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Sitting a test is a tough process, and it needs to be a tough process, but we are doing all we can to ensure that Western Australians get access to driving tests.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, minister. I do believe that assessor intervention during a test is an automatic fail.

Ms R. Saffioti: Yes, it is, but they still got me to go out for the next half an hour anyway!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

CHRIST CHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL — PLAYING FIELDS ZONING

Grievance

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [9.25 am]: It is good to know that I am in good company. My assessor also had to put the brakes on during my first test! My grievance this morning, however, is to the Minister for Planning, not that assessor. I thank the minister for taking my grievance on an issue that I appreciate is important to both of us—ensuring accessibility to green space for our growing communities and, in particular, maintaining playing fields for girls' participation in sport.

I will give a brief outline of the history. Eight hectares of pristine playing fields in Mt Claremont were acquired by Christ Church Grammar School in 1958 from the City of Perth. At the time of this transaction, it was represented by the school that the land would be used for playing fields. When the land was gazetted in 1985 by the City of Perth, this use and purpose was again reinforced with the land specifically reserved for parks and recreation. In recent years, the school identified the playing fields as being surplus to its needs and made an application to have them rezoned to a development zone and therefore have the reservation removed. On 25 February 2022, Town of Cambridge councillors voted unanimously to uphold the town's local planning scheme and reject a scheme amendment request by Christ Church Grammar School to rezone the fields. The school has sought an intervention by the Minister for Planning under section 76 of the Planning and Development Act 2005 to remove the reservation so that the playing fields can be developed. It is on this note that I grieve to the minister to confirm that she will take no further action as there are no planning or community reasons for providing a section 76 exception.

The planning reasons for this grievance include the fact that in April 2021, the Western Australian Planning Commission confirmed that the reservation was appropriate as part of its formal acceptance and endorsement of the Town of Cambridge's local planning strategy. The Town of Cambridge is also meeting its density and infill targets without the need to impinge on local reservations. It has focused increased density around key local centres and high-frequency transport corridors. At no time has it been a local or state government policy or requirement that reservations be used for densification purposes.

The community reasons are both highly local and of state significance. Locally, members of the Friends of Mt Claremont Fields, many of whom are here today, collected close to 5 000 signatures on a petition calling for the playing fields to be protected by ensuring they remain reserved for parks and recreation, consistent with their creation, zoning and land use for the past 60 years. People from across the generations collected and provided signatures, including Walter and Beth Pigeon, local residents who stood outside the Good Grocer in Claremont every day for months on end and collected signatures. The group presented this petition on 20 September 2022 to Hon Dr Brad Pettitt, MLC. I want to thank the Friends of Mt Claremont Fields for its ongoing and positive engagement in working for the fields to be protected and remain as a reservation.

Community playing fields are in short supply more broadly in metropolitan Western Australia and government reports indicate that this shortage will increase substantially with time. This is especially the case for girls' sport, which has seen the largest participation growth of any group and, as we know, suffers from significant historic and systemic inequality in terms of access to broadacre playing fields for sports such as football, soccer and cricket. As we continue to meet our targets for infill and development and as the population in the western suburbs continues to grow, so too does demand for active green space.

<004> M/2

I will highlight growth at just one of our local clubs and use the sport of football as an example. The Swanbourne Tigers Junior Football Club, which is located in the City of Nedlands, has experienced an increase in enrolment of more than 30 per cent in just the past three years. This has put pressure on existing facilities at Allen Park, which cannot sustain this growth. Home games for the Swanbourne Tigers are now played every weekend at various fields, subject to availability. These fields include the upper park behind the Shorehouse, the Allen Park rugby fields, the John XXIII College fields, the University of Western Australia sports ground and the Scotch College playing fields. The Swanbourne Tigers have access to only the minor fields within those facilities, so none of those locations has access to toilets, shelter, change rooms, permanent goalposts or boundary lines, which makes game preparation more difficult and the game experience for players and spectators much less engaging. All three football ovals within the Mt Claremont playing fields have permanent goalposts and boundary lines, permanent shelter and toilet and change room access.

I would like to particularly emphasise to the minister the crucial issue of access to playing fields for girls in the western suburbs. We are both mothers of daughters and know that participation in sport is essential for their mental, social and physical health. Although there are still barriers related to accessibility and inclusivity for girls' participation, they are barriers we can help to reduce by protecting those fields.

Taking just AFL football as an example, in the female competition for ages six to 17 years in the past four years since 2018, female participation in the metropolitan north region, where the playing fields are located, increased over 90 per cent, with almost 2 300 female participants playing in the zone in 2022. Another four-year comparison for Auskick shows a 53 per cent growth in girls' participation from 300 to 458 players. There was an 80 per cent growth in juniors, from 528 to 952, and for youth there was a 138 per cent growth, from 369 to 878 girls and young women who now play. When considering the female competition for ages 18 and over, in the past four years since 2018, female participation in the Perth Football League has increased almost 300 per cent. Today, Western Australia has more female teams in the 18-plus amateur league than the equivalent league in Victoria, which is a credit to WA given that Victoria traditionally considers itself the home of Australian Rules Football.

Adding to this, not one of the girls' schools that participates in the Independent Girls Schools Sports Association has its own venue suitable for those broadacre sports, including AFL, soccer or cricket. In order to participate, the girls' schools must negotiate for time and space on council-owned ovals or with the boys' schools to allow them to play. At age 14, girls are dropping out of sport at twice the rate of boys, and the availability of playing space is a factor in that. Given the importance of the Mt Claremont playing fields to our local community, and for girls' sport in particular, today I seek reassurance from the Minister for Planning that the zoning of Mt Claremont playing fields will remain as it currently stands—that is, reserved for parks and recreation—thereby upholding the Town of Cambridge's decision to reject the rezoning application, meaning that the playing fields will continue to be active green space for the local community.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [9.32 am]: I thank the member for Nedlands for that grievance. I also acknowledge the supporters of this grievance in the public gallery. As the member pointed out, a request was made for me to ask the Town of Cambridge to rezone the playing fields to residential. As members would expect, I get a lot of requests from all parts of the community on different fronts. As I have said on radio, I treat every proposal on its merits. In this instance, we analysed the benefit to housing, the amount of housing and the location of the proposed housing and compared that with the loss of the playing fields and other local amenity that would be lost—but particularly the playing fields. I am glad the Minister for Sport and Recreation is sitting next to me because we fully understand and acknowledge this issue. We sit here and talk about the massive demand for playing fields in the community, particularly in areas where, as the member said, more people are moving. As increased demand occurs and more people move to the area, there is an absolute explosion in the popularity of girls' and women's sport. I have two girls who are very much into sport, both football and soccer. As I traverse the suburbs every weekend to watch them play, I know the massive demand there is for training and playing. A key factor in my decision is making sure that we continue to have playing fields for the growing popularity of sport more generally, but girls' sport in particular. This situation did not exist 10 years ago. Girls were not playing AFL at the rate they are today. Now we see it absolutely everywhere, with other outdoor sports as well, such as soccer. The FIFA Women's World Cup this year will again increase the sport's popularity.

On its merits, we considered what would be the benefit to housing. We need more housing in WA; there is no doubt about that. The government continues to support more housing. We asked what would be the amount of new housing, noting that this area is very much surrounded by Bush Forever. The setbacks required to comply with fire and emergency rules would mean that the number of houses that were supported there would not be a lot, but the loss of the playing fields to the local community would be significant.

I understand what the school was trying to do, to get its playing fields closer to its campus. I understand also that it is a challenge, particularly for many schools in the member for Nedlands' area whose students must catch a bus or travel a distance to playing fields. Other schools such as Trinity College have the same problem. I understand the challenges they have, but more generally, this would be just too big a loss for that community, and that is why I made that decision. Going forward, I will probably write to the council asking what other measures exist to support those fields into the future in relation to the ownership of those fields. The next questions to be asked are: Who manages it into the future? Are there any other mechanisms to make sure that they are publicly available in the future? Questions about who is going to manage the fields into the future and what shared responsibility, potentially, will occur, are always tough. Perhaps that is something we can talk about in the future.

I have considered all the factors. I listened to the point of view of both sides and read through the documents to get across all the detail. I am very happy with the decision I made. I do not think there should be housing there; I think we should retain the playing fields. One of this government's first decisions was to retain Subiaco Oval in its form and size, because there were plans before we were elected to change the nature of Subiaco Oval. We need playing fields. The member highlighted the lighting, change rooms and accessibility at the fields. As Minister for Planning and someone who is very much interested in sport, I have discussed with the Minister for Sport and Recreation what else we can do to create more opportunities to get more playing spaces. As we all lament that kids do not get out and play,

we have an obligation to create places for them to play. Girls in particular need better access to change rooms. I have had to take my kids into a lot of change rooms that are absolutely disgusting and awful. Sometimes my kids just refuse to go in there. We need to consider types of change rooms and, in particular, how they impact on girls who want to play sport. Lighting is always an interesting issue because sometimes local residents are not keen on the lights. However, now with more targeted LEDs, we can be smarter with our lighting and provide the ability for people to train safely in the evening. Sometimes having lights still does not help people see the ball! Better lighting, change rooms and the joint management of these facilities is needed. The Minister for Sport and Recreation and I, as the Minister for Planning, want to continue having these types of playing fields available to schools and the community, supporting our younger people playing sport.

<005> J/5

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — GNARABUP COMMUNITY FIRE SHED

Grievance

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [9.39 am]: My grievance is to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Emergency Services and I thank the minister for taking my grievance. This grievance addresses the government enforced closure of the Gnarabup community fire shed, which ensures the safety of the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade during operational measures and provides a rapid response to bushfires.

As the minister is aware, Margaret River has experienced several severe bushfires. The 2011 bushfire in particular devastated the community, with 39 properties destroyed, 26 homes burnt or damaged and the historic Wallcliffe House, built between 1855 and 1865 by Alfred Bussell, one of WA's pioneers, destroyed. This is not a distant memory for the wider community but one that is in the forefront of their minds. The decision to close the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade's second unit has overlooked the needs as well as the concerns of the coastal community that has been affected by bushfire on multiple occasions. I have been contacted by business owners, community groups and residents who understand a minor fire could ignite at any point, and if not extinguished within minutes, could potentially move to be a major bushfire incident.

Last November, a member of the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade was in the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions fire-spotting truck patrolling Wooditjup National Park on Carters Road following a fuel reduction burn. This is the content on the brigade's Facebook post —

Just imagine if any of this bushland ignited in the middle of summer with a 20-knot wind behind it ... frightening stuff.

We cant stress enough that bushfire is inevitable if you live in the Margaret River region. You really need to be taking immediate steps to work on your preparedness for this summer. You can already see how volatile the bush is now and fire authorities are predicting an above average fire risk season.

In the same vein, it is the government's responsibility to ensure our brave firefighters can respond safely and quickly to avert a potentially serious bushfire. This region continues to enjoy visitors to our beautiful coastal destinations and surrounding bush. Wedding season is in full swing with our wineries, breweries and hospitality venues heavily booked, and all it would take is a cigarette butt to spark a fire.

The location of the fire shed, maintained for years by members of the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, is in a critical position to enable a rapid response when protecting the coastal hamlet of Prevelly from a possible bushfire. The light tanker that was removed has been used multiple times over the past 20 years on a range of fires. St John Ambulance support has been used over a dozen times, with the service arriving within minutes of an emergency call-out to the Gnarabup–Prevelly area. The volunteers live close to the fire shed and can be on location and despatched on the fire truck to respond to any call-out within minutes. The closure of the fire shed and relocation of the firefighting appliance to the main headquarters on Wallcliffe Road will result in an increase to response times of more than 20 minutes, which will jeopardise the ability to distinguish or contain a minor fire before it escalates. The location of the fire shed and fire truck is critical in the brigade's firefighting strategy in Prevelly and to ensuring a rapid response.

The Westin Margaret River resort and spa has been a contentious issue for the Margaret River community, with opposition from the Margaret River Coastal Residents Association. They have recently been quoted in the *Augusta Margaret River Times* as being “alarmed” at the shed closure. The president, Adrian Wilson, said —

“Once a fire starts in coastal heath it is very difficult to control.

“For very little cost, this unit provided extra protection and might have made the difference between a small incident and a major fire.”

This decision is hard to believe when a submission from DFES recommended against the proposed Westin Margaret River resort and spa and associated village development at Gnarabup due to bushfire safety concerns as the area faced a major population increase. On the one hand, DFES is concerned about Gnarabup being an extreme bushfire area and its ability to effectively mitigate a potential bushfire risk, and, on the other hand, it relocated the fire truck critically positioned near Prevelly for rapid response in a high bushfire risk area.