

**UNCORRECTED PROOF
GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 2**

Wednesday 10 October 2012

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

SPORT AND RECREATION

The Committee met at 12.15 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. M. A. Ficarra (Chair)

The Hon. R. H. Colless
The Hon. C. M. Faehrmann
The Hon. P. Green (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. A. Searle
The Hon. L. Voltz

PRESENT

The Hon. Graham Annesley, *Minister for Sport and Recreation*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

CHAIR: I declare open to the public this hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2012-13. I welcome Minister Graham Annesley and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Sport and Recreation. Before we commence, it is necessary for me to make some comments about procedural matters.

In accordance with the Legislative Council's guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings, only Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photographs. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee, you must take responsibility for what you publish or what interpretation you place on anything that is said before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of the proceedings are available at the table by the door.

Any messages from advisers or members' staff who are seated in the public gallery should be delivered through Chamber or support staff, or the Committee clerks. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes or refer directly to the advisers who are seated at the table behind you. Transcripts of this hearing will be available on the web from tomorrow morning.

The House has resolved that answers to questions on notice must be provided within 21 days. I remind everyone to turn their mobile phones on to silent mode and take them away from the microphones. All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you already have sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. Mr Simon Glass and Ms Donna Rygate already have been sworn or affirmed today, so it is also not necessary for them to be sworn or affirmed again. I ask Mr Doorn and Ms Milligan to state their full names, job titles and agencies, and to swear an oath or make an affirmation.

JANET MARGARET MILLIGAN, Acting Executive Director, Venues NSW, and

PAUL DOORN, Executive Director, Sport and Recreation, Office of Communities, sworn and examined:

DONNA THERESE RYGATE, Chief Executive Officer, Office of Communities, and

SIMON PETER JULIAN GLASS, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Office of Communities, on former oath:

CHAIR: I declare open for examination the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Sport and Recreation. As there is a no provision for a Minister to make an opening statement before the Committee commences questioning, we will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Minister, has Nathan Tinkler's Hunter Sports Group settled its outstanding debts with Hunter Venues as the owner of the Newcastle Jets and Newcastle Knights? What was the amount of those debts? How much of those debts is still outstanding?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Thank you for the question. Hunter Stadium is managed by Venues NSW. It is the home ground for the Newcastle Knights rugby league team and the Newcastle Jets football club, both of which are owned by the Hunter Sports Group. The Hunter Sports Group has outstanding debts to Venues NSW relating to the Knights use of the stadium and the use of catering services. Delays in payment have been due to ongoing discussions about the accuracy of some charges. Venues NSW has been working closely with Hunter Sports Group to reach an agreement and a payment schedule. Those discussions are continuing as recently as yesterday.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Again I ask: How much are the outstanding debts?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: There is agreement on \$883,000 and there is \$400,000 that is still under discussion.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Are they agreeing to pay the \$883,000, or is that still outstanding?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: That sum has been agreed.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And has been paid?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: It has not been paid at this stage.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have the Newcastle Knights signed any long-term contract with Hunter Stadium?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: As a result of the disagreement or the discussions about the amount of moneys outstanding, there have been ongoing discussions about an extended agreement for the long-term hire of Hunter Stadium, but those discussions have been complicated by the amounts that have been in dispute. There is another meeting again today to try to progress the matter further. We are working through them as best we can to try to get both the outstanding debts paid and also to enter into a long-term hiring agreement.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Okay. Let us move to the Wollongong Stadium. Has it signed a long-term lease with the St George Illawarra Dragons?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Again, we are in a situation where the hiring agreements for these particular venues, including the Parramatta Stadium I might add, all expire at the same time or around the same time. They have all been under negotiation for some months. Agreement has not been reached yet in the case of each of the three stadiums. We are in a situation in which obviously a lot of public moneys have been spent on these venues. They primarily require anchor tenants in order to maintain the necessary revenue flow to keep the venues viable.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But at the moment you have no contract signed?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: That is correct.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How much funding did the Lloyd McDermott Aboriginal rugby development program receive in 2011-12 and how much funding has it received in 2012-13?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: In relation to 2011-12, it was \$50,000. In relation to 2012-13, no payment has been made at this stage.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Apart from the Lloyd McDermott Aboriginal rugby development program, what other sporting organisations have had their funding cut?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Sporting organisations?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Obviously you cut the Lloyd McDermott Aboriginal rugby development program. What other organisations that receive moneys had their funding cut?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: You are obviously referring to the recurrent grants program that has been in place for some time. It is not a program, but there were a number of recipients of recurrent grants. The provision of funding from government organisations should be based on equity, transparent processes and consistency in assessment and decision-making. In 2011 I requested a review of all those programs and organisations funded through the sport and recreation fund.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Sorry, may I interrupt? I only have 15 minutes. I am asking which organisations had their funding cut.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I am getting to that. I think it is important to put it in context. The review—because the outcome was the result of the review—identified several organisations that were receiving annual grants based predominantly on historical reasons. To improve fairness, transparency and consistency in assessment and decision-making I am requiring organisations to make project-based applications for funding rather than just cash handouts. This will ensure that government funding is awarded to the most meritorious projects and maximise value from the funding pool that is available.

I wrote to the relevant organisations in 2011 and advised them that they would be eligible to apply for funding under the range of Sport and Recreation application-based grants programs. Those organisations include Kidsafe, the Jack Newton Junior Golf Foundation, the Flying Fruit Fly Circus, Johnny Warren Football Foundation, Cricket NSW for the Alan McGilvray Memorial Scholarship and the Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Program.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: On 13 August 2011 Mark Fowler died while participating in a Muay Thai bout in Liverpool. Can you inform the Committee whether this bout was classified as a professional bout or an amateur bout under the Combat Sports Authority?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: You are talking about Mark Fowler?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is right. Was it classified by the Combat Sports Authority as a professional bout or an amateur bout?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Mark Fowler unfortunately died on 15 August 2011 following a Muay Thai contest on 13 August. The matter is currently being considered by the Coroner.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: So you are saying it is in front of a Coroner's review?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Absolutely.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Do you have your own investigation running?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: We have been conducting a review of the Combat Sports Authority for some time now.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I am not asking anything in particular about his death. I am asking how it was classified by the Combat Sports Authority—whether it was amateur or professional. That should be public information, should it not?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: It is a matter that the Coroner is considering. He has taken all the circumstances into consideration.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is good, but I would like to know—and it should have been available, public information—whether the Combat Sports Authority classified it as a professional bout or an amateur bout.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: A prosecution was launched against the promoter of the event, Mr Tony Favuzzi, the President of the NSW World Muay Thai Council. He applied for an amateur promoter permit on 13 August 2011. The permit was granted. He then applied for a permit to promote professional combat sports contests on 13 August. This application was refused as he was not a registered promoter. As neither the World Muay Thai Council nor Mr Favuzzi is a registered promoter they cannot lawfully promote professional combat sports contests.

Mr Favuzzi in his capacity as President of the World Muay Thai Council applied on 13 August 2011 for an amateur promoter permit for Paolo Suarez Promotion Unleashed. He is a registered judge and timekeeper and therefore ineligible to be registered as a promoter for professional events. There may be a prima facie case that Mr Favuzzi was the promoter of the 13 August contest. NSW Police laid charges against Mr Favuzzi and the court hearing was held on 21 September 2012.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: When will you publicly release the report into the new grandstand failure at WIN Stadium?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: That is not a matter that falls under my portfolio. The construction of the grandstand was under the jurisdiction of Public Works, so the question should be addressed to Minister Pearce.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But in the House you said you would release the report publicly?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: The matter does not fall under my portfolio.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Okay, no worries. How often have the advisory councils for Newcastle and Wollongong venues met?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: They are meeting monthly.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: They have met monthly?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How many meetings have they held since being constituted?

CHAIR: You can take the question on notice if you like.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I am happy for you to take that question on notice.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Yes. I would have to come back to you on the specifics, but they are meeting monthly.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Do they have access to the day-to-day operations and financial records of these organisations? I am happy for you to take that question on notice.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Does who have access?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The advisory councils.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Yes. Just so I understand the question: Do they have access to?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: To the day-to-day operations and financial records for the venues.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: No, they do not because they are advisory boards; they are not operational.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I refer to another matter on which you may have a view. Do you think the Canterbury Bulldogs team handled itself badly regarding events after the grand final?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Which events in particular?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs team.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Yes, which events?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: In their attitude to women and the allegations made against them by the journalist?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I am not privy to the outcomes of the investigation undertaken by the club which, apparently, were handed to the National Rugby League. The National Rugby League announced, I think yesterday from what I have read in the media, that the club will be donating \$30,000 to a charity as a result of the outcome of that investigation. As I am not privy to the detail, it is difficult for me to go into it any further.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Okay. The 2011-12 budget papers outlined the full-time equivalent employees for Sport and Recreation as 404. On page 3-11 in current Budget Paper No 3 the number for full-time equivalent employees does not appear. In answer to a question on notice from me you answered that the number of full-time equivalent employees of the division of Sport and Recreation as part of the Office of Communities as at 13 June 2012 was 318.45. Can you explain why the FTE figures no longer appear in the budget papers and where these staff reductions have occurred?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I might pass that question to the department.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is fine.

Ms RYGATE: Without having the numbers in front of me, my assumption is that it depends whether the staff of the former Olympic venues—the Sydney International Equestrian Centre, the rowing centre at Penrith or the shooting centre—are actually counted in or out of the Sport and Recreation total. From the numbers you have quoted it sounds like that is the explanation as to whether they are counted in or out.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What would be the full-time effective staff number if they were counted in, given that it was 318.45 as at 13 June 2012?

Ms RYGATE: You are comparing that to a number from the 2011-12 budget papers?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: From the 2011-12 budget papers.

Ms RYGATE: The safest thing for me to do is to take that question on notice so that I can give you accurate figures because you have the numbers in front of you and I have not.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Thank you. I return to the Combat Sports Authority, but not to the issue about which I have asked already. How many full-time effective positions in the department look after the Combat Sports Authority? How many looked after the authority when it was under the wrestling control Act? How many look after the authority now that it has been expanded to take in all combat sports? You can take that question on notice.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I believe that it is currently a question on notice.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I think it is more expansive than the question already on notice. You can take it on notice.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Okay.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Minister, I refer to your media release on Tuesday 12 June this year in which you announce that the Government has invested an additional \$100 million into major sport and recreational infrastructure. What does that \$100 million consist of?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: It relates primarily to the SCG, the Sydney Cricket Ground, redevelopment. I am trying to get the exact figures for you. It is \$105 million to the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust to redevelop the grandstands.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: When your media release said in the first line that the New South Wales Government will invest an additional \$100 million into major sport and recreational infrastructure, was that additional \$100 million just for the Sydney Cricket Ground? It implies that it was for potentially more than that, but the budget papers suggest that the \$100 million was just for the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Yes, that is true.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Were any funds allocated previously to the Sydney Cricket Ground redevelopment or are these all additional funds?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: These are additional budget funds that were approved, yes.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: So efficiency savings have been made elsewhere in the department, is that correct?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Like all departments, yes.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: What savings, besides efficiency savings from the creation of Venues NSW and the local boards for management of government-owned venues, have been made within your department? Specifically, have there been any savings in the participation and facility program?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: In relation to savings overall, is that the question?

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: With the reduction in GST revenue of \$5.2 billion over the next four years on top of reductions in other forms of revenue, the Government has had to place significant savings, including a labour expense cap, across all portfolios. I understand the Office of Communities' savings strategies are focused on reducing operating costs through voluntary redundancies for some non front-line positions, decreasing accommodation, travel, contractor and consultant costs, and improving procurement processes. The Office of Communities also will save money through greater use of shared services across agencies in information technology, human resources, corporate services, administration, media and communications. I am pleased to say that in spite of those efficiencies and savings, the Sport and Recreation grant funding has been maintained in the difficult economic times we are confronting and at the same level as previous years.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Has the maximum amount under that grant funding been maintained or just the overall dollar amount for the entire program?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: The overall amount, yes. I have undertaken a review of our grant programs and made some changes, but the overall amount that has been allocated for grants to sporting organisations, local councils and the like around the State has been maintained.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Have those changes to the review been made public?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Yes, they have.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: What is the overall amount available for those organisations under that program?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: For participation and facilities it is \$3.35 million.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Does the Government have any information about the value of community participation sports funding compared to funding for established and professional sport? Do you have any cost-benefit analysis? I know one of your targets is to increase participation in sport.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Yes.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Do you have any analysis of the dollar spent on funding these programs through these grants, for example, compared to the dollar spent for upgrading the Sydney Cricket Ground? What type of internal analysis do you do? Do you have research that shows what you get for that?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Not specifically comparing one spend against the other.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: I ask because we are all aware of the apparently tight budget situation that the Government reminds us of regularly. I am trying to establish what value the State is gaining from providing \$100 million for the Sydney Cricket Ground upgrade. That money could have been spent by hundreds of local sports clubs. What analysis did your department do internally and can you release that information?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: In fact, it would not have gone to those other organisations had it not been allocated to the Sydney Cricket Ground upgrade. It was considered important to upgrade the cricket ground to maintain the competitiveness of New South Wales against other States.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: When you say "it was considered", on what was that consideration based?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: It was based on the fact that other States have made significant investments in their major sports facilities over a long period and that has placed them in a better position to bid for major events. Major events increase tourism and have a local economic impact. New South Wales was at risk of becoming less competitive in those bidding processes if it could not offer comparable facilities.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: It does not sound as though there was an internal brief or document outlining the value of that investment for New South Wales.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Is there a document to which I can refer? No, there is not. A lost opportunity cost was considered. It is difficult to do an accurate analysis of that because we do not know in advance which events we may or may not be able either to attain or retain if we do not have the upgraded facilities. That is clear given the major investment that has been pumped into facilities in other States. Anyone who has been to Melbourne, in particular, to Perth or to the redeveloped Adelaide Oval would have seen evidence of the amount of money being pumped into sports facilities in those States. Professional sporting organisations and event organisers have options in hawking their events around the country. If New South Wales cannot offer facilities that afford the same sort of financial return, we risk missing that economic opportunity.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Minister, were you happy about the Sydney Swans win?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I was very happy about it.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Sorry, that was the wrong question. I refer to the Good Sports program—a national initiative of the Australian Drug Foundation—which helps sports clubs to change their culture to become more focused on young people and families and less focused on the high-risk consumption of alcohol. Are you aware of any government funding allocated to this initiative? If so, how much has been allocated and will you continue to support this program? Are any similar initiatives being implemented in rural communities? What plans do you have to expand this great initiative throughout New South Wales?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: My understanding is that that program is not funded through NSW Sport and Recreation; it is funded through another portfolio. Therefore, I will take the question on notice to provide an accurate answer. I have witnessed the program in action and I have been to a number of local sporting clubs that have participated in it. It is achieving excellent results and I certainly support it.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My point is that it is a great initiative and we should be investing in it. Given that the Sports Development Program aims to assist sporting organisations and peak industry bodies to develop sport and recreation at all levels in New South Wales, can you tell the Committee how much funding has been allocated to it, how many sporting organisations and peak bodies have applied for grants in the past financial year, and how many sporting organisations and peak industry bodies have received grants in the past financial year?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Are you after a breakdown of the amounts?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: How much funding has been allocated in total and how many sporting organisations and peak bodies have applied for grants?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: The payments from the Sports Development Program in 2011-12 amounted to \$2,776,613 and it was allocated to 107 different organisations. That included \$120,000 for the New South Wales Sports Federation, which was paid out of the strategic partnerships program.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I am aware that about 10 per cent of spinal cord injuries are sports related. How much funding has been allocated to increase public awareness of the potential risk of spinal cord injury and to determine how the incidence might be reduced? Have you allocated any funding for public information programs?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: That is not done through the Sport and Recreation portfolio. It is a health-related matter and that question would be better addressed to the Minister for Health.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Can you update the Committee about the outcomes of the Sport and Recreation Ministerial Council meeting held in Perth in July 2012?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I met with my Federal, State and Territory counterparts at the forty-sixth Sport and Recreation Ministerial Council meeting in Perth in July. It was a very productive meeting, with Ministers unanimously agreeing to work cooperatively to continue the fight against match fixing and corruption in sport, to encourage participation in sport, and to improve national water safety measures. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining the integrity of sport in Australia, and to this end recognised that it is important that the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments continue to cooperate and collaborate with each other and the betting industry to strengthen standards to protect the integrity of sport.

The meeting also discussed the need to address and find ways to break down barriers facing individuals who want to participate in sport so that we see more people playing sport and taking part in active recreation. Of course, that is very important to the health and welfare of our communities. The cost of participating in sport may be one of those barriers. I am pleased to say that New South Wales will be taking the lead in investigating this issue and finding ways to overcome the barriers. We will be presenting a report of our findings to the next ministerial meeting at the end of this year. Ministers also received an update on the progress being made in each State and Territory in applying best-practice principles relating to water safety that aim to improve domestic pool safety and water safety education. The Ministers agreed that water safety is a national priority and the Commonwealth Government will work with peak water safety groups and each jurisdiction to develop water safety principles.

Ministers also discussed the significant growth in combat sports and the diversity in their regulation across the States and Territories. A more consistent national approach to regulating these sports will be explored with a view to improving their integrity and safety. The Ministers tasked the Committee of Australian Sport and Recreation Officials to prepare a report in consultation with the various combat sport codes by the end of November 2012 on areas that would benefit from having a nationally consistent approach.

States including New South Wales Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia have legislation in relation to regulating combat sports, while other States such as Tasmania and Queensland have no legislation, and the Australian Capital Territory takes an administrative approach to regulating the industry. New South Wales believes there is value in having a more consistent national approach to regulating combat sports and for this reason I am pleased to say that New South Wales will be taking the lead role in chairing a States and Territories working party to look at developing a national approach to improving integrity and safety across these sports. New South Wales will continue to work in the areas of cost of participation in sport and a

consistent approach to combat sports regulation. We will report back to the next meeting of sport and recreation Ministers in November.

CHAIR: Minister, can you provide an update on how Sydney Olympic Park will support this State's events industry during the closure of the Darling Harbour exhibition facilities?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: Sydney Olympic Park is best known as a place for major events, as we all know. Most people think of it as the home for the Sydney Royal Easter Show or perhaps major concerts at Allphones Arena or even football and cricket these days at ANZ Stadium. What is not well known is the fact that 6,000 or so events have been held at the park over the last 12 months. More than 2,800 were business events, many of which are conferences and exhibitions attracting over 700,000 visitors.

Sydney Olympic Park is one of Sydney's two major conference and exhibition venues. The other is the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour. With the closure of that facility in 2013 for several years to allow its much-needed upgrade, the hosting of major conventions and exhibitions will fall on other venues, with the park shouldering the majority of that burden. The park is well situated to do so. It hosts the nation's biggest annual event—the Royal Easter Show—which attracts around 900,000 people each year and generates half a billion dollars of economic activity for the State.

The Sydney showground precinct is capable of hosting the largest exhibitions. In September last year it played host to the Asia-Pacific's International Mining Exhibition, which is Australia's largest ever trade show. It is one of the world's top mining exhibitions spreading over 11 venues within the showground precinct, equating to more than 50,000 square metres of exhibition space. That exhibition was such a massive success it will now be held every two years and is booked for 2013 and beyond.

As you can imagine if the park can handle an exhibition like that—this included huge mining machinery weighing hundreds of tonnes—other events present few difficulties. Some of the major upcoming conferences and exhibitions that have been booked at the park include the Asia Oceania Camping Congress in October 2013, the Association of Consultants in Access Australia in November 2013, the Rotary International Convention in June 2014, the Australian International Motor Show which will be held here in 2014 and again in 2016, the Visual Impact Image Expo, the world conference of the International Scout and Guide Fellowship in September 2014, the World Parks Congress in November 2014, the International Rotary Convention in 2014 and various other major events.

Those are in addition to the current roster of exhibitions, conferences and trade shows that already call the park home. They cover a diverse range of events from the Pregnancy Babies and Children's Expo to Better Homes and Garden LIVE event. While the showground precinct is the heart of the park's convention and exhibition capabilities it is not the only venue available. In fact, the park boasts over 100 spaces for events, conferences and exhibitions with a space for every size event. People think of ANZ Stadium as the site for sporting and entertainment events and Allphones Arena as a site for concerts and sporting events but both have a major role to play in hosting competitions and exhibitions as well. For example, Allphones Arena was the site for the 2011 Amway China Leadership Seminar, one of the largest international conferences ever held in Sydney with over 8,000 foreign delegates. It has also played host to the annual Hillsong church national conference, which attracts tens of thousands of attendees over multiple days.

The ANZ Stadium is a popular venue for business events, combining conference spaces and facilities with the opportunity to hold receptions and functions on the playing field—I have attended some of those—which offer a completely different experience. The park's smaller venues are in demand to support conferences and exhibitions either directly as the host venue or supporting the venue. In 2013 the Asia Oceania Camping Congress will be held at the park. Delegates will stay at the park's hotels, they will attend the conference at the Novotel hotel and the conference dinner for over 400 delegates will be held at the WatervieW restaurant in Bicentennial Park. It is an integrated approach with accommodation, venues and dining all located within the one precinct that makes the park attractive to organisers.

The park now boasts four hotels: the Pullman, Novotel, Ibis and Ibis Budget plus a serviced apartment complex due for completion soon. This will provide accommodation to meet the needs of not only the park's visitors but also visitors to the greater Western Sydney area. There are over 10,000 car spaces available for event attendees plus public transport options. It has everything that event organisers could wish for.

The decision to upgrade the convention and exhibition centre at Darling Harbour will take one of Sydney's major event venues out of service for some three years. Fortunately, due to the presence of Sydney Olympic Park and its diverse range of versatile venues, the Government is confident that Sydney will continue to attract new major event business. Together with a range of other alternative venues elsewhere throughout Sydney, events of all sizes will continue to call Sydney home.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Minister, could you please update the Committee on the Tackling Violence program?

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I am happy to do that; it is a fantastic program.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Hear! Hear!

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: I hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's voice in the background and I have to say by way of background—

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: You did not.

Mr GRAHAM ANNESLEY: By way of prefacing my remarks about this program, when I became the Minister I was approached by the Hon. Linda Burney, who was very supportive of the continuation of this particular program. When I found out more about it and saw it in operation, I fully concurred that it is a valuable program. We are very happy to continue supporting it. It is an anti-domestic violence education and prevention program which uses sport, in particular rugby league, to deliver a powerful message to regional and rural areas of New South Wales. It is delivered through 22 regional rugby league clubs in 18 regional communities across the State.

In 2012-13 the Government has allocated \$600,000 to the program. For the past several years the Commonwealth has provided annual funding of \$200,000 for the program and is expected to do so again in 2012-13. Treasury has been requested to approve the rollover of \$200,000 from 2011-12, bringing the total funding to \$1 million for the current financial year. In 2012 over 900 players and officials signed the Tackling Violence Code of Conduct, which includes a range of penalties for any player found guilty of a domestic violence offence. At the conclusion of the season nine players across the 18 clubs had been stood down from playing for breaches of the code of conduct.

All clubs, together with over 500 players and officials, 25 high schools and over 500 students have participated in domestic violence workshops. This is delivered by the Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Women's Corporation with the assistance of the Tackling Violence ambassadors David Peachey, Nathan Blacklock and Ronald Prince. There were 11 community service announcements featuring the clubs delivering the anti-domestic violence messages. They were broadcast on television in conjunction with the national rugby league programming on regional commercial television.

In addition commercials were also broadcast during rugby league semifinal games in Sydney, Melbourne, Townsville and Canberra. The Australian Rugby League Commission provided free tickets to the games for the participating clubs. In March 2012 the Change Your Ways DVD was launched at Rugby League Central. I was happy to be there for that launch. It featured men speaking about their experiences of domestic violence. Their life experiences are also used in the tackling violence education workshops that are conducted throughout New South Wales and they are considered to be an invaluable component of the program.

In July 2012 the Australian Rugby League Commission was significantly, I think, named the governing body of the year at the International Beyond Sport Federation awards for its work in creating a positive social change. The Tackling Violence Program was included in the award and obviously played a significant role. The targeting of regional communities corresponds to data showing that 19 out of the top 20 local government areas for domestic assault are in regional New South Wales—something that we obviously need to continue to work on. The domestic assault rate in the top five local government areas is between three and 10 times the State average, and the Tackling Violence Program has four football clubs in those top five local government areas. The broadcasting campaign featured football clubs delivering anti-violence messages reaching all of the local government areas in the top 20. The 2012 clubs involved in the program included teams from Dubbo, Tingha, Moree, Warren, Macksville, Northern Rivers, Wilcannia, Menindee, Broken Hill, Walgett, Toronto near Newcastle, Wellington, Bourke, Narrabri, Orange and Armidale.

I am very happy to confirm that New South Wales has committed \$600,000 in funding for the Tackling Violence Program in the financial year 2013-14 going forward. It is my understanding that the Commonwealth funding of \$200,000 is at this stage only confirmed for 2012 and we are hoping that will also be committed to support the program in 2013-14. I remain very confident that this exceptionally proactive social program will again be repeated and will receive Commonwealth support. In answer to an earlier question about my June press release, I advise that the money mentioned in that press release also includes funding to upgrade the Jindabyne Sport and Recreation Centre with water reticulation and sewerage systems and to allow improvements at the Sydney International Regatta Centre which will host the 2013 World Rowing Cup.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.
