

CORRECTED VERSION

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into budget estimates 2011–12

Melbourne — 16 May 2011

Members

Mr N. Angus

Mr P. Davis

Ms J. Hennessy

Mr D. Morris

Mr D. O'Brien

Mr M. Pakula

Mr R. Scott

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Witnesses

Mr H. Delahunty, Minister for Sport and Recreation,

Mr Y. Blacher, Secretary,

Mr G. Forck, Chief Finance Officer,

Dr P. Hertan, Deputy Secretary, Sport and Recreation Victoria, and

Mr J. Montgomery, Director, Community Sport and Recreation, Department of Planning and Community Development.

The CHAIR — I declare open the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing on the 2011–12 budget estimates for the portfolios of sport and recreation and veterans affairs. On behalf of the committee I welcome the Honourable Hugh Delahunty, MP, Minister for Sport and Recreation; Mr Yehudi Blacher, Secretary of the Department of Planning and Community Development; Mr Greg Forck, chief finance officer, Department of Planning and Community Development; Dr Peter Hertan, deputy secretary, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development; and Mr James Montgomery, director, community sport and recreation, Department of Planning and Community Development; as well as Mr Jason Calleia, project support officer, Department of Planning and Community Development, who will be operating the presentation only. Members of Parliament, departmental officers, members of the public and the media are also welcome.

In accordance with the guidelines for public hearings, I remind members of the public that they cannot participate in any way in the committee's proceedings. Only officers of the PAEC secretariat are to approach PAEC members. Departmental officers, as requested by the minister or his or her chief of staff, can approach the table during the hearing to provide information to the minister by leave of myself as Chair. Written communication to witnesses can only be provided via officers of the PAEC secretariat. Members of the media are also requested to observe the guidelines for filming or recording proceedings in the Legislative Council Committee Room, and no more than two TV cameras are allowed at any one time in the allocated spaces. I remind TV camera operators to remain focused only on the persons speaking and that panning of the public gallery, committee members and witnesses is strictly prohibited. I am also pleased to announce that these series of budget estimates hearings are being audiocast live on the Parliament's website.

All evidence taken by this committee is taken under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act, attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review. However, any comments made outside the precincts of the hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege. This committee had determined that there is no need for evidence to be sworn. However, witnesses are reminded that all questions must be answered in full and with accuracy and truthfulness. Any persons found to be giving false or misleading evidence may be in contempt of Parliament and subject to penalty.

All evidence given today is being recorded. Witnesses will be provided with proof versions of the transcript to be verified and returned within two working days of this hearing. Unverified transcripts and PowerPoint presentations will be placed on the committee's website immediately following receipt, to be replaced by the verified transcripts within 48 hours after the hearing.

Following a presentation by the minister, committee members will ask questions relating to the budget estimates. Generally the procedure will follow that relating to questions in the Legislative Assembly.

I now ask that all mobile telephones be turned off.

I now call on the minister to give a brief presentation of no more than 10 minutes on the more complex financial and performance information that relates to the budget estimates for the portfolio of sport and recreation.

Overheads shown.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Thank you, Chair. I thank also the members of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. I will start off by saying that the government recognises that sport and recreation helps to build strong and healthy communities in Victoria. It brings all sections of society together, provides health benefits and makes an important contribution to our economy.

The coalition's plan for sport and recreation has a number of key themes that are shaping the government's approach to sport and recreation. The government's highest priority in sport and recreation is to increase participation — to get more people more active more often. Encouraging community participation in sport and recreation strengthens communities and improves our wellbeing.

The government will support strategic programs to boost participation. We will support women's sport in a range of ways, including giving women greater say in developing programs and encouraging the appointment of women to more roles within the sector. Sport in schools is important to the government, and we will be encouraging this through partnerships between schools and local sport and recreation groups and through shared use of school facilities in addition to initiatives in the education portfolio.

We are so lucky in Victoria, with 450 000 adults volunteering in a variety of activities every year. These people give so much and they deserve a lot in return, starting with a thank you. The government will support community sport clubs through a range of initiatives, including resources to increase the skills of volunteers involved in coaching and administration.

Victorian athletes are not as well represented on national teams as they should be. The government will provide support to our athletes to maximise their potential. The government will place a high priority on the development of community-based sporting facilities in the suburbs of Melbourne and regional Victoria. Access to a range of sporting facilities is the key to getting more people more active more often, doing a greater range of activities and being healthier.

During the election we promised to fund a number of important community sport facilities around the state, and these commitments will be met through the funding of the Community Support Fund and the Regional Growth Fund. There has been a slow response to the increase of female participation in sport across the state in the past, and as a result many community sporting clubs have not been able to provide adequate change rooms and other facilities for women. The government will address this issue.

Geelong is a gateway to a fantastic area of Victoria and has great tourism events and business potential. Skilled Stadium is a key asset in realising this potential, and the government is committed to ensuring that it is one of the best regional sporting venues in Victoria.

Increased participation is one of the government's key priority for sport and recreation. We will require sporting bodies seeking assistance for new facilities or major events to deliver support for community or junior sporting programs.

The government recognises Victoria's outstanding record in relation to major sporting events and will maintain support for major events in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Cycling and walking trails are an outstanding resource from a number of perspectives, including recreation, physical activity, commuting and tourism, including employment in country towns. The government is committed to several key initiatives in this area. I have asked my department to work with other agencies to ensure that the state's bicycle strategy is extended to also include recreational cycling.

There has been a significant range of achievements in the sport and recreation portfolio in 2010–11. I recently announced over \$1 million worth of funding towards 19 projects to help redevelop and improve football and netball club and association facilities across Victoria through the latest round of the country football-netball program. This latest round of funding will assist a variety of projects, including \$60 000 towards installing a new netball court and floodlights at the Drysdale recreation reserve, \$100 000 to upgrade football ground lighting at Western Park recreation reserve in Warragul, and \$80 000 towards the Tony Clarke Reserve change rooms, extensions and modifications in the Macedon Ranges. The country football-netball program makes an enormous difference to country Victoria, where football and netball play a major role in community life in many country towns.

I have also launched this year two new resources that will assist clubs and councils in the development of community sporting facilities. The tennis facility planning guide was developed in partnership with Tennis Victoria and provides advice to communities about the development of best practice tennis facilities. The artificial grass guide for sport is the first comprehensive guide to the planning and development of artificial grass for various sports and will assist Victoria in continuing to be the leader in the development of high-quality and accessible sporting facilities.

State sporting associations have a key role in providing opportunities for people to participate in sport. As a group they face a diverse range of challenges, including promoting their sport and in some cases coping with the strong demand in participation numbers. I approved a new range of funding agreements with the SSAs. New agreements have been finalised with over 70 SSAs, totalling \$2 million. Funds are being provided to SSAs to run programs to attract more participants and to improve their operations.

There have also been achievements in relation to major and significant sporting events. Terrific annual events such as the Rip Curl Pro have continued, and I was privileged to be able to represent the government at this event. In addition, new major events have been secured, such as the 2015 Asian Cup. This will be conducted in

Victoria and other eastern states. More recently I announced an international friendly between the Socceroos and Serbia to be played at Docklands on 7 June.

I have approved a round of grants under the significant sporting events program. This program provides an opportunity for individuals and communities to experience sport and recreation in a different way. The program provides funding for a range of elite-level or regionally significant sporting events that have contributed strongly to Victoria's events landscape, building participation opportunities for communities and showcasing less prominent sports to a wider audience. Typically these national or international championships are for all age groups in locations across the state and in most cases are the top level of competition for their sport. The government provided additional funding of \$80 000 from the significant sporting events program to the Stawell Gift this year to add to the \$70 000 from RDV, taking the total funding and support for the 2011 Stawell Gift to \$150 000. The 2011 Stawell Gift was a tremendous event, and I was fortunate enough to be there. Another key regional event, the Melbourne to Warrnambool Cycling Classic, will be funded from the Regional Growth Fund.

I have already referred to the importance of Geelong as a regional centre and Skilled Stadium as Geelong's main stadium. The government has announced it will provide \$25 million in the state budget to support stage 3 of the redevelopment of Skilled Stadium, which will focus on the southern stands.

The government has also identified that additional funding is required to successfully complete the state athletics centre at Lakeside Oval and has announced that it will provide over \$15 million to meet the shortfall.

I now wish to outline the government's priorities for 2011–12 in the sport and recreation portfolio, focusing on the initiatives announced in the state budget. There are several budget initiatives that are designed to advance the government's priority of increasing participation in sport and recreation and getting more people more active more often. These initiatives form an important part of the community support and recreational sports package, from which \$6.2 million has been committed for physical activity grants over four years, with \$1.5 million allocated for 2011–12. These grants will be focused on changing people's behaviour to include more physical activity, with a focus on schoolchildren and people in communities with lower levels of participation in sport and recreation. This initiative also includes the Ride2School program. The Premier's Active Families Challenge will continue over the next four years, with \$800 000 allocated in 2011–12. This is an important program for celebrating and promoting physical activity to all Victorians in the context of family life.

An important part of the government's plan for sport and recreation is the active sports partnership program, which is aimed at encouraging participation in sport by people with a disability and older people. Joining in sport and recreation activities can make an enormous difference to the overall health and wellbeing of all Victorians, including people with a disability and older Victorians who are currently less active, and \$800 000 has been committed to this program over four years. The government is very pleased to provide \$1.6 million over four years for the Summer Kidz learn-to-swim program, including \$0.4 million in 2011–12. Funding will be provided to Aquatics and Recreation Victoria, which manages all VICSWIM programs. The funding will be provided specifically to run the Summer Kidz learn-to-swim holiday program during the summer school holidays.

As I emphasised earlier, the government strongly recognises the importance of volunteers in community sport and recreation. We will provide increased support to volunteers and clubs. Our main initiative in the area is the support for volunteers and coaches initiative, which will receive \$1.75 million over four years, including \$600 000 in 2011–12. The initiative will support community sporting clubs by investing \$1.35 million over four years to increase skills of volunteers and for the establishment of a web-based central resource of information, and \$0.4 million over four years to supplement coach education.

The sporting uniform grants program is another important part of the community support and recreational sports package. The sporting uniform grants provide grants of up to \$1000 to assist in the purchase of sports uniforms by Victorian community-based clubs or organisations involved in the delivery of sporting opportunities. It makes an enormous difference to local clubs and participants who may be struggling with the cost of uniforms.

To assist Victoria's best athletes there is an initiative totalling \$2 million over four years that will deliver the commitments for high-level athletes outlined in our plan for sport and recreation and boost Victoria's reputation

for sporting success. This initiative provides 0.5 million in 2011–12 and will support athletes at all stages of their careers.

The government remains committed to Victoria's major events program. We have allocated \$0.53 million to secure the future of the Stawell Gift, including \$80 000 in 2011–12. The gift, as we all know, is Australia's most famous and prestigious footrace.

As I stated earlier, the coalition in the 2010 election committed \$25 million towards the third stage of the Skilled Stadium upgrade. The budget delivers on this promise with initial funding of \$12.5 million in 2011–12.

The minor sport and recreation grants initiative will deliver an election commitment outlined in the plan for sport and recreation to provide \$5 million over four years for additional minor sport and recreation grants. The initiative will boost support for local community sport and recreation facilities. A great example of this would be the lights at a local netball club, soccer club or tennis club to allow greater time for people to play and train. Funding in 2011–12 will be \$1.25 million.

In relation to community sporting facilities, during the recent election campaign the government also committed to building and upgrading a range of important facilities throughout Victoria, with approximately \$16 million in commitments across the state, including \$400 000 for the Eaglehawk Football Netball Club and \$800 000 for the Warrandyte sports hub. These will be funded through the Community Support Fund and the Regional Growth Fund.

The state athletics centre project, currently under construction at Albert Park, is experiencing budget pressure. The government has allocated \$15.3 million to complete this important strategic project, including \$13.9 million in 2011–12.

In addition to this funding, we are continuing with a range of state facility projects, including Yarra Park, the Great Southern Stand at the MCG and redevelopment of Melbourne Park. I was honoured to announce a new design for Melbourne Park with Minister Napthine during the Australian Open in January this year. This was followed at a later date by the Premier turning the first sod for the eastern plaza works. To give you an idea of the Melbourne Park project, subject to the agreement of the Chair, I would like to conclude my presentation by showing the committee a brief fly-through of this development.

The CHAIR — How long will that take?

Mr DELAHUNTY — About 2 minutes.

Video shown.

The CHAIR — We now have probably 55 minutes only for questions on the sport and recreation portfolio. Minister, will you advise the committee on how predictions concerning population growth have shaped the budget for 2011–12 and out years specifically in relation to this portfolio?

Mr DELAHUNTY — Victoria's population has grown considerably over the last few years, and planning for the impact of this growth is a significant challenge for governments due to the increased demand for key services. The continued population growth has meant that demand for sport and recreation programs and facilities has increased. I understand that it is predicted that Victoria's population will continue to grow above the national average. The government is committed to getting more people more active more often, and our sport and recreation plan contains a range of measures that will help to meet this challenge in the context of a rapidly growing population. These commitments include new initiatives. The budget delivers strongly on meeting these commitments.

Budget initiatives that will assist in meeting the needs of a growing population include the community support and recreation sports package. This includes the Active Places program, which targets areas of low levels of participation; the Ride2School program; one that I am very happy with, the sporting uniform grants program; the Premier's Active Families Challenge; \$1.6 million to provide more learn-to-swim places for young Victorians; additional support for coaches, officials and other key volunteers to enable clubs to provide more and better opportunities for participation; and other initiatives to increase the participation of people with a disability and older Victorians through the physical activity partnerships.

The provision of new and refurbished community sporting facilities is an important strategy to meet the challenge of population growth. The government had more than 75 election commitments, pledging approximately \$16 million in funding to develop local sport and recreation infrastructure. These election commitments will be funded through the Community Support Fund and the Regional Growth Fund. The government has met another election commitment by allocating \$5 million over four years for additional minor sport and recreation grants. This will help alleviate the backlog of upgrades required to support grassroots sporting clubs and assist them in satisfying increased demand. The government will continue to deliver funding through contributions from the Community Support Fund. The government is strongly committed to meeting the demands of Victoria's growing population in relation to sport and recreation.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, in your presentation you made reference to the state athletics centre, and I refer to your requirement that all users of the new centre pay a uniform fee for the use of those facilities. I think you have described it to the South Melbourne Districts Little Athletics club as competitive rates. It is my understanding that South Melbourne's Little Athletics club has said that that fee may put the future of the organisation in doubt, so I am wondering whether you are preparing or proposing to implement concessional rates for community organisations for the centre, or indeed waive the fee, and whether or not you are planning to apply similar charges for community sporting groups at other athletic centres throughout Victoria.

Mr DELAHUNTY — The state sporting facilities project primarily includes the construction of a new state athletics centre at Lakeside, Albert Park, and is soon to be home to the administration and training bases of the Victorian Institute of Sport, the South Melbourne Football — soccer — Club, Athletics Victoria, Athletics Australia and Little Athletics Australia. In relation to the Lakeside Oval works, on 15 April of this year, 2011, I announced on behalf of the government the provision of over \$15 million to the project, including \$12.9 million of capital and \$2.4 million in output funding to ensure that a range of underfunded items can be delivered and the project completed. The state athletics centre will become an important addition to Melbourne's network of world-class sporting facilities, with the capacity to host key major events as well as providing an opportunity for extensive community use.

I would like to address your question by saying that there is access to Little Athletics for this facility. It is important to note that these facilities will be used year round by school athletic meets, regional and state-level events, Little Athletics and club competitions in addition to elite athletics training and events. Little Athletics Victoria has been consulted throughout the development of the new centre at Albert Park, and I can confirm that the facilities have been designed to accommodate Little Athletics meets in its events overlay. It should also be noted that Little Athletics Australia will be a tenant of the new facility, and it has been actively involved in and has supported the project along with Little Athletics Victoria. I am told that Little Athletics Victoria was given the opportunity to be a tenant but declined because they own their own office building in Port Melbourne.

The facility will be the premier athletics centre in the state, catering for elite-level needs of the sport. However, I would like to reinforce that this facility will certainly be available for use by local Little Athletics clubs, such as the South Melbourne Districts Little Athletics club based at Albert Park. I wrote to the club and asked them to work with the State Sports Centre Trust as future venue manager to discuss its needs and booking procedures at the centre. I have also advised the club that it would not be appropriate for the state's principal athletics centre to be made available on a weekly basis exclusively to one club. I expect this conversation to be held over the next few months as the State Sporting Centre Trust develops operating procedures for the new stadium. This is the new home of the sport of athletics and as such must be managed in a way that is appropriate for the development of the sport as a whole. Albert Park is one of Melbourne's most highly utilised and cherished sporting precincts, accommodating approximately 45 clubs, balancing sport and recreation needs, events and passive leisure opportunities.

The CHAIR — Do you want to follow up on that?

Mr PAKULA — I would like to follow up, Chair. I do not want to be uncharitable, but questions from the committee are not an opportunity for ministers to read a prepared answer, particularly when the answer is not to the question I asked.

Mr ANGUS — It was so.

Mr PAKULA — The question that I asked was about whether or not community organisations, such as South Melbourne Little Athletics, will be able to access a concessional rate for the use of these facilities and whether or not similar charges would apply to other sporting groups at other athletics and sports centres around Victoria. I would appreciate an answer to that question.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Thank you, Deputy Chair, for your supplementary question. As I said, the Albert Park centre will be managed by the trust. They have been advised that the South Melbourne Little Athletics group are wanting to get access to the Centre, and these will be discussions they will have with the trust. It is no different to what operates at all other major sporting facilities, whether it be the MCG or Rod Laver Arena. The approach that will be taken to the running of this facility will be similar to that taken with all our other major sporting facilities across Melbourne.

Mr MORRIS — Minister, I refer you to page 62 of budget paper 3, in particular the program for minor sport and recreation grants. Can you indicate to the committee how this initiative will assist in alleviating the backlog of upgrades that are required to support clubs across Victoria?

Mr DELAHUNTY — The government believes that encouraging community participation in sport and recreation, particularly team events, is an effective way of strengthening communities across Victoria and improving our collective wellbeing. I have been a board member of VicHealth for nine years, and I appreciate what sport can do for the health of our community. One of the keys to increasing participation in sport and recreation is providing adequate community facilities.

There is currently a backlog of requirements for the upgrading of community facilities to help meet demand. To respond to this community need, the government made an election commitment to provide \$5 million over four years for additional minor sport and recreation grants. This will help alleviate the backlog of upgrades required to support grassroots sporting clubs. The funds will be used primarily for small grants to support sporting clubs to undertake projects such as improving change rooms, providing facilities for women and upgrading lighting.

Several state sporting associations have completed work which identifies this backlog. For example, Football Federation Victoria's independent research indicates that over 5000 players were turned away from clubs in 2010 due to the inability to meet the demand with the existing facilities and resources. Similarly a 2009 audit of country football and netball facilities by the VCFL and Netball Victoria estimated that hundreds of sporting facilities required either new infrastructure or upgrades to redevelop existing facilities to the appropriate standard.

As I said before, the Liberal-Nationals coalition government also made more than 75 commitments, pledging approximately \$16 million to funding and developing local sporting and recreation infrastructure. Some examples of this include: \$500 000 to assist East Gippsland Shire Council to resurface Bairnsdale oval, install lighting and upgrade the main pavilion; \$800 000 for the Manningham council to upgrade the sporting hub at Warrandyte; and \$300 000 for the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council to upgrade the Balnarring football and netball clubs' clubrooms and amenities.

These election commitments will be funded through the Community Support Fund and the Regional Growth Fund, and funding has been made available for all the election commitments in the recent budget. The government will continue delivering funding through contributions from the Community Support Fund, subject to the usual approval processes and capacity.

Mr SCOTT — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 4, page 40, and the allocation of 1.5 million in 2011–12 as an investment in outdoor recreation infrastructure. Could you indicate if Cricket Victoria has received any funding as part of this measure towards the redevelopment of Junction Oval in St Kilda?

The CHAIR — Which page is it on?

Mr SCOTT — Page 40.

Mr PAKULA — Budget paper 4.

The CHAIR — Sorry, right. We all reached for the wrong one.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Sport and Recreation Victoria operates five residential recreation camps across Victoria. The camps provide Victorians with access to quality sport and recreational activities.

Mr SCOTT — It is about Junction Oval.

The CHAIR — Sorry, can we just pause? Mr Scott, could you repeat your question?

Mr SCOTT — My question was regarding whether any funding had been provided in the budget paper allocation for outdoor recreation infrastructure, but I was also just asking if any money had been provided to the redevelopment of Junction Oval.

The CHAIR — And your reference was BP4 — —

Mr SCOTT — Page 40, which was a general thing, and I was seeing whether that was the one.

The CHAIR — Yes, okay. I was actually struggling to follow your reference, that's all.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Again, as I said to Mr Scott, Sport and Recreation Victoria operates five residential camps across Victoria, and we put funding into those. As my notes here tell me, \$1.5 million will be used to upgrade the camps, but as I have said before, and I think I might have been asked about this in Parliament, this project — I think you are referring to the redevelopment of the cricket facilities at Junction Oval — was not brought to the government or the opposition as it was, in time and therefore it was not committed to in this budget.

Mr SCOTT — So just to seek clarification: there is no funding within this budget for the redevelopment of Junction Oval?

Mr DELAHUNTY — Mr Scott, I am aware of the state cricket centre plan proposal, which was prepared by Cricket Victoria for the new training and administrative centre at Junction Oval. Whilst there is no formal commitment to this project in the sport and recreation policy, I look forward to working with Cricket Victoria on its plans to upgrade the Junction Oval site to enhance a pathway for Victorian cricket to move from community to representative level but also to maximise the community benefits of any upgrade of Junction Oval. This government will uphold the \$0.5 million previously committed to Cricket Victoria to enhance the facilities at Junction Oval. It is intended that the funds will enable facility upgrades to be undertaken at the oval, which will increase participation and benefits to the community. Any further funding beyond this will be subject to future budgetary processes.

Mr SCOTT — But not in this budget.

Mr ANGUS — Minister, I refer you to page 61 of budget paper 3, under the output initiatives for sport and recreation, in particular 'Maximising performance of Victorian athletes'. Minister, could you outline to the committee how the budget is targeted to assisting athletes to reach their potential?

Mr DELAHUNTY — I know Mr Angus has a great passion for sport. I am always pleased and proud when I see or hear of Victorian athletes performing well on the national or international stage. In fact I have just come from the funeral of the 1968 world boxing champion, Lionel Rose, who was a great Australian and an inspirational Victorian.

Like it was for Lionel Rose, sport is an important part of our community, and I am sure that many Victorians feel the same way. Reflecting that, it is a priority for the government to help Victorians athletes reach their potential. The Victorian coalition government has committed funding of \$2 million over four years to help high-achieving Victorian athletes perform at their best with a view to improving their potential to compete at a national level. Grants of up to \$2000 per year will be made available to subsidise the cost of travel and accommodation for elite and developing athletes. This will help remove some of the obstacles facing our high-level athletes, making it easier to focus on pursuing their sporting career and representing Victoria and Australia. These grants will be available to promising athletes across a wide range of sports, and they will also ensure that support is not limited to Olympic sports.

The funding will be in addition to the highly successful Victalent grants, which are available to grassroots sporting and recreation organisations in regional and rural Victoria. These grants will make a big difference to

our up-and-coming athletes, and the government will add to this benefit by working with a network of sporting organisations and training institutions including the Victorian Institute of Sport, the regional academies of sport, the state sporting associations and the regional assemblies to strengthen and develop opportunities from the grassroots level through to the elite sports for talented athletes to realise their potential.

Expert bodies such as the Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority and Sports Medicine Australia will also be engaged in the process to ensure that pathways for athlete training and development are strategically linked to initiatives by sporting codes and schools to eliminate drugs in sport and to maximise access to the latest developments in sports science. The government will work in partnership with these organisations to ensure that the Victorian pathway to athlete development — —

Mr PAKULA — On a point of order, I just want to make the point that it might be more expeditious for the committee if the minister simply tabled the answer that he is reading copiously from.

The CHAIR — Thank you for your point of order, Deputy Chair. As we know, the procedure in this place is designed to ensure that ministers can give full, frank and truthful answers to questions the committee puts to them, and if the minister wishes to refer to detailed notes to ensure that he gives the answer which the committee is seeking, then he is able to do so. Minister, please continue.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Thank you for your ruling, Chair. In finishing, the government will work in partnership with these organisations to ensure that the Victorian pathway for athlete development is clear and well aligned across the sector and to strengthen opportunities for Victorian athletes to access support for training and competition at a national or even international level.

Ms HENNESSY — I want to ask about the minor sport and recreation grants, and the reference is \$1.3 million in 2011–12 in budget paper 3, page 61. I am particularly interested in the provision of suitable sporting facilities and infrastructure for women. I note your commitment, and commend your commitment, to increase female participation in sport, but I want to understand how much funding from the minor sport and recreation grants is specifically going to be spent on change rooms and other facilities for women and whether or not the government would require that all clubs and organisations that receive grant money from the minor sport and recreation grants must provide adequate change rooms and other facilities for women?

Mr DELAHUNTY — I know Ms Hennessy is interested in this topic. I want to start by saying that the government has a strong commitment to providing opportunities for participation in sport and recreation by women. This is a matter not only of creating opportunities to participate in sport and recreation but also of ensuring that the sector makes the most of the views, knowledge and skills of women in management and decision making. The government is committed to supporting the development, as you have highlighted, of new community facilities that increase participation in sport and recreation, and I want to see that in relation to women particularly. Access to high-quality sporting facilities is pivotal to getting more people more active more often, doing a greater range of activities and being healthy.

Currently, there is a backlog of requirements for the upgrading of community facilities. I have highlighted that before, and I have seen a lot of this personally. For example, as I said before, Victorian country football and netball has estimated — and netball was heavily involved with this — that hundreds of sporting facilities require either new infrastructure or upgrades to redevelop an existing facility to an appropriate standard, and I have seen many facilities that do not meet those modern-day standards.

To respond to this community need, the government has committed a further \$5 million, as you have highlighted, to the minor sport and recreation grants. This will alleviate the backlog we have been speaking about to upgrade facilities as required for grassroots sporting clubs. We have not made a specific allocation of the funding; that has never happened before. The process will be, like it has always been, on application, which predominantly comes through local government, and we will look at it when we receive that application.

Mr O'BRIEN — Minister, I would like to take you to budget paper 3, page 128, under 'Output initiatives', and I refer specifically to the 'Community support and recreational sports package', which I note has funding of \$6.9 million in 2011–12, \$6.8 in 12–13, increasing to \$11.8 in 2013 and \$16.7 in 14–15. I ask the minister to explain, if he could, what this package involves and how the Victorian government's budget will assist in increasing participation in sport and recreation and helping to build strong and healthy communities.

Mr DELAHUNTY — I thank Mr O'Brien for his question. As a person who I believe is still playing football, you are highlighting the fact that being active keeps you healthy.

Mr O'BRIEN — Hardly a high-level performance athlete, though.

The CHAIR — Minister, his advertising precedes his reputation.

Ms HENNESSY — I am happy to endorse that if it helps Mr O'Brien!

Mr O'BRIEN — Hardly a high-level performance but, yes, participating when I can.

Mr DELAHUNTY — The budget includes several initiatives that will help to increase participation in sport and recreation. The community support and recreational package includes three programs that will assist more Victorians to become more active more often — the physical activities grants, the Premier's Active Families Challenge and the sporting uniform grants.

Funding of \$6.2 million has been committed to the physical activities grants over four years, with \$1.5 million allocated in the 2011–12 budget. This program has two components. The Active Places component will be focused on changing people's behaviour to become more physically active, with a focus on people and communities with lower levels of participation in sport and recreation. This initiative will focus on neighbourhoods in local government areas with lower than state average levels of physical activity. The government will work with partners to design tailored programs that will respond to locally identified needs for targeted neighbourhoods.

The second component is a Ride2School program, which encourages children to be more active by riding their bikes to school. Ride2School is delivered by Bicycle Victoria in partnership with local schools. The program encourages young people to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives. When I was on the board of VicHealth I chaired the walk-to-school program, so this is a continuation of that and I am a strong supporter of it. It also complements the government's commitment to promoting cycling as a sustainable and active transport option. Schools participating receive practical advice, guidance and support to create active, healthy children both in school and out of school.

The community support and recreational sports package, as highlighted by Mr O'Brien, also includes the Premier's Active Families Challenge, which will continue over the next four years with \$800 000 allocated in 2011–12. The challenge asks participants to undertake 30 minutes of physical activity a day for 30 days within a six-week period. In doing so, the program celebrates and promotes physical activity to all Victorians as part of everyday life. The challenge has been run annually since 2008, with over 67 000 Victorians participating in 2010.

The program that really catches my attention and of which I have been a strong supporter for a long time is the sporting uniform grants program. This provides grants of up to \$1000 to assist in the purchase of sports uniforms by Victorian community-based clubs or organisations involved in the delivery of sporting opportunities.

The government has taken the important step of committing to support each of these programs over an extended period of four years to maximise their impact. We are committed to encouraging the widest possible community participation in sporting activities, including people with a disability and older Victorians, to ensure that Victorians of all abilities can reap the benefits of participation in sport and recreation.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, on page 128 of budget paper 3 it outlines over the forward estimates period about \$72 million worth of budget savings to DPCD. I am wondering if you could tell the committee what proportion of that 72 million will be borne by the sport and recreation portfolio?

Mr DELAHUNTY — Thank you, Chair, and thank you, deputy secretary.

Mr PAKULA — Deputy Chair.

The CHAIR — Deputy Chair.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Deputy Chair, I apologise.

Mr PAKULA — The deputy secretary is next to you.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Thank you.

Mr SCOTT — Sitting on your right.

Mr PAKULA — I am not in the public service just yet.

The CHAIR — We are trying to steer you that way.

Mr DELAHUNTY — We are all in the public service.

Mr PAKULA — Is that an offer?

Mr DELAHUNTY — Thank you for your guidance, Chair. Questions regarding savings targets are to be handled at a departmental level and should be directed to the lead minister, the Minister for Regional and Rural Development, in DPCD.

Mr PAKULA — Can I follow up, Chair?

The CHAIR — Yes, and I understand what your follow-up question is likely to be.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, to be clear, I am not asking about the savings targets across the portfolio. I am asking you about what proportion of those savings targets need to be borne by sport and recreation — and veterans affairs for that matter, but I know that is coming up next. There must be some breakdown within the department which says that of that \$72 million, this much, Minister Delahunty, is yours to find. I am wondering if you could take me to what that proportion is.

Mr DELAHUNTY — I have to start off by saying that the government's better financial management policy targets savings by capping head office staffing, greater utilisation of shared services and reducing government advertising and travel and other discretionary operating expenditures. The 2011–12 budget also allows for additional efficiencies. Savings are expected through consolidation of grants management and other administrative support, and any further developments in that are still being developed through the department.

Mr PAKULA — Can I ask the minister to take on notice my specific question about how much is to be borne by sport and recreation?

The CHAIR — Certainly. The minister will take that on notice and respond appropriately in due course.

Minister, BP3, page 275, refers to a matter you commented on in an earlier response to a question. It relates to new performance measures relating to the sporting uniform grants program. Would you outline the program that you earlier referred to and explain how this measure relates to, and any impact it will have on, cost-of-living pressures?

Mr DELAHUNTY — This is a very important issue, because we as a government want to ease the pressure on families. The new performance measure relates to the Sporting Uniform Grants program, which is a part of the Community Support and Recreational Sports program announced in the budget. This was a lapsing program, which would have finished in 2011 without new funding from this government in this year's budget.

Mr PAKULA — Or our government.

Mr DELAHUNTY — This is a program I strongly supported in opposition and was disappointed to note on coming to government that no ongoing funding had been provided to ensure that this important program could continue into the future.

The aim of the program is to increase participation and strengthen local communities through the provision of grants of up to \$1000 to purchase uniforms or footwear essential for playing sport. These small grants help to offset the cost of uniform purchases. In many instances these purchases are compulsory for participation, but families, particularly those with several children, may find the cost of sports uniforms prohibitive on top of existing fees, which can then result in the children not being able to play organised sport. The program makes an enormous difference to clubs that receive grants and to families who participate at these clubs.

The government has allocated funding of \$800 000 per annum over four years to continue to deliver this highly successful program for sporting clubs and organisations. The program aims to increase participation rates by offsetting potentially prohibitive costs associated with uniform purchase. The program will target juniors and clubs with a high level of CALDs and indigenous members, who face economic barriers to playing sport.

This increase in participation strengthens local sporting clubs through a stronger membership base and strengthens communities through providing greater social interaction through involvement in a club environment. Club sport is an effective mechanism for community inclusion. Being part of a local club provides opportunity to participate in a broad range of community activities and build strong and enduring community connections and networks.

Mr SCOTT — Minister, there was a previous answer that intrigued me. I just want to clarify what the status of the Go for Your Life program is — whether it has been cut or if it is going to continue and where I can find it in the budget papers.

The CHAIR — Minister, can you advise if the Go for Your Life program is still ongoing?

Mr DELAHUNTY — The government is committed to taking action against preventable chronic disease. The Minister for Health is leading in this process. Promoting physical activity and healthy eating is crucial to ensuring Victorians' wellbeing today and into the future. The government is developing new approaches to promoting healthy lifestyles which go beyond merely continuing the previous government's Go for Your Life program.

New approaches will be based on the latest evidence on effective interventions in this area. The government will develop a Victorian strategy of preventive health and present a new, coordinated approach to prevention. The previous government had a number of Go for Your Life initiatives that were being delivered by Sport and Recreation Victoria, which were not funded beyond June 2011. The coalition government has announced in the latest budget new funding for key participation initiatives, including the Active Places and Ride2School programs and the Premier's Active Families Challenge. The Active Places program aims to improve the uptake in sport and recreation in targeted locations, while the Ride2School program and the challenge promote increased participation by children and families.

These programs will support the government's key message of having more people more active more often to deliver improved health outcomes across Victoria's population. The programs complement new funding announced in the budget for election commitments around volunteers, coaching and athletes support. Sport and Recreation Victoria will continue to support increased participation levels in all sports through investment in state sporting associations and investments in sporting infrastructure through the Community Facility Funding program and these programs will respond to the challenges of rising obesity and type 2 diabetes while helping to build strong and healthy communities and will improve Victorians' collective wellbeing.

Mr SCOTT — I have a follow-up. Minister, are there any aspects of the Go for Your Life program which have not been funded in this budget?

The CHAIR — I take it you mean that — —

Mr SCOTT — There was a number of programs which you stated had been funded. I am just asking, as a follow-up, if there are any that have not been. It is not a fresh question; it is a clarification.

The CHAIR — So you are not going to the issue of cuts; you are actually saying: is there anything that was — —

Mr SCOTT — Previously in Go for Your Life — —

The CHAIR — That was not funded but has not been funded again.

Mr SCOTT — Funded in this budget; so it is a pure clarification.

The CHAIR — Yes, I understand. Minister, it is just a question of whether there were programs that had exhausted their funding that have not been funded again.

Mr PAKULA — Do you want to swap?

Mr DELAHUNTY — Thanks for your guidance, and thanks to Mr Scott for his question. As I said earlier, the Minister for Health is leading the process of changing the programs here. The ones that were under sport and recreation have continued funding. As I highlighted, those were the Active Places program, the Ride2School program and the Premier's Active Families Challenge program.

Mr PAKULA — So the sport and rec bits are ongoing.

The CHAIR — That is what you wanted to know, is it?

Mr PAKULA — Yes, that is what we wanted to know.

Mr MORRIS — I would like to refer to a matter which I am sure is absolutely the centrepiece of the sport and rec budget, and that is the government's commitment to stage 3 of Skilled Stadium. I ask the minister to update the committee on the project and the government's ongoing commitment to major sporting facility projects in general.

The CHAIR — Mr Morris takes the ferry across to Geelong.

Mr PAKULA — I am going to ask about the Stawell Gift, and I am going to enjoy that, too.

Mr DELAHUNTY — I thank Mr Morris. He has a wide interest in this issue, and I know he has been to Geelong a few times in the last couple of months. I look forward to answering this question by highlighting the fact that the Premier and I recently announced the coalition's commitment of \$25 million towards the third stage of Skilled Stadium. As many people here would appreciate, Skilled Stadium is a very important focus for the people of Geelong and the broader western region community, which Mr O'Brien services. Its ongoing improvement is critical not only in providing for the Geelong Football Club but also supporting the government's commitment to the provision of quality services and facilities in regional Victoria.

The current project includes the replacement of the Doug Wade stand at the southern end of the ground with a continuation of the form of the recently completed premiership stand around the eastern stand, completed in 2005, to increase the stadium's capacity to approximately 34 500 people. It will enhance spectator amenity and improve facilities for community support.

The project will significantly enhance the quality of Skilled Stadium as a multipurpose community facility and provide greater opportunity for the community to access and utilise the facilities of Skilled Stadium. I am particularly pleased that the Geelong Football Club has responded to the coalition's policy of providing a community benefit through their commitment to develop a community wellness and education centre which will provide flexible education and administrative space to run community sport and social programs.

Mr PAKULA — I thought you were going to take credit for them being undefeated!

Mr DELAHUNTY — The proposal is estimated at around \$33 million. Funding has been committed by the Geelong Football Club and the coalition government. The club is continuing to discuss funding arrangements with the Australian Football League and the City of Greater Geelong. The club has commenced design work on the project and is expected to commence building works later this year, with completion in approximately 2013.

Ms HENNESSY — Minister, in relation to budget paper 4 at page 39, where the government has allocated 1.5 million in 2011–12 to investment in outdoor recreation infrastructure, could you indicate if funding to refurbish the Chelsea women's sports centre is provided for?

Mr DELAHUNTY — In relation to outdoor facilities and any grants that come out of the sport and recreation budget, the normal process is to apply through local government. As I said in answer to a previous question, there is a budget allocation, but it does not specifically highlight any particular program or, as you have highlighted, women's facilities. But, again, through the application process local government will work with SRV staff and any applications will come to me through that process.

Mr ANGUS — Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3, page 63, and the heading 'Support for volunteers and coaches'. Could you outline for the committee this new initiative?

Mr DELAHUNTY — Volunteers, as Mr Angus knows, play a very important part in the delivery of sport and recreation programs. As I say here often, volunteers are critical to the operation of sporting clubs and associations and essential to the delivery of both community and elite sporting activities. The Victorian coalition government has committed funding of \$1.8 million over four years to support volunteers and coaches in community sport.

Of this funding, \$400 000 will be used to supplement coach training across Victoria through the state sporting associations. This will help to increase the number of coaches and officials at grassroots level, which contributes to increased capacity for the clubs to provide more opportunities for participation in sport and active recreation. Training for the new volunteer coaches can cover a range of essential coaching topics, including the role and responsibilities expected of the coach, safety, working with parents, communication and group management skills and inclusive coaching practices. Training can also deliver advanced education and expertise for existing coaches, which creates a pathway for continuous improvement and skill development.

The remaining \$1.4 million will fund a suite of activities to increase the skills of volunteers. This will include the delivery of training workshops and information seminars for volunteer officials, coaches and administrators right across Victoria. It will also include development of a web-based clearing house to facilitate the exchange of information between organisations, volunteers and experts in sports science and club management. The website will provide access for existing resources, adding value to national initiatives such as 'Play by the Rules', and online coaching and officiating training modules.

These initiatives will boost the sport and recreation sector's capacity to attract and retain volunteers by improving access to formal education and training, information, research, sports science and development tools. The sector will also benefit from a broader dissemination of new information on sports science and exercise. Cutting edge techniques being used to assist elite athletes can also be used to improve the performance of athletes at other levels.

This will include the establishment of a sports injury prevention task force which will develop a framework for addressing priorities for injury prevention, resources and training over the next decade. Improving the skills of volunteers will have flow-on benefits for the capacity of clubs to create opportunities for participation in sport and recreation. This has benefits not only for individual health and wellbeing but also for building strong and more connected communities.

These initiatives complement government support for volunteers, including: the provision of \$5.2 million for ongoing management of a volunteers portal and grants, continued investment in the Advance program and additional funding for individual programs to support volunteers engaged in a range of organisations, such as Landcare, the Victorian State Emergency Service, the Australian Breastfeeding Association, SYN FM, the Victorian scouts and girl guides and Life Saving Victoria. As you have said, Mr Angus, volunteers are a very important component of our sport and recreation, and I am pleased to say in this budget we are giving them strong support.

Mr PAKULA — Minister, going back to the previous Q and A about the Albert Park state athletics centre, I really want to seek some clarity on your answer. In regard to the rate that will be charged to the South Melbourne Districts Little Athletics Club, is your evidence that that is not a matter for government but it is a matter for the trust and the trust alone and that the government will not be stepping in, in that regard?

The CHAIR — Minister, you did give a response earlier. I assume that you are just trying to elaborate on that earlier response?

Mr PAKULA — Yes, because it was not clear to me.

Mr DELAHUNTY — As I said before, the state sporting facilities reconstructed there at the state athletics centre at Albert Park are a multitude of developments, but importantly it will encourage participation. We want to see participation right from grassroots to elite level. As I said earlier, I think 45 different sports are played there. The trust that will manage the Albert Park centre does a great job in managing all those demands within the budget they have got, whether it be swimming, whether it be basketball or in this case athletics, including Little Athletics, again they have managed their process as has been continuing on from previous governments.

If my memory is right, MSAC was built by the previous coalition government and put under the trust at that stage. The use of the facility will be similar, as I said before, to all other state high-level athletics facilities, and there will be discussions going on between the future managers, which in this case will be the trust, and the users of that facility. Whether it be Little Athletics clubs in general or, as I said before, school groups or regional groups or city groups that want to use that facility, they will have that discussion with the trust.

Mr PAKULA — About the rate?

Mr DELAHUNTY — That is correct.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Minister, I think that is now clear.

Mr O'BRIEN — Minister, I would like to again touch on budget paper 3, page 61, and the government's commitment to the Stawell Gift, which I know is an event you have been a personal supporter of and that you travel through Stawell many times as you travel through to Lowan. Could you detail the government's commitment to this and other important regional events?

Mr DELAHUNTY — I thank Mr O'Brien, who represents the area which includes Stawell, and I know he has got a passion for sport and has been to Stawell many times since he has been elected and indeed previous to the election. For the information of the Chair and the other members of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, the Stawell Gift has been held at Central Park in Stawell, at Easter, every year since 1878, save for four years during World War II. It is considered to be one of Australia's and the world's most famous and prestigious professional foot races.

It is a very important event not only for the Stawell region, because it injects millions of dollars into the local community and provides extensive exposure through broadcast. I am told by the Stawell Athletic Club that last year's event generated an estimated economic impact of \$10 million and was broadcast to 22 million homes in 44 countries across Asia, the Pacific and the Indian subcontinent. The coalition election commitment was to support the Stawell Gift by providing \$600 000 over four years from 2012 to assist in the marketing and staging of this very important event. This funding will ensure that the Stawell Gift will be viable into the future and provide the community with tourism investment that will support growth in the region.

My department has been working with the Stawell Athletic Club on the details of these plans. As I said earlier, \$530 000 over four years has been allocated in the state budget. The remaining \$70 000 for this election commitment will be provided from the existing allocation in the RDV for 2011–12, to bring the total commitment between 2012 and 2015 to \$600 000. In addition to the \$600 000 commitment the coalition government is also contributing \$80 000 for the 2011 event from the Significant Sporting Events program — and as I said earlier there is a \$70 000 allocation from RDV — taking the total funding for the support for this year's Stawell Gift to \$150 000.

I am pleased to advise that the coalition will also fulfil its election commitment to another significant sporting event in regional Victoria. The coalition is supporting the Melbourne to Warrnambool Cycling Classic, which is also in Mr O'Brien's region. We will be providing a total of \$200 000, or \$50 000 per annum over four years, from 2011 to 2015. Funding for this iconic race will be provided through the Regional Growth Fund. This funding will help support and ensure the future of this iconic race, which continues to attract visitors to Victoria, drive economic activity, support local jobs and provide promotional benefits to the south-western region of the state.

The race is the world's second oldest one-day bike race and has become an integral part of not only Victoria's but the world's sporting heritage. Traditionally in October, the race travels over 260 kilometres, showcasing approximately 30 towns and iconic locations in south-western Victoria, including Camperdown's lakes and craters region and parts of the Great Ocean Road, before finishing on the Princes Highway in the centre of Warrnambool. This will support Victoria's outstanding credentials in hosting another cycling event.

As we all know, Victoria's major sporting events industry is what sets us apart from the rest of Australia and indeed the world. Melbourne continues to wear the crown of the Ultimate Sports City, ahead of Singapore, London, Berlin and Sydney, awarded for the third consecutive time in 2010. Our government is committed to enhancing the value of major events by requiring a community benefit to be demonstrated and delivered alongside the strong economic and tourism benefits that these events generate.

The coalition government has recently announced our continued support for the iconic Rip Curl Pro at Bells Beach for a further three years, in addition to support for the men's and women's events until 2014. Our support also enhances the community benefit delivered by the event through initiatives such as the Rip Curl Pro Championship Moves. A spot in the Rip Curl Pro trials is being provided to the Victorian Indigenous Surfing Champion, and an All Abilities Day for more than 100 Victorians with a physical, social or intellectual disability.

The CHAIR — Sorry to interrupt, Minister, but we are past time for this portfolio.

Mr DELAHUNTY — I have got some other good news here.

Mr O'BRIEN — I was very interested in that comprehensive answer. It is great news for western Victoria.

Mr SCOTT — From copious notes; table the notes.

The CHAIR — I have to say that it is evident that the minister could wax lyrical for another 30 minutes on this one answer.

Mr DELAHUNTY — Sorry, Mr O'Brien.

Mr O'BRIEN — We will have to roll them out over the next four years.

The CHAIR — I think we will call a pause there.

Mr O'BRIEN — Thank you, Minister. I am more than happy for that to continue, but we will go on to veterans affairs.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Mr O'Brien. As we know, we have to deal with the veterans affairs portfolio, so I would like to thank Mr Montgomery and Mr Calleia for their attendance.

Witnesses withdrew.