concern for local and state communities, especially as such facilities are the means to a more physically active community. At the end of the day, if we put a focus on active Australia, participation in sport and recreation activities can be better promoted and encouraged through such facilities.

The Federation strongly supports the joint management plans that are put in place for the various school access and community access facilities and also shared user facilities which maximise opportunities for participation. I would ask both Gratton and Peter if they would like to expand on any aspects of our submission.

Mr Wilson—I would just like to reiterate the need for a coordinated and planned approach to national and international facilities. A lot of work has been put in by the Sports Federation to get to that level. Without that coordinated approach, we end up with a hotchpotch and ad hoc planning process to sport and recreation facilities. I think that point alone is very important to the future of national and international sporting facilities in Australia.

Another point is multiuse. Often at that level these facilities rest as a facility alone. But, as Bob pointed out, these facilities should have the ability to cater not only for international competition but also at the club and local level. For them to generate sufficient revenue and maximise their revenue potential, they are putting on international events, catering for that international and national area, and then moving down to the club and local level. For example, the schools competition play between 9 and 12 at the hockey stadium on Saturday morning. No other usage is going on during that particular period. This maximises the revenue for the international stadium and also provides the ability for the club to participate at a local level.

Management and feasibility studies are other points. Before these facilities are built, we need to look at how they are going to be managed and make sure that the money is appropriately allocated and appropriately spent so that the facilities are going to be able to maximise their revenue and that they are going to be built in the right place at the right time. It is a matter of timing and it is a matter of allocation of appropriate resources.

Mr Ilfield—I have no further comments at this point.

CHAIR—Thank you. Perhaps you could tell us a little about the Western Australian Sports Federation. You mentioned in your submission that you have 89 sports affiliated and I think it was 21 other agencies. How are you funded and what sorts of projects are you involved in?

Mr Ryan—We do represent many registered participants. Our main objective is to represent sport where sport needs to be a combined voice. In part, it is lobbying government, whether it is on policy matters, funding matters or whatever. It is also servicing sports associations and agencies and improving their skills through the various services that we offer to them. It is a combination of funding. We have a levy on all of our members, which does not represent a very large part of our total funding; we have a number of sponsors whose names, hopefully, you would have seen very clearly on the bottom of your correspondence; and we do get some basic administration funding from the government of Western Australia.

CHAIR—From the budget of the state, not through the lotteries or anything like that?

Mr Ryan—It is through the ministry which, in turn, is basically through the lotteries process, certainly.

Mr Welch—If I may, I have a submission here or a kit for each member of the committee, which sets out some background on the Sports Federation, and our current annual report which has been produced in the last month.

CHAIR—Great. I am curious that you suggested the Commonwealth should provide \$30 million

beginning in the year 2001. I wondered how you have managed to calculate \$30 million and why you thought it should start in 2001?

Mr Ryan—It is \$30 million, on the basis of looking at continuation of the current federal funding program going into the facilities for the Sydney 2000 Olympics. I believe that runs out in the 1999-2000 financial year. We are proposing that fund should continue and be spread around facilities other than, of course, those that have been constructed for Sydney 2000. We felt that the figure of \$30 million—in consultation with other state federations and with the Confederation of Australian Sport and bearing in mind the current government budget for facilities—was a reasonable figure to put in from a government perspective and would provide an excellent seed fund then for allocation based on application and needs basis for major facilities around the country.

CHAIR—You said you would prefer it to go into international and national standard facilities; in other words, generally reasonably expensive facilities. Western Australia's share of \$30 million would be \$3 million or thereabouts. Is that going to be enough?

Mr Ryan—It is never enough. But, as Gratten pointed out, we are very much in favour of a planned approach for the allocation of dollars. The CSRFF scheme is an example of what can occur in a planning sense. On occasion, we have access to capital funding grants from our own state government for major facilities, after due consideration has been given to appropriate priorities and cases of need. We suggest that that should continue around the country as well.

CHAIR—I think the difference between your submission and many of the others and why \$30 million might actually work in your case is that you make it very clear you want the Commonwealth to butt out of local facilities. You say under the second term of reference that many of these matters are not even the federal government's responsibilities. You come in very strong on the Commonwealth keeping out of local facilities and only concentrating on the more expensive international and national type facilities. As I said, that is different from the overwhelming weight of submissions that we have received. Are you coming at it from an elite sportsman's point of view and forgetting about the little bloke in the country town or do you think that is just being fair and reasonable?

Mr Ryan—We think it is being fair and reasonable, basing it on the point of view that we believe it would be very difficult for an equitable funding program to be based on local facilities across the country. Any selection process would be too far distant from the local level to provide a fair and equitable distribution. It would be a lot easier and a lot more practical to have an allocation process that identifies itself with national and state sporting association facility priorities. It would go a long way towards the establishment of major facilities rather than the smaller grants on a shotgun basis around the country. We are coming at it from what we believe is a practical approach.

Mr McDougall—I have to understand what you mean by a national, state and international specification facility versus a national, state or international facility. I mean this sincerely. You can have an international standard facility in a regional or country town that is going to meet their needs and not necessarily cost a lot of money. Are you saying that you want a full distribution of facilities to that standard or that you want to concentrate major facilities, let local government do what they can, and not give the

opportunity to others to participate on a facility that is of national or international standard because it is all concentrated in one area? What do you mean by that?

Mr Welch—To have something considered to be of national-international standard, there is more to the playing field. The infrastructure around the facility that provides for spectator support enables the facility to do all the things that it would do to attract major national and international events. There are two versions basically, as you are saying: the facility that can attract the major events because of the nature of the facility and the standard of the facility. We are not, by any means, opposed to the construction of facilities of such standard in country areas provided there is the support from the population base to then access the facility, to use the facility to its fullest potential.

Mr McDOUGALL—Can you give me an example of any facility that has been built at an international standard to hold international events and that makes money? If you build them, who pays for them? After the capital construction, who pays for it? Who should continue with the running costs, the recurrent capital? Is that a federal government responsibility or a shared responsibility? If it is shared, who shares it and does sport have a responsibility in that?

Mr Ryan—There are a number of points to be made there. I will kick it off by saying that I would have to agree that an international standard facility which is capable of holding international events—if it is a stand-alone on that basis—would not be revenue neutral. It would almost certainly be revenue negative, provided it is well sited within the population base and has the right demographics and so on. There is an aspect of international facilities which has been well and truly proven over and over again—it started with mistakes made with the AIS in Canberra—that there needs to be training facilities associated with international facilities which can and should be used as the participation base from which extra revenue is obtained. You are asking for examples of those that pay for themselves. I am not quite sure how Homebush goes but I do know that the recreation facilities which are associated with Homebush go some way towards offsetting the overall cost of the facility.

Mr McDOUGALL—I am glad you said ‘go some way’, but that does not recover the cost.

Mr Ryan—Of course it does not, no.

Mr McDOUGALL—Or the running costs.

Mr Ryan—There has to be an acceptance, I think, of international facilities which are up to a standard of holding the international event; in other words, with all the infrastructure: parking, seating facilities, change rooms and so on. To expect those to come out revenue positive is probably a pipedream.

Can it be offset to some degree? I believe it can. Certainly the Challenge Stadium out here in Mount Claremont costs money every year. There is no question about it. But I believe the number of people going through that facility justifies that subsidy on the basis of the amount of participation that takes place and the various benefits that come from increased physical exercise, the health benefits that come to the community from that.

I would say that if a million people—however many it is; I do not know the numbers—go through there every year, elite sport participation at the competitive level would account for a very small percentage of that. That is the sort of international facility and the way it should be used that we are advocating.

Mr McDOUGALL—What facility is it?

Mr Ryan—The Challenge Stadium out in Mount Claremont is the venue for the world swimming championships. In 1985, when it was first built, it was the state sport centre for Western Australia. It has both a dry sports and an aquatic sports aspect to it. It was used for the world championships in January 1991 and it will be used for the world swimming championships when they occur in January next year. There is a dry sports facility: a gymnasium, training and competing facility. There is a lesser hall associated with that. There is the main aquatic sports hall which is the 50-metre and the 30-metre pool. The 30-metre pool is being used for synchronised swimming, water polo and diving. For the world swimming championships in 1991 there was a 10-lane external pool and another 8-lane one was put outside. There is also a basketball and netball facility with seating for about 2,000 to 3,000.

Mr BILLSON—With no capacity for wrestling, weight-lifting, boxing, judo, table tennis and badminton?

Mr Ryan—You can use the main stadium for the highest level competition, but that obviously is very limiting on what those combat sports can do. It can also be used for table tennis and badminton. Any number of sports can be held on a basketball size court.

Mr McDOUGALL—Has the Federation done anything about putting together a database of what facilities Western Australia has in total and what participation rates you have in all different sports? Has it put those two together and said, ‘This is what we need’? Has the Federation done that?

Mr Ryan—The Federation has cooperated with the ministry and with the now fairly newly formed Sport and Recreation Council and has participated in that process. It is a process which has occurred over the years, more within the ministry than within the Sports Federation itself.

Mr McDOUGALL—I am sure the state government said earlier today that they do not have a database.

Mr Welch—There is a database as such.

Mr Ryan—There is not a current database.

Mr Welch—Certainly through the late 1980s and into the early 1990s the Federation, with the ministry, participated in a number of exercises to identify what might be termed fairly major facilities; in other words, the major facilities for each of our 89 sports. We have been through that exercise and identified where rifle shooting and swimming are conducted on a state basis.

Mr McDOUGALL—But there is no database that says: state schools have this, private schools have

this, private enterprise has this, local government has this, the state owns this? Nobody knows that?

Mr Welch—I believe that has been done to a degree. Was that done through the Planning Commission exercise?

Mr Wilson—Just to go back one step, there is a document that says that these are the sports that we have in Western Australia and these are the types of facilities that they train at at various levels. That exists through the WA Sports Federation with the Ministry of Sport and Recreation.

Mr McDOUGALL—You would be the only state in Australia that has it, if you have it.

Mr Welch—Across the board—private, school and local governments—there would not be a database that exists in the total sense, no.

Mr McDOUGALL—You do not have a database then.

Mr Ryan—However, I point out one of the major recommendations of the Strategic Directions document of the Sport and Recreation Council. Recommendation No. 1 under ‘Facilities’ states:

(a) that a full audit of the facilities throughout the state should be carried out and (b) that a blueprint for further development should be itemised and documented.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—You came up with a list of priorities for sporting facilities that are needed in Western Australia. How did you work out what the priority was, what was the most important and why?

Mr Wilson—Essentially the priorities for sport and recreational facilities in WA were based on the information that we were given from various sports as to their home base, international capacity and so forth. We then looked for what was missing from international and home base. In addition, we looked at which sports had contacted the Sports Federation directly looking for support on particular issues, weighed those up and came up with international and home based priorities as well as a number of issues that we believe needed to be resolved.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—They are basically things that are missing here altogether at the moment?

Mr Wilson—That are missing here altogether. In the case of tennis, a tennis centre was built that was some way short of international standard facilities which we believe to be an important priority to get an international standard facility. Given all the money that had gone into putting the facility up in the first place, a little more could get it over the line to be able to host an international event.

Mr Welch—That list was endorsed by our full Federation council.

CHAIR—The list does include some rather curious things: for instance, a home ground for the Western Reds Rugby League team. I thought they were doing rather well to fill the stadium that they are playing in. Also, soccer for the Perth Glory. Now that soccer is playing in the off season, there ought to be

an opportunity for sharing with the other football sports.

Mr Welch—There is. The aficionados of those sports will tell us, and we rely on the expertise of our member bodies to let us know what the requirements are. There is a whole range of difficulties in spectator support for, and therefore commercial viability of, the smaller field sports being played in major stadiums, on football grounds and cricket fields based on their needs and their requests to achieve that. A feasibility study has been proposed and is being conducted right now by our state government to look at the actual feasibility in a real sense of a stadium which will house soccer, rugby league, rugby union and other smaller field sports. Lacrosse, for example, could also use that. If that study demonstrates that there is a need, then we will pursue it. If the study says it is not economically viable, for whatever reasons, they will continue to use their current facilities.

Mr BILLSON—Does that go to whether the government has a role at all in providing venues for commercial sporting franchises? In the state where I come from they shop around the stadium providers and see what sort of deal they can do. You end up having four or five teams using the one venue. The question that goes through my mind is: what is the government's role in all this other than being a venue provider or being a partner of some private sector interest, creating them as a boot scheme or whatever, saying, 'Each time we open the gates for the Glory to glow, it will cost you \$70,000.' That is just an example. It is a figure that is commonly used in our state.

Mr Welch—That is certainly a part of the study. The input we had to the preparation of the brief for the study indicated that government support of a facility would go ahead only on the basis that there was greater use and benefit to the sport as a whole. If the facility was built with government funds and managed under our state sports centre trust or essentially government managed, then the commercial users would be paying commercial rents.

Mr BILLSON—That is how Burswood operates, as a tennis venue? You mentioned earlier that it and the hockey stadium had some Commonwealth money into it. How does that relationship work?

Mr Welch—Both of those facilities are managed by the sports themselves. The sports are responsible for the ongoing maintenance. They do let them out on a commercial basis for various exercises. Gratton was previously general manager of the hockey stadium and is in a better position to give more specific information.

Mr Wilson—The tennis centre is on land that was granted from the state government. They basically have that land for their use for their centre. The hockey stadium is located on university land. They have an agreement with Curtin University for very low rental on a medium-term basis—a 20-year basis—to be able to utilise the facility during that period.

Mr BILLSON—In the Burswood case that was all nussed out when the concept was being developed. Each party knew what they were in for before they entered into capital investment in the facilities, what their access was to titles—all those sorts of things. What is the artificial reef story? Paint a picture for me how that cracks for a mention.

Mr Ryan—Bob is the man who catches all the waves. He can do it.

Mr Welch—The reef has quite a substantial history. To bring it back to maybe two or three minutes, it has been on the drawing board for some 25 years as a need for a surfing facility in the metropolitan area primarily for the summer months. The uniqueness of our coastline is that it does not hold the swell. If you understand surfing terms, you get a strong wind, a bit of weather, and for three or four days there is a good wave. We have minimal open coastline with reef. On the east coast the surf is excellent because of the bays and the headlands which generate constant seas and swells. The thought process going into the reef was that there is a lot of reef in different areas, but reef does not necessarily always create a swell or a wave because of the different shape of the reef.

The idea of the surfing reef is twofold. One is to reduce the congestion of our northern beaches in the summer months to enable our recreational surfers to go elsewhere. We have a lot of problems with clashing of body boarders, with windsurfers and with surf board riders. Eoin will be very familiar with the Scarborough and the Trigg Island case. After some considerable research, the state government felt it was feasible to build an artificial reef over the existing reef at a place called Cable Station to better shape the swell that does come through of a summer month to provide a constant surf at one more venue, over maybe 300 or 400 metres of wave length, to reduce the very real danger of the overcrowding at Trigg Island.

Mr BILLSON—You have some of the artificial reef there and you are saying it needs to be extended or replicated elsewhere?

Mr Welch—No. What we are saying is that for an artificial reef to be successful in a surfing sense it can only be built on existing rock.

Mr BILLSON—I was with you until you mentioned Cable Station. I understood from what you were saying that you had already got that one going.

Mr Welch—No. It is an existing reef that is a natural reef in a certain area. The shape of the reef is such that it does not provide for the shape of a wave, except on minor occasions during the year.

Mr BILLSON—How do you then front up to the calisthenics people and say, 'It is \$30 a night for the venue but if you happen to surf we will build you a reef and it will cost you nothing'? How do you deal with that? Is there a tollgate on the reef? One of the great issues that occupies my mind is that consistency is important in policy setting—how you rule in and rule out different sports, for instance. A changeover station for triathletes coming out of the water, hopping onto bikes, seems a perfectly reasonable suggestion. But if you raise that in the halls of local governments around the country they will say, 'They can bloody build it themselves.' But for something that is in a conceptual sense no different, they will say, 'That is fine. We will do that tomorrow; in fact, it is disgraceful we haven't done it already.' With the reef concept, and this viability line that you have been running, which warms the cockles of my heart, how do you deal with that concept? Do you apply it to an artificial surfing reef and freeze out other people who do not have a choice of a good or a bad swell or cannot even get a start at their particular recreational pursuit?

Mr Welch—It gets back to the debate that centred for quite some time around the establishment of the reef, around it getting on our list in the first place and then having government dollars applied to it for it to become a reality. The debate centred around the fact that the reef is one of the few things that could be

achieved in a recreational sense for the masses—if you know what I mean. A lot of sports are such that you cannot just go out and row a boat on a weekend or have a dive on a weekend. In a recreational sense, surfing is one of the few sports where you can do that. It is a bit like jogging, kicking a football or throwing a cricket ball: you can go out almost anywhere and do that.

Mr BILLSON—In the city that I represent I cannot take my golden retriever down to the beach in summer. My dog finds it hard to understand why that leisure activity is not to be supported on the coastal zone during summer while perhaps in this case it is. It is what is in, what is out. I am sensing from your answer that the reef project had a bit of momentum for a whole lot of other reasons that has perhaps given it a life it might not otherwise have had. Is that a fair summary?

Mr Welch—I do not think so. I think local government has been very progressive in a number of areas in looking at that to start with. On the dog question, we have some progressive local governments here that have specific dog beaches. I will not go near them, but I support the concept.

Mr McDOUGALL—I have to ask a question on behalf of Stephen Martin, a member of the committee. He has not been here today, but he has been to every other hearing. The Confederation of Australian Sport suggested that we could have 2c on a cigarette stick or we could have a sports lottery. You are an associate member of the Confederation of Australian Sport, being the Sports Federation: if the Commonwealth government is going to get into capital sports facilities funding, how do we raise the money?

Mr Welch—I know John will answer the question. We are not an associate member of the Confederation of Australian Sport. We have a communication agreement with them because their members are the national bodies of our members.

Mr McDOUGALL—You are related though?

Mr Welch—We talk to them, yes.

Mr Ryan—As a representative state sports association, I would ask you not to expect a higher level of sophistication when it comes to the ways and means of raising taxes. Speaking of taxes, the way we see it is really rather simple, as has been explained earlier: it is a case of priorities and the slicing of the existing cake. The reason for our advocating that the whole thing should start in the year 2001 is based around the fact that there is very large expenditure going into the Sydney 2000 effort.

Mr McDOUGALL—That is a one-off. There is no existing cake.

Mr Ryan—We are suggesting it should be.

Mr BILLSON—On the concept of linking taxes to objectivities, it has been suggested you could extend that to gambling. At the moment we do not have too much Internet gambling and we do not have a regulatory regime for—heaven knows why anyone would want to do it—poker machines on the backs of seats in aircraft and those sorts of things. Those are clearly two areas of federal jurisdiction; areas of gambling that are likely to rear their heads. Are the taxation revenue streams from those sorts of activities

something you would support going towards sport? Putting it another way: what do you anticipate the reaction would be of having those additional forms of gambling amongst the communities that you are a part of?

Mr Ryan—I suppose the first thing is the philosophical question: how do we stand in relation to accepting funds from tobacco sales and from gambling? We do not have any particular problem with that. As you would be well aware, at present there are the Healthway funds, which are basically a proportion of the tax raised through tobacco taxes. As I would see it, and the Federation would see it, that is just a simple case of user pays. The smokers are causing the problem; they are causing a tremendous drag on the health dollar at both state and federal level. The idea is that there is revenue coming directly to what is intrinsically a healthy pursuit and should improve the health of the nation. We do not have any particular problem with that. As to the idea that the Lotteries Commission is a gambling pursuit, when people buy a lottery ticket, a lotto ticket or whatever, there is a clear understanding that the profits from that will be going toward some sort of community pursuit. As far as lotto, lottery tickets and that sort of thing are concerned, that is reasonably clear and, I might suggest, reasonably clean.

The Sports Federation, as yet, has not developed a view on the matter of poker machines. At this point, there is a fair bit of one side and the other debate—not hot debate. Clearly, people like golf clubs, which they reckon are absolutely terrific, and perhaps football clubs—places where they are almost automatically set up to put poker machines in. If you are talking about the local lacrosse club or even the local surf club in other states—which state are you from?

Mr BILLSON—Victoria.

Mr Ryan—In other states, surf clubs have adopted poker machines. As far as the Sports Federation is concerned they are fairly new to this state. They are not here at this point other than out at the casino. Some pseudo gambling activities might be regarded that way. In short, we do not have a consensus from our members on that issue.

CHAIR—We are running out of time. I need to ask one quick question because nobody else has mentioned it today and you have given it only one line in your entire submission. The Australian Sports Foundation is supposed to be largely at the centre of fundraising for sports facilities in the nation. Do any of your members use the Sports Foundation? Do you have any comments on it other than that it should be pursued further, which is all you have had to say about it in your submission?

Mr Welch—Yes. Our members have used that Foundation. In fact, the Rowing Association utilised it very successfully in gathering community support and commercial support for the construction of a rowing shed some years back. It is a Foundation that we promote to our member organisations to utilise. We have given it one line. That might not be justice, but we wanted to keep the submission brief. Put simply, it is an organisation that could be utilised a lot more, given better promotion, through which commercial organisations could provide funding for a whole range of things.

While I am speaking to you, the point I wanted to make earlier is that the other source of income for the construction of facilities could well come from our current illness budget—the rationale being that there

are more opportunities for participation in physical activity. The Federation currently has as its major objective in this state to achieve a better quality of physical education program in our schools, to encourage physical activity and, therefore, to reduce the health costs in those areas.

Mr McDOUGALL—There has been criticism that the Foundation has not really worked because it is under the control of the ASC. They have used it predominantly to gain money to build their own buildings and, therefore, if it were separated from the ASC it would have a far better life. Would you like to make a comment on that?

Mr Welch—I think its promotion is stifled under the ASC.

Mr ENTSCH—Again, on funding: have you any idea what the proportion of private sector funding is to the contribution to sport and recreation at the moment? Is there any significant amount of funding coming from private enterprise?

Mr Welch—I believe that has not been measured. I would not like to comment. I would not be able to give you an even close to accurate comment—apart from the fact that we are aware that some commercial organisations do fund their own facilities on a user-pays basis. For that particular socioeconomic market, they are doing very well.

CHAIR—Thank you for coming. We appreciate the advice you have given from the sporting side in Western Australia. You have helped us also with our consideration of the issues.

Mr Ryan—Thank you for the opportunity to participate. It is a most important process that you are going through.

ASH, Mrs Denise Ann, Secretary, Carine Calisthenics Club, c/- 3 Mica Court, Carine, Western Australia 6020

MORRIS, Mr Darryl, President, Calisthenics Association of Western Australia Inc., Gray Drive, Midvale, Western Australia 6056

MORRISSEY, Mrs Coralie Anne, Member, Board of Directors, Calisthenics Association of Western Australia Inc., Gray Drive, Midvale, Western Australia 6056

PLESTER, Mrs Jillian, Treasurer, Carine Calisthenics Club, c/- 3 Mica Court, Carine, Western Australia 6020

CHAIR—Welcome. We have received submissions from you and have authorised their publication. Do you propose any changes to the submission; if not, would someone like to make a brief opening statement?

Mr Morris—Thank you for giving us the opportunity to come at this late hour. I am sure the day is all but nigh. Our esteemed colleagues before us have certainly set a standard. I suppose the association, our sporting body, and certainly the Carine Club are now wanting to bring it right down to the grassroots level. You will pick up on some things which we see as being extremely important at the coalface.

CHAIR—We have the statement in front of us, so you do not need to read that to us again.

Mr Morris—I would like to make an opening statement. We represent the Calisthenics Association of Western Australia and have been invited here today to support the Carine Calisthenics Club. Calisthenics is a unique sport that although nationally recognised is a minority sport. It is a sport that not only promotes a healthy lifestyle but also builds teamwork, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-control and discipline. As a minority sport it receives minimal recognition in the way of promotion, media coverage, sponsorship, grants and venue availability.

There are approximately 15,000 participants of the calisthenics sport throughout Australia, made up of just over 7,000 from Victoria, 5,000 from South Australia, 1,200 from Western Australia, 600 from the Northern Territory, 300 from Queensland, 550 from the Australian Capital Territory and 150 from New South Wales. The Calisthenics Association has its own theatre complex here in Western Australia; in fact, we are the only state to have developed our own purpose-built theatre in Australia, built in 1990 with the help of donors, volunteers and substantial loans.

As I said, the theatre is purpose-built and has a seating capacity of about 700 seats and a school staging area, sprung floor, with lighting, et cetera. It is used primarily for the numerous competitions held during the year and for the training of our Western Australian state teams. The complex is used to its maximum with a large percentage of its hire being allocated to the dance schools to assist with the financial burden to the association.

We have an annual budget of about \$165,000 with a large proportion of this allocated to insurance,

wages, the payment of loans and running costs of the theatre complex. It is essential to hire the venue to outside organisations to meet our expenditure commitments for a building that is valued in the vicinity of \$2 million. Subscriptions from our members—as I stated the number is around 1,200—generate only 15 per cent of the annual budget. In Western Australia there is a total of 19 clubs operating in the metropolitan area as well as Mandurah, Bunbury, Karratha and Southern Cross, which are country centres, with a total, as I have already mentioned, of 1,200 members.

Many of the clubs use the Calisthenics Association theatre complex for their concerts. The Calisthenics Association is an administrative body only. It does not support any of the member clubs financially. It is the responsibility of the member clubs to ensure that they have the ability to administer themselves financially. It is not possible for all of these clubs to use our theatre complex for their training requirements. The majority of clubs train in venues such as local government high schools, local community centres and halls and in a few private schools. Over the past few years there has been a common complaint from many of our clubs about the escalating costs. It is getting harder and harder for clubs to keep their current members due to the increase in their annual fees. These costs have increased over the past number of years due to the high increases in venue hire.

The costs vary with each individual club and are directly related to the support they receive from their local community, councils and high schools. To give you just a brief overview, they could range from as much as \$200 per annum for a girl in a club as a minimum, up to about \$800 per girl per annum, depending on the locality they reside in. As I have already mentioned, much of that is contributed by the cost of the venue hires in those areas.

Some clubs have much higher expenditure than others due to the lack of support from their local councils in the way of subsidising their hall rental. Representatives of the Carine Calisthenics Club will detail for you some of the problems that they encounter with their own venue facilities within their own area.

Mrs Ash—Thank you for allowing us to speak to you. You all have my submission so I will not go into the basics. As a club, over the last few years we have had to consistently increase our level of fundraising efforts to meet our running costs, our main costs being wages and hall hire. This year we were forced, unfortunately, into the situation where we had to increase our club fees, which resulted in a decline in our membership. I think that is a huge tragedy not only for our club but also for the sport in general.

As I mentioned in my initial letter to Mr Cameron, our sport is rather unique in that we must have indoor facilities and we must have a sprung timber floor for the physical and ballet work that the girls undertake. Unfortunately, gymnastics, volleyball, badminton and basketball—all those sports—require the same type of venue that we do, and we are all vying for the same type of venue.

With the increase in demand and the lack of new facilities, particularly in our area, our hourly hire rates have increased substantially from \$15 an hour roughly at government school gymnasiums up to about \$50 an hour at a private school. Hall hire for the Carine Calisthenics Club this year has been estimated at \$13,800, which equates to \$186 per girl. To minimise this cost we have to train two teams consecutively thereby reducing the cost to \$93 per girl. The cost is still one-third of our annual cost per girl.

Dual use of venues does have many disadvantages, and I have listed them in my submission. Our local government high school where we have been training for 20 years is now charging us at a higher hourly rate and the availability of our training venue has been cut to facilitate the adult education scheme that is on offer. This has now forced us to utilise six different venues over various suburbs; in fact, one of our teams has to train for one hour in one part of the school and relocate to another area of the school to continue training. Our club has developed various strategies to ensure costs are kept to a minimum; however, it becomes increasingly difficult and brings us back to parents having to fundraise to meet costs. Unfortunately, calisthenics is a minority sport in that it is not well known, particularly here in WA, and does not receive the media recognition it is due for its national and local achievements. We are aware that the problems we are experiencing apply to all other clubs throughout Australia. Currently our club receives no financial support from any government department or the Calisthenics Association of WA, and the economic climate does not encourage businesses to support local sporting groups such as ours.

Also, our club is competing against the better known sports as well as Girl Guides, Brownies, Boy Scouts, local music groups, et cetera. We feel that it is vital that the youth of our community are encouraged and supported in the pursuit of a healthy, competitive sport, allowing them to gain self-esteem, confidence, discipline, commitment and loyalty, with an emphasis on being a team member.

Calisthenics is a nationally recognised sport. State and local government departments do not appear to have the funding available to assist our needs. There is a need within the community to support minority sporting groups, not the media recognised sports of football, rugby, gymnastics, et cetera, which readily attract business sponsorship. We feel one of the biggest problems at a local level is the availability and hire cost of suitable halls being used throughout Australia. We recognise that this cannot be rectified easily.

We have made the following suggestions and recommendations: we urge future planning to ensure multiuse facilities are built to accommodate a variety of needs by the community and sporting groups as a whole; that the Commonwealth government recognise youth support and in particular minority groups via subsidies to offset increasing costs of venue hire, which is of particular importance in residential areas where no new facilities have been planned; that the Commonwealth government allocate a subsidy based on a number of affiliated members, which will ensure fair distribution between small and larger clubs to encourage participation in youth sport and community groups; and that the Commonwealth government offer rebate subsidies to government schools to encourage them to support local youth and their need to utilise special facilities.

It is our understanding that private schools receive Commonwealth and state government funding and that many privately owned gymnasiums received low interest loan funding from the state government. Could it not be a criterion that these gymnasiums must provide a percentage of out-of-school hour hire time of facilities to minority sports at a reduced rate?

CHAIR—Thank you for coming to put a local perspective on our hearings today. You have no doubt heard the Western Australian Sports Federation suggest that the Commonwealth should stay out of local affairs altogether and just fund international and national facilities. Do you agree with that proposal?

Mrs Morrissey—No, definitely not.

Mr Morris—I suppose when you consider it, what is important to us at a local level is the subsidy. At the end of the day, where it comes from is really immaterial to a local club and that is really where we are coming from. We, in our sport, are not about the building of big complexes. I have heard the comments mentioned about complexes and the capital drain, and then there is the ongoing drain. Our theatre has never run at a capital loss or an operating loss at all in the six years that we have been operating. We built it to help sustain our sport and it does that.

We are very proud—we have 1,200 members—to be able to make that sort of comment. Because of the nature of the sport—it is a metropolitan sport, a state sport; the clubs are spread out over the metropolitan area—we need the support in those local areas for the local clubs. We could say in a nutshell how you could do that: via private schools, the Education Department and the local community recreational centres—providing some subsidy through them to be able to reduce the hourly rate that is a burden to us at those levels. Whether that is done through the municipalities, through a state government or through federal government, we do not have any agenda.

Mr McDOUGALL—Are you saying private schools do not rent out their facilities?

Mrs Morrissey—They are reluctant to.

Mr Morris—They are very reluctant.

Mr McDOUGALL—We have found in other states that they are very active. That is why I asked the question.

Mrs Ash—In this state they seem to be very choosy as to who uses their facilities.

Mrs Morrissey—If they do not want to rent their premises out they will put \$50 or \$60 an hour on the venue. Therefore, the normal minority sports cannot afford those types of venues.

CHAIR—I accept the fact that it is difficult for sports clubs, particularly those that have a lot of children or young people participating, to meet the costs of the sport. I am interested in your suggestion that the Commonwealth should subsidise your operations in some way. How is the Commonwealth going to decide? The Confederation of Australian Sports spoke about, I think, 89 sports in WA; in fact, I think the number that the ASC recognises is something over 150-odd. How is the Commonwealth going to decide which ones are worthy of subsidy and which ones are not?

Mrs Ash—We discussed that before proposing. We do not hide the fact that that is not going to be easy to address, but we do think that there should be some criteria set that address minority sports. The larger sports—the more media recognised, well-known sports—seem to attract financial backing from independent sponsors quite readily; the minor sports do not. How the Sports Federation would work that, I do not know.

CHAIR—Let me take the academic dry line: if your sport cannot attract public sponsorship no-one likes it and, therefore, everybody should play something that they do like.

Mrs Ash—I have to disagree in that we are a sport that attracts. Through no media recognition, it is a still a known sport within our local community. Our girls absolutely love it, they work hard at it, and we support it wholeheartedly. I am sure a lot of you had not heard of calisthenics before we put our submission forward. There is obviously an interest there. As I said, we have been training at the Carine High School for 20 years and I think that is indicative in itself. We are trying hard in working with the youth in the area. I think that is what we should be looking at not only as a club but at this inquiry. We have spoken a lot about elite sports. We have a lot of girls in our club who come week in, week out, but they are never going to be elite sports people. They come because they love the sport and we are here to represent those girls.

Mr EOIN CAMERON—Mr Chairman, if I could make a comment because I have to fly, unfortunately. At the next election Carine falls entirely within my electorate. I support everything Denise has to say.

Mr McDOUGALL—Could I ask a question to try to put an understanding on it? Have you made a comparison between the contribution of your individual participant to netball, basketball and hockey and how much yours contribute a week?

Mrs Morrissey—Not officially. We have done it unofficially. We have parents in our clubs that have children that play the other sports. In my own state they do arts and dance—things like that. We have got those as comparisons. We have used that at club level and at our executive meetings to be able to determine what those costs are and what they get for their money compared to what our children are getting.

Mr McDOUGALL—If a child comes along and wants to participate in calisthenics, it is going to cost them X dollars a week—let us say \$10 a week. How much is it going to cost them to participate in hockey on a weekly basis? Have you done that?

Mr Morris—As a sport, we would have to say, no, we have not. Calisthenics is a bit unique in that it is a 12 months of the year sport, which escalates the costs because they start in February and they finish in December. If you are lucky, you get a month's grace in between. From that point of view, it is expensive—the amount of hours that you would put into your sport.

Mr McDOUGALL—That is what I am trying to get at: is it expensive? I am trying to get at what they are paying compared with another sport. I am trying to justify your asking for a contribution through a process. How do you rack up against the others?

Mrs Plester—The joining fee for netball for a season is \$60, for example, for a couple of terms. Ours is \$340 for the same age girls.

Mr ENTSCH—What about something like equestrian activities as a sport? That is also extremely expensive. I guess it is a matter of choice. We could then have the equestrian people coming in and saying, 'My youngster wants to be involved in equestrian activities. I need a subsidy to buy him a horse and saddle.' Do you understand what I mean? It is expensive.

Mrs Plester—Calisthenics is a sport, but it is a dance sport. We are often compared with the dance

schools. It seems to be a more comparable charge, if you like. Our fees are \$2.50 per hour. That covers our coach, our hall hire and any other bits and pieces. Dancing is \$5 for three-quarters of an hour.

Mr BILLSON—Basketball is about the same.

Mrs Plester—We have done everything we can to make it less. One of the things, as Denise mentioned, is two teams working at the same time. It is difficult, but it helps with the costs.

Mr McDOUGALL—I do not know whether you were here but the Education Department told us how good they were.

Mrs Ash—Yes. We heard them and we were staggered.

Mr McDOUGALL—What you are telling us is that this is a good bit of paper but not a reality.

Mrs Ash—It is the first time we have seen or heard about it.

CHAIR—Now that you have heard about it, have you asked school principals and been refused or have you just not thought about it?

Mrs Ash—No. In our own situation, the headmaster at Carine High School is extremely supportive not only of our sport but of any community commitments at all. We could not knock him; he is just wonderful. The reality of life is that he is a very busy man, so he has handballed the responsibility of the allocation of the facilities of the school to a teacher. If you ring him up on a good day he will give you the venue; on others he will not.

Mr McDOUGALL—There is no community management program?

Mrs Ash—It is not in place at that school. Also, they are not utilising the facilities that they have to their full advantage. For example, with the gymnasium we have we can accommodate two to three calisthenics teams in there. We have been given the royal boot by the belly dancers. I am not knocking belly dancers for a moment—please do not get me wrong. That is an adult education scheme. Whether the school makes more money out of that, I do not know, but we are told to remove ourselves to accommodate five ladies that want to do belly dancing. That to me is not good economics.

Mr ENTSCHE—Have you gone back and seen the principal who you said is very supportive?

Mrs Ash—Yes, on numerous occasions. As I say, I do not know if it is particular to our school. I do not think it is, I think it is across the board that the staff at the school—

CHAIR—You do advocate multipurpose facilities.

Mrs Ash—Yes, definitely.

CHAIR—Except that you are being squeezed out of the multipurpose facilities by others who can afford to pay more?

Mrs Morrissey—We do not dispute at all the need for more recreational centres, by the way, but there is a need for them and we would support them. Our problem would always be that the community sports or the minority sports are not going to get a look in in those centres; it will be the major sports again.

CHAIR—How do we fix it?

Mr BILLSON—If I can just offer a suggestion? In Victoria the Education Department has a very odd policy. When it builds a new school it builds a two-thirds basketball court as a gym area. That is wonderful for the calisthenics people because no-one else wants to use it. Why would they want to use a pygmy basketball court? It is an odd thing that has played into the hands of the calisthenics people quite nicely.

I was talking to the education representative from the Western Australian government about the fact that the Commonwealth provides substantial funds for education for capital facilities. The proposition I put to him was that, if that is the talk, can we help walk the talk by saying, 'If you cannot demonstrate that you have implemented this policy and that you have no community use, you get a discount on your grant. If you can demonstrate that you have got broader community use and full utilisation of your facilities, we will tweak up your grant, even if it is for fit-out.' Do we need to go that far in your view to drag uncooperative bureaucracies screaming to the table?

Mr Morris—You could use this document as a bit of a guide. Page 7 is headed 'Who will determine the cost of the hire?' The principal will determine the charge for the facilities. Fees may be charged for the hire of the facilities. To cover the costs associated with their hire, it will be necessary for some research to be done to make sure that the fee is comparable with other facilities in the area. When developing a schedule of charges the school should exercise care not to introduce competitiveness with its facilities. Cost components of the charge may include power consumption, water, cleaning, insurance, administration and additional wear and tear—those sorts of issues.

If you take us as a sport—the girls would turn on the lights and use the floor area—we would argue why it might be \$10 an hour in one centre, yet in another it might be up to \$50 an hour. All we are doing is using the floor and turning the lights on with no extra additional. There is no yardstick, no standard to work to if that is all that we are using it for.

Mrs Morrissey—It goes further than what Darryl is saying. On page 9 it goes through and works out the types of rates that should be charged and differentiates between the charitable community service organisations that support the community. It then breaks it down to, say, non-profit sporting organisations which are again supporting the community area around it, but there are two separate costings.

Mr McDOUGALL—Is the Calisthenics Association recognised by the department of sport in Western Australia as a sport?

Mr Morris—Yes.

Mr McDOUGALL—Do you get administrative funding from them?

Mr Morris—The funding that we get through the Ministry of Sport and Recreation is at this point what we call category funding. Our limit on that category funding is \$14,000 per annum. We are putting a submission forward with a development plan to go from what is called category funding to developmental funding. The difference between the two is that category funding is a pretty bullet point: you can and you cannot. Developmental funding is more freedom of a use of our money. At this stage, the association has not made a decision as to how it would administer its \$14,000, but it would not go very far in the clubs.

Mr McDOUGALL—Have you been asked by the department to participate in any sort of strategic planning for the future capital facilities that are required in Western Australia?

Mr Morris—No.

Mrs Morrissey—No.

CHAIR—Have you used the Australian Sports Foundation?

Mr Morris—Nationally we have, not locally.

CHAIR—Why not?

Mr Morris—I cannot answer that.

Mrs Ash—We have targeted our local area and the bigger known business and company names to hopefully pull in the dollar but, no, we have not.

CHAIR—The Australian Sports Foundation could help your local business people to contribute and get tax benefits.

Mr McDOUGALL—That is what the Sports Foundation is about—tax benefits.

Mrs Morrissey—Where do you find out that sort of information? How do clubs find out that level—

Mr McDOUGALL—I think you are answering the question. This is one of the things that we are finding out because nobody knows about the Sports Foundation.

Mrs Morrissey—It is the best kept secret.

Mr BILLSON—If it is any comfort to you, I had never heard of it until we started the inquiry.

Mrs Morrissey—I find this interesting because at the beginning of the year our own local council—one either side of us—asked us who was representing our local sport and wanted to know about our sport. I sent the details of our club membership off to them. They were telling us that they wanted that on record so

that if anybody inquired about the sport of calisthenics they could come to us. If these things are in place and happening why are they not coming to all the sports?

Mr McDOUGALL—Are you a member of the Sports Federation?

Mr Morris—Yes.

Mr McDOUGALL—Why haven't the Sports Federation sent you the details?

Mrs Morrissey—Good question. Are we talking about individual clubs here?

Mr McDOUGALL—I had to ask the question because it has been recognised, without a doubt, that it has been tucked away in the back of the Australian Sports Commission. I said earlier tonight that it is about raising funds for the AIS and the ASC. Frankly, I believe it, and I am happy to be on record saying it. It has never been promoted properly to the sports. As the Chairman says, it is a very great benefit in tax benefits to commercial enterprises which want to make a contribution.

CHAIR—We are getting to the time when we need to be out of this building. Any quick final questions?

Mr BILLSON—The issue that I was raising earlier with the local government authorities was the traditional sports, the ground hire charges and those sorts of things. Is your local council aware of the circumstances that you are facing and have they been helpful? Have you rung up your local councillor and said, 'If you don't help me out we'll be—'

Mrs Ash—I have been associated with Carine Club for nearly 10 years now. When I initially started on the committee I was all gung-ho and what have you. I used to make a lot of contact with the City of Stirling trying to address the issue of venues. They have a venue clerk there. I have had numerous meetings and made phone calls and in the end you know you are not going to get anywhere. You are beating your head against a brick wall. You have to look at other ways to help your club, so you just give it away.

Mr Morris—As part of my role, I visit the 19 clubs annually and one of the major concerns or complaints that the clubs are bringing is that they are not getting the support that they need from their local councils and shires in relation to hall hire. As I mentioned, that reflects in the rates of fees which I said could be from \$200 up to nearly \$800 for a girl. In some areas the facilities are so sparse that they are just charging premiums for them because the demand is great.

Mr BILLSON—You would have a regular commitment. Are they charging you casual rates even though you could enter into a lease for three years?

Mr Morris—No. The clubs will be negotiating very strongly on that basis that they have been in those areas for, let us say, 20 years and they do train—

Mr BILLSON—They just give you the casual rate?

Mrs Ash—Yes.

CHAIR—We probably cannot delve in too much detail into your specific case. Your evidence has been helpful to us because it helps fill in the actual problems that local clubs have to deal with at the local level. We have tried in each state to meet some people in your category—not just the elite sporting organisations and those that one might expect to be able to know their way around the sports bureaucracy a little better. It is certainly a problem that has been identified, that people are not aware of the Sports Foundation. We have trouble, therefore, in getting intelligent comments about how effectively it is doing its job when people do not even know what it is or what it has done.

We have certainly appreciated the advice you have given and wish you every success with your club and your search for hall rental. What you are looking for is not just an ordinary hall but one that has a sprung floor. They are a bit rare to start off with and they cost a lot of money to build. You are caught with this double difficulty that whoever owns it needs to get some return on their investment as well.

Thank you for coming. The committee will receive your paper as supplementary submission No. 282.

Resolved (on motion by Mr Billson):

That the submission from the Carine Calisthenics Club be received as evidence and authorised for publication.

Resolved (on motion by Mr Entsch):

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 6 p.m.