

CORRECTED TRANSCRIPT

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into budget estimates 2005–06

Melbourne — 8 June 2005

Members

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Witnesses

Mr J. Madden, Minister for Sport and Recreation;

Mr T. Healy, acting secretary;

Mr P. Hertan, executive director, Sport and Recreation Victoria; and

Mr S. Gregory, chief finance officer, Department for Victorian Communities.

The CHAIR — I declare open the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing on the budget estimates for the portfolios of sport and recreation and the Commonwealth Games. I welcome the Honourable Justin Madden, Minister for Sport and Recreation; Mr Terry Healy, acting secretary; Mr Peter Hertan, executive director, Sport and Recreation Victoria; and Mr Stephen Gregory, chief finance officer, Department for Victorian Communities, departmental officers, members of the public and the media.

All evidence taken by this committee is taken under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act and is protected from judicial review. However, any comments made outside the precincts of the hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege. All evidence given today is being recorded. Witnesses will be provided with proof versions of the transcript early next week. In accordance with the guidelines for public hearings, I remind the public that they cannot participate in the committee's proceedings. Officers of the PAEC secretariat are able to approach PAEC members. Departmental officers, as requested by the minister or his chief of staff, can approach the table during the hearing. Members of the media are requested to observe the guidelines for filming or recording proceedings in the Legislative Council committee room.

Before I call on the minister to give a brief presentation on the more complex financial and performance information that relates to the budget estimates for the sport and recreation portfolio, I ask that all mobile phones be turned off and pagers be put to silent. I hand-over to you, Minister, for your presentation, for which you have a maximum of 10 minutes, so you have about another 8 on this.

Overheads shown.

Mr MADDEN — Thank you very much, Chair. I thought I would just give a brief introduction in relation to the sport and recreation portfolio. You can see that this sets out the policy context in relation to where sport and recreation fits in terms of Growing Victoria Together and the government's framework for A Fairer Victoria, particularly for communities that encourage participation, a government that is easier to work with and communities that gain lasting benefits from the Commonwealth Games. It is about community building in many ways over and above what we already know about sport and recreation.

There were a number of key achievements in the last financial year, particularly in major projects, facilities and events. We delivered the 2005 summer Deaflympics, and that had a fantastic result all around. I am happy to answer more detailed questions in relation to that throughout the proceedings. I know we are limited for time on the sport and recreation portfolio, which is a bit of disappointment — I would have liked to have spoken for a lot longer in terms of sport and recreation, because there have been some great outcomes. There was the successful redevelopment of Kardinia Park; we saw that opened recently by the Premier with the first game of the season down at Geelong's home ground on 1 May. The Country Grounds Football Assistance Program was a \$1 million development for grassroots sport and recreation facilities to build and strengthen communities throughout Victoria, particularly in the drought-affected areas. There was also the ongoing support of suburban and regional facilities, which is often the trademark of sport and recreation initiatives.

As well as that, in community sport and recreation there was Healthy and Active Victoria — the Go for your Life campaign. We have been keen to get people active, to get them involved and engaged in active participation, whether it be low-level uncompetitive participation or whether it be as volunteers. There was also elite athlete development. We have been particularly successful at that end as well through appreciating that you only get that elite athlete development if you have successful investment at a grassroots level. That success was reflected at the Athens Olympic Games at which Victoria produced 108 athletes of the Australian Olympic team, and our local athletes contributed to 17 of the 49 medals. So that is a pretty good result.

We have been involved in opening the fourth regional sports academy in Warrnambool, and that backs onto the other three academies at Bendigo, Ballarat and Gippsland. We also saw the Victorian Institute of Sport move to its new headquarters at what was formally known as the Glasshouse down at the Melbourne Olympic Park precinct. We are supporting people from diverse backgrounds in order to assist them in accessing sport and recreation. We know they are underrepresented in terms of the general turnout. Throughout the course of the year I made a ministerial statement, *A Focus on Community Sport and Recreation* — that was in September of last year.

In terms of appropriation, if we look at the budget appropriations we see that the appropriation for the 2004–05 year was \$95.5 million, and the appropriation for the 2005–06 year was \$55 million. So there is a fair bit of difference in that, but basically it relates to the final payment of \$38.5 million for the MCG redevelopment which

was in the appropriations for the 2004–05 year, and the rest was relative to the cash flow in relation to those two years.

Before we go on to the next slide, from the 2005–06 appropriation we want to see a number of initiatives pursued. There is \$3.1 million for the first instalment of the government's commitment of \$6 million for the establishment of a home for rectangular sports; \$4.5 million as part of the government's \$10 million commitment to develop the National Ice Sports Centre; \$9.5 million of funding for ongoing sport and recreation commitments to programs involving Regional Sports Assemblies, the State Sporting Association, the Victorian Institute of Sport, sports sector planning and development projects and state facility programs. Then there is the commitment across a number of events, including the Australian Formula One Grand Prix, the employment costs of about \$5.3 million for the department and \$2.8 million in terms of operating expenses. In terms of other priorities for 2005–06, we are also ensuring that from the Commonwealth Games there is a lasting legacy for all Victorians. That is happening in a number of areas, but in particular there is a focus on 20 November when we will have right across Victoria Warming up for the Games Day, when we will be encouraging local communities to get particularly active and engage in a whole range of initiatives and activities. We look forward to local members and members of the committee involving themselves in those activities too. Basically we try to make communities more active. That is part of the Healthy and Active Victoria strategy, or what is known more broadly as the Go for your Life campaign. As well as that we are contributing support for upgrading country football and netball facilities as a response to the inquiry into country football.

There are a number of other priorities — I will try to move through these pretty quickly because I know we are limited for time. Improving sport and recreation facilities — there is a commitment to Albert Park; additional funds for the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre; a recommitment to the Whitten Oval redevelopment, which has been announced recently; and the Melbourne Olympic Park stage 1 redevelopment, as we mentioned before, in relation to a rectangular pitch stadium. There are also target groups, with support for people from diverse backgrounds, including the Access for All Abilities program; support for volunteers in the sport and recreation sector; the anticipated release of Sport and Recreation Victoria's strategic plan 2005–10; and the review of legislation to comply with anti-doping codes around the world.

We are also supporting major events. This year we will see the ICC Super Series, the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, Rescue 2006 — World Lifesaving Championships and the Volvo Ocean Race Stopover. The World Swimming Championships requires planning. There will also be a review of the crowd control legislation; planning for the State Volleyball Centre and the National Ice Sports Centre; a review of the Community Facilities Funding program; the Better Facilities — Stronger Communities conference in August this year; a commencement of works on the Outdoor Recreation Centre; and the establishment of the AFL Multicultural Project.

There are a number of other initiatives, including women's participation initiatives. These involve target groups, because we are finding that whilst we have very high participation levels — well and truly on the increase over and above what is the rate nationally — there are target groups where we see a little bit of underperformance in those areas. Hence there will be targeted initiatives in women's participation initiatives and the Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program. Then there is assisting the sport and recreation sector. We are trying to build better links between the philanthropic sector and the sporting communities with a conference. There are also insurance and risk-management initiatives. That basically completes the overview.

There are a number of areas there. I am always a bit disappointed that we do not give sport and recreation more time at these PAEC estimates hearings, because it is a good news portfolio. It brings me a lot of joy to be out there to be making great announcements for the community, and I know that it often validates and reflects the tremendous work our community groups do. The volunteer sector in particular is heavily involved in the sport and recreation sector. One of the great things about the portfolio is that it really does validate what the community does. Rather than the government delivering it per se, as we might in a number of portfolios, we actually validate what the community does, and I would like to be able to talk at great length on it.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — We would be happy to extend the hearing if you were happy to extend it, Minister.

Mr MADDEN — In future years I would always be happy to.

The CHAIR — Minister, I have already made a note to give more time for sport and recreation, and if the committee so agrees that will be taken into consideration. Also the Commonwealth Games will have been completed, so there will not be as much in your portfolio.

Mr MADDEN — There will be a bit more room, won't there?

The CHAIR — Minister, I want to take you to the Go for Your Life physical activity program that is a new measure in the 2005–06 budget. As I read it, we are looking at about \$10 million in funding on a range of activities. Could you tell us something of that program: the media campaign, the funding allocated to it and how you are going to measure effectiveness?

Mr MADDEN — The Go for Your Life campaign is really a communications initiative and also has a number of targeted strategic interventions, if you would want to describe them as that, to try and get the community actively engaged in physical activity and community participation. It is a bit of a challenge, because we have an ageing population. We have target groups who are often underrepresented, and those targeted initiatives are aimed — and I will speak in some detail on those.

The CHAIR — In 4 minutes.

Mr MADDEN — Yes. In particular we have got fantastic facilities and, as I mentioned, organisational structures and infrastructure across the community. It is really about trying to engage people in those, hence the need for a substantial communications campaign. That relates to the Healthy and Active Victoria strategy. We are doing that in conjunction with the health minister and also with the minister for senior Victorians. Basically it is about trying to raise awareness about the benefits and opportunities of being healthy and more active. The campaign was launched in 2004, and we have undertaken two waves of evaluation to measure and monitor the awareness of the campaign and the recall of the key messages. I understand 46 per cent of Victorians surveyed could spontaneously recall seeing the advertising encouraging a healthy and active life, which is certainly a good response. Of those who could spontaneously recall the advertising, 26 per cent could directly attribute this to the Go for Your Life campaign, so that is pretty good recall and good prompting. Certainly what we have seen come from that is not only the communications campaign; we have seen television advertising, newspaper advertisements and billboards in various places, such as on trams and along the freeways. It is about trying to achieve a number of significant outcomes: reducing levels of obesity and diabetes; getting people more involved in physical activity; and, as I mentioned before, getting people more socially active in their communities.

I have already announced a number of targeted programs from that. Part of that is the \$400 000 to support the fun'n'healthy in Moreland project. That is a groundbreaking study into the health and wellbeing of primary school students, where they have a control group and then another group, so that they will be able to measure and monitor that to also see what sort of interventions work and what strategies work at school age, because there is a lot of concern about obesity levels. There is a grant of \$540 000 to RecLink to increase the involvement in physical activity of people of all ages experiencing disadvantage in Victoria. That is a fantastic community model. Often the people involved in RecLink have been subject to significant disadvantage, and this is a great way to either actually link them to community support themselves or to bring them together in a sense of community.

There is funding of \$200 000 over four years to VicFit to provide the physical activity infoline, so that people can access that information readily and quickly and be directed to the right location. Then there is \$1 million in physical activity grants, which will encourage Victorians to get off the couch and get involved in physical activity. As well as that there is more than \$300 000 in Go for Your Life community walking grants. That is also linked in and dovetailed with a number of other initiatives in relation to information and materials provision, program monitoring and evaluation. Warming-up-for-the-Games Day is also linked into that, and also the program administration. The money seems to be working very well, and we are very pleased that not only the recall but those targeted groups, targeted interventions, will see increased participation over a number of years in that area.

The CHAIR — In order to get through more questions, I notice you were referring to the effectiveness of the campaign and how it was being measured.

Mr MADDEN — Yes.

The CHAIR — Perhaps you could take those points on notice and forward them to us later.

Mr MADDEN — That sort of detail?

The CHAIR — That would be helpful. If you ran through each of their effectiveness measurements we would be here all afternoon.

Mr CLARK — Minister, my question relates to the proposals for the working-with-children laws, which of course are not being carried by your portfolio but potentially would have a very significant impact on sport and recreation because of the requirement for police checks on volunteers who in many circumstances are involved with sport and recreational activities. What I want to ask is: what assessment is your portfolio doing of the potential impact of those laws on volunteers and on sport and recreation generally; and what measures, if any, are you proposing to try to make sure that any such laws do not have a counterproductive effect and in fact undermine the vibrancy and participation in sport and recreation in Victoria?

Mr MADDEN — Thanks very much for that, Mr Clark, because it is a very handy question. It is one of those issues that is quite complex. From a number of years ago in an array of discussions with many stakeholders across the sporting fraternity, I know they are very keen to tackle this serious issue, as we are. They are very committed to this. Whilst we have had an exposure bill out there, a draft exposure bill for consultation — and no doubt that has raised a fair degree of discussion amongst many stakeholders — from the very outset, even prior to the introduction of that legislation into the community, sporting groups have been very conscious that this is an issue that needs to be tackled and tackled in a very forthright way so that everybody in the sector — families, mums and dads and kids — can have confidence in it. We know what extraordinary things sport does for the community, but it is particularly important that either the question mark over this issue or the implementation of any legislation does not undermine that confidence or the ability particularly of volunteers to administer their sporting associations, given the enormity of demand on those volunteers anyway.

That was released as a discussion paper, and we have had significant public comment. Whilst I have not been dealing directly with the bill, because it sits with the Attorney-General and the justice department, I have had significant contribution from and consultation with VicSport, and it has reflected significant input from all its membership organisations. Their concerns have been in particular the cost of the implementation and where that cost should be borne. I know the Premier recently announced that there would not be an additional cost on the volunteer sector in relation to this issue, and I understand the government would pay for that cost. That has taken a lot of the angst out of the debate, because much of the angst was not so much based on the checks. It was based more so on where the cost or the burden would lie. But that does not mean that there is still not a lot of work to do in relation to the way in which that is implemented. We are consulting with sporting groups and also having input into the Attorney-General's office and justice to make sure that, whatever form the legislation does take, the importance of sport and recreation is not undermined, the volunteer sector is not undermined and that we can ensure that those issues raised, not only broadly in relation to the legislation but also on the implementation — particularly because the devil is in the detail — do not add additional financial or administrative burdens on largely those volunteer organisations. So we are having input, and we are very conscious of that, but I know, having spoken to many of the sporting organisations since that announcement by the Premier, that that sits more comfortably with them, but they are still interested in what the detail will show once the legislation goes through Parliament and regulations or the details are rolled out.

Mr MERLINO — Minister, I refer you to page 242 of budget paper 3, where it states that one of the aims of the sport and recreation development output measures is:

... to secure positive, lasting economic, social, and environmental legacies by capitalising on major sporting events.

Could you provide an update to the committee on the implementation of the Sports Event Ticketing (Fair Access) Act 2002 with regard to AFL Grand Final events.

Mr MADDEN — This is a particularly good news story in terms of one of the initiatives that we have rolled out in the portfolio. We have got a fantastic reputation for sport in this state, we have got a fantastic reputation in major events, and in many ways ours is world best practice when it comes to the delivery of sport, not only at a community-based level but at an event level. One of the ways to ensure that we get that continued quality has been the introduction of the Sports Event Ticketing (Fair Access) Act. I know there was a little bit of consternation about that initially, but what we have seen is a significant impact on increasing accountability in the provision of tickets particularly to AFL Grand Final games and a decrease in illegal ticket scalping. The Sports Event Ticketing (Fair Access) Act has been used predominantly for the last three grand finals and will also be used,

and is being used currently, in relation to the Commonwealth Games, because that is also a designated event. Whilst it was not without a little bit of scepticism on the part of some publicly, what is important is it required a greater degree of transparency and accountability and, for example, the public display of proposed final ticket allocation by the AFL, AFL clubs and other authorised on-sellers including the MCC and the Medallion Club via their respective web sites.

Consumer Affairs Victoria was engaged to monitor and review the compliance of the AFL's 2004 ticket scheme to the legislation, and this review involved gathering records from the AFL, Ticketmaster7, four AFL clubs and several commercial ticket distributors, and analysing the relevant data. That was a fairly substantial task. Then it was reviewed, and what we have seen is the AFL has reported a significant decrease, in particular in relation to complaints about ticket distribution, and CAV noted a marked decrease in illegal newspaper and Internet ticket sales. I think there is also an appreciation from the AFL's point of view that this is a fairly substantial asset. The grand final ticket sales are one of the key sources of revenue for the AFL, and now they do know exactly where those tickets go. While they may have suspected where they went previously, they do know where they go now, and that allows them to target their own policy, their own strategic direction, in relation to these things. I understand that it is likely that there may be a follow-up currently being undertaken by CAV and the police in relation to ticket-sellers. Whilst I do not have the detail on that, I think that also indicates that we are following through and the police are following through in relation to that legislation.

The CHAIR — When you say CAV — —

Mr MADDEN — Consumers Affairs Victoria.

The CHAIR — Yes. We have got the minister tomorrow. That might be helpful. Mr Clark, a follow-up question.

Mr CLARK — Is there any data you can provide to the committee either now or on notice about whether there have been changes in the proportions of tickets being allocated to different types of purchaser since the introduction of this legislation — for example, differences between the proportions going to the public or to club members versus those that are being allocated for corporate sponsorship or travel packages et cetera?

Mr MADDEN — I think what is crucial about this, Mr Clark, is we have seen an acknowledgment by the AFL of where the tickets actually go, because the suspicions were and anecdotally what had been presented to us was that some of the clubs were taking the tickets that were allocated to the clubs, but they were using them as currency, in a sense, for a whole range of things, so they were not necessarily flowing through to their allocated membership base. That could neither be confirmed nor denied, but we did have a fairly substantial amount of anecdotal evidence in relation to that. What we have now seen is that if that were the practice, then we understand that it is no longer the case. They have to declare where those tickets go and they have to declare to their members on the web site where those ticket allocations are, so there is no obscuring where those tickets go. What we do now have is significant accountability and transparency, and the transparency has presented, in a sense, more accountability. We believe the outcome has been basically a guarantee that the clubs do not participate in unsolicited or unlicensed on-selling of tickets, and really it is sort of a control mechanism as to who can sell those. So I am not sure if we have any hard and fast data — —

Mr CLARK — If you have any data, perhaps you could let us have it.

Mr MADDEN — But I do know that we have data on where the tickets go, so we are certainly happy to provide you with where the tickets now go under the way in which the AFL publishes its ticketing distribution.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — Minister, I would just like some clarity on your slide presentation on a couple of points. Firstly, you refer to \$3 million for the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre funded through this output group. Could you tell us if that is new money — that is, in addition to the \$50 million for the redevelopment for the Commonwealth Games — and secondly, is that \$3 million included in the Commonwealth Games global budget? Also, you mentioned that the difference between this year and last year in the amount appropriated was essentially the second payment for the MCG redevelopment, which is a Commonwealth Games expense item. Are there other Commonwealth Games expense items in the sport output group as distinct from the Commonwealth Games output group and, if so, can you provide us with details?

Mr MADDEN — There are two questions there. In relation to the \$3 million for the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, that is not related to the Commonwealth Games per se. This is really related to the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, so it is not about the Commonwealth Games; it is really about the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre long term, not at games time or preparation for the games. It is really about overcoming any long-term impact in terms of the business operation on the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre in a number of areas. It is worth appreciating that throughout the course of construction and throughout the delivery of the Commonwealth Games there are probably additional works over and above the new works that the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre might want to have completed or there might be other elements of their business case that they might want to expand upon or develop, and really this relates very much to those areas, not Commonwealth Games areas. For example, they are developing a wellness centre and also a hydrotherapy pool. The hydrotherapy pool is part of the Commonwealth Games project, although it is not needed for the Commonwealth Games, and it is within the Commonwealth Games budget. But they have to ensure that after the Commonwealth Games their patrons, their normal clientele, feel that it has been worthwhile over and above the facilities. They have to think about ways to market the facility differently and also where they need to invest to assist their revenue projections. So it is not so much infrastructure, but an array of areas right across their management structure.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — It is new money on top of the \$50 million for the — —

Mr MADDEN — It is separate from the Commonwealth Games money. I am happy to talk in more detail about the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre and I am eager to in relation to the Commonwealth Games and money associated with the Commonwealth Games, but I just reinforce this: it is not Commonwealth Games money and it is not directly related to the Commonwealth Games. It is also worth appreciating that there are a number of things we have done through sport and recreation in terms of your second question. You may want to repeat it.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — Are there any other areas within your \$55 million appropriation? Is any of that money going to Commonwealth Games-related activities; and will that be accounted for it in the Commonwealth Games global budget?

Mr MADDEN — There are a couple of things probably worth appreciating. There are elements of the Darebin International Sports Centre that we are developing, because we are developing a state lawn bowls centre, state training velodrome and state soccer centre. They are all being developed in conjunction with that. There is a contribution in the order of about \$17 million — I would have to confirm that — but about \$17 million to that whole facility. Predominantly that is not coming off the Commonwealth Games budget because it is a state centre. Whilst it is being used at Commonwealth Games time, the training velodrome is not necessarily for the Commonwealth Games, soccer is not part of the Commonwealth Games and whilst the lawn bowls is, we are basically building the centre for the future for lawn bowls in particular. So there is a slight difference, but it is worth acknowledging that. There are no direct funds out of that 55 which go into the Commonwealth Games budget per se. It is worth reinforcing that. Sport and recreation will be involved in some of the community activities in and around the games. Basically with the warming up for the games day, which is on 20 November, strategically whilst it is branded as a Commonwealth Games community initiative, it is as much about the Go for your Life campaign as it is about the games. So there are two lots of badging or branding. Predominantly there is a health benefit or an activity benefit that might be funded out of sport and recreation, but there is no direct relationship between the sport and recreation budget and the Commonwealth Games budget.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — If we took your previous criteria about being Commonwealth Games-related that we would not be doing it if we did not have the Commonwealth Games, then obviously you would not be doing a warming up for the games day if we did not have the games. Should that not be included in the global budget?

Mr MADDEN — I would say that in fact even if we were not having the Commonwealth Games we would still be having the warming up day because it is related to the Go for your Life campaign. There are two areas worth appreciating taking place here: big time Commonwealth Games, but also we are trying to increase physical activity and participation. This is really a way of getting people enthusiastic about physical activity and the health benefits that come from being active and engaging in community particularly at the local level. It is also about getting people inspired by the games. There is a connection, but we would probably do it without the games anyway because we are funding that in the Go for your Life campaign. So two things are happening. One is we need to increase levels of participation and activity in the community because of diabetes, obesity and the ageing

participation population not participating or actively engaging in the community. With the Commonwealth Games we are really trying to encourage people to do these things. The Commonwealth Games is a good catalyst for these things, but it is not necessarily the reason for having the event.

Ms ROMANES — On page 242 of budget paper 3 the sport and recreation sector development outputs provide funding to develop and extend sport and recreation opportunities through improved facilities throughout Victoria. What level of financial support has the government provided to country football and netball to date?

Mr MADDEN — It is worth appreciating that in relation to country football and netball, we allocated to one of the parliamentary committees terms of reference related to an investigation into country football. While that was the heading of it, we were also very concerned about the likes of netball in the country. It was probably iconic of maybe the status of development or lack thereof in regional Victoria. One of the things that came to light very quickly, not only because of the weather conditions but in terms of our inquiry into country football, was the impact of the drought and what the drought was doing to local community sporting organisations. Hence we were able to provide through the government funding to basically football and netball organisations to improve the water usage on their restricted facilities. We have seen some great outcomes in relation to that. But we have also invested over a long period of time — and that was reflected in that parliamentary inquiry — over \$10 million through the community facility funding program to the development of community football facilities. Of this, 71 per cent or over \$7 million was provided towards country-based football facility projects.

A good example is the Wedderburn sports club. I do not know if members of the committee have been to Wedderburn in recent years, but in 2003 the government provided \$50 000 towards a \$91 000 upgrade from the community facility funding program. Loddon shire contributed \$5000 to that. The junior football, netball and hockey clubs and the Donaldson Park committee of management raised \$37 000, which is pretty substantial in a small community like Wedderburn. They contributed an additional \$14 000 in labour representing nearly 1500 hours towards the painting, tiling, concreting and cleaning up. So there was tremendous support from the club, the members and a substantial community benefit. That really reflects the fact that these clubs are more than just sports clubs or footy clubs. They really are particularly important.

The CHAIR — Minister, that is helpful. We do not need many more examples.

Mr MADDEN — Right, that was just one example. It is handy. I know we often talk about figures, Chair, but, as I mentioned, we have 89 ground upgrades through the \$1 million grant in relation to the country grounds assistance program and as well we have recently announced in response to the parliamentary committee's recommendations in relation to country football a \$4.5 million package. That is made up of \$2 million towards upgrading country football and netball facilities. That is matched by the AFL, so it is great to have a partnership arrangement here. And \$215 000 also matched by the AFL toward supporting the recruitment, training and retention of umpires, coaches and other officials, and \$90 000 towards a study into turf sports ground conditions and user safety guidelines. In terms of overall support for country football initiated by the inquiry but also based on the outcomes of that inquiry, it shows that we recognise the substantial impact those sorts of sports organisations have, but also how they reflect those communities. We do have a fairly substantial number of players. Country football is really healthy, but in some places where they have a population decline, of course, they have a few difficulties. It was a great way to consolidate many suspicions out there in the community. I have been out to country Victoria and everyone had a different theory or opinion so it was a great way to bring that together, also a great way for the sports like netball and football to advocate on their behalf. I think the outcomes are fairly substantial. It is also an indicator as to where we can invest in the future.

The CHAIR — Could you take on notice the breakdown between football and netball? It would not be a PAEC hearing without me asking that question.

Mr MADDEN — Yes. Without prolonging the answer, it is worth noting that the success stories we have seen in country Victoria in particular are where the football and netball competitions work hand-in-hand to encourage family-friendly clubs. We are trying to support that not only with this sort of funding but across all facilities to try and bring that together.

The CHAIR — I appreciate that in many instances the netball and football clubs are basically the same organisation and it would be difficult for the department to go to that level of breakdown, but where there is clarity about whether it is football or netball, that would be useful for the committee.

Mr MADDEN — You are right about the conditions for netballers, they are a long way behind in many communities and this is also a chance to try to encourage councils and communities.

The CHAIR — I am also encouraging WorkCover and TAC along the same lines.

Mr CLARK — My question relates to the Darebin lawn bowl centre which I gather from your previous answer is partly the responsibility of sport and recreation and partly, Commonwealth Games. I understand that that project has struck some significant difficulties in recent times and I gather that is, in short, because the grass has died on the bowls arena; and a major bowls competition had to be relocated to Yarraville as a result of that. Can you tell the committee exactly what has gone wrong with that centre and how much the problems that have occurred have ended up costing?

Mr MADDEN — Thanks for that question, Mr Clark. The State Lawn Bowls Centre is a tremendous initiative because we have brought together a number of sports under the one banner of the Darebin International Sports Centre and what we have seen there is, as I mentioned before, the velodrome developed — a training velodrome — and as well as being a training velodrome, it also allows for smaller-scale cycling events because the Vodafone Arena, whilst it seats a reasonable crowd, is not a cheap venue to put an event in like cycling because you have got to rearrange or reconfigure the facility. This allows for them to have up to about 800 or 1000 people at a cycling event, so that positions it well for the vast majority of cycling events other than the big international ones that they might have at the velodrome. The State Soccer Centre is also there with a number of pitches and we are, as part of that, also having the administrative base of the Victorian Soccer Federation located there and we have the State Lawn Bowl Centre, that you have mentioned, there.

There were some difficulties associated with the installation of the bowling greens, they did not take the way in which they should have and whilst I am no technical expert in relation to the installation of a lawn bowls green, there is conjecture as to why the lawn bowls green did not take in the way that it should have and why it did not grow uniformly right across the site. That is also the point of discussion throughout the number of organisations delivering at the moment in order to see if there is a legitimate reason as to why that occurred. But what we have indicated in relation to it is that we have got a working party together to oversee what is the most appropriate technical advice to deliver the lawn bowls green given that there are a range of theories within the greenkeepers' fraternity about the best way to maintain and develop a new bowling green. We have established a number of representatives on that technical panel and the technical director, Tony Ware who is the curator at the MCG, has been appointed to provide not only the expert advice but also to manage that expert advice given that there is a different array of opinions as to how you manage these greens and what is the best way to introduce a new green.

In relation to the facility itself, there has been an additional cost to that facility. That cost is being shared, as the development of the facility is being shared, between a number of parties, predominantly the City of Darebin, the Office of Commonwealth Games Coordination, Sport and Recreation Victoria, and Melbourne 2006 — they are all making a financial contribution to the replacement greens that I understand have taken very well given that we have got a relatively warm winter, I am also informed that they are growing well and they will be well and truly established before the end of this year, given that we have got such a warm winter. The cost of that is likely to be in the order of, I understand, about \$300 000 for the upgrade of that lawn bowls green, in that order and that is broken down in terms of the contributions from each of those respective parties.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. Could I place on record the committee's appreciation to those people from Sport and Recreation Victoria who are leaving us now. I thank those in attendance as potential witnesses and those from the department who have prepared for today.

Mr MADDEN — Chair, I meant to give this out just as I talked about it, but I have for each member of the committee an information pack on Go for Your Life. It is probably worth taking it back to your electorate offices if you do not already have them.

Witnesses withdrew.