

HANSARD 29 SEPTEMBER 2011

WILLETTON SPORTS CLUB

Statement by Member for Riverton

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.50 pm]: After 30 years of service to the community, the Willetton Sports Club, one of the largest sporting facilities in WA, is facing closure due to inaction by the City of Canning. As a patron of the club I have worked closely with the club's chairman, John Tidman, his board and staff, over the last 18 months to try to put it on a sounder footing. They have done a remarkable job under difficult circumstances and I congratulate them on behalf of the community for their efforts. But the task has been too large. The accumulated debts and lack of action by the council left them no choice.

The club is a council-owned asset, but it has been allowed to run down for decades. The council has known it was in urgent need of repair but failed to act. Instead of heeding the club's pleas for help over the last 18 months, the mayor and the council have sat on their hands.

Last year, over 30 000 people used the club's facilities. It is home to 5 000 members from cricket, amateur football, semi-professional soccer, little athletics, lawn bowls, a junior tennis centre of excellence and the Willetton Basketball Association; and numerous local service groups, including Rotary and Lions, regularly use the facility.

The club has more than 1,200 forward bookings to host family gatherings, local schools, business forums and other things. There simply is not anywhere else in the area. It plays an essential role in the sporting network in the metropolitan area. The club is in desperate need of revitalisation, not closure, so that it can continue to play a pivotal role in the local community for many years to come.