

Grant bonanza for Great Southern sport

■ Keir Tunbridge and Tim Edmunds

The Great Southern will soon be home to not one but two first-class WAFL-grade multimillion-dollar combined sporting facilities, after Albany's Centennial Park development and Mt Barker's Souness Park project were both successful in gaining major Federal grants this week.

The two projects will each receive a seven figure sum from round four of the Regional Development Australia fund.

The City of Albany's \$27 million

Centennial Park project received \$8.75 million and is now fully funded.

The Shire of Plantagenet's \$9 million Souness Park upgrade received \$1 million, and now only needs another \$1 million to be fully funded.

RDA Great Southern executive officer Simon Lyas said he was surprised but delighted both projects were successful.

"It's an outstanding result for the Great Southern in such a competitive grant round," he said.

Mr Lyas said there were 20 appli-

cations in WA, of which only five were successful — two in the Great Southern.

"It's a great outcome for Albany and Plantagenet, and a fantastic result for the project teams who have obviously been rewarded," he said.

Both projects applied for a previous RDA round last year but were bitterly disappointed when no Great Southern projects were successful.

Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington said the City's project would create a major sporting complex

for both elite and community use.

"Centennial Park will be a pre-eminent facility in regional Western Australia, a venue of choice for State level sporting events and a place to be enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds," he said.

The project consists of an eastern precinct upgrade, including a new stadium construction, a western precinct upgrade, including new soccer and cricket club rooms, and a central precinct Stage 1 upgrade to Railways playing surfaces and lighting.

Meanwhile in Mt Barker, Shire

of Plantagenet community services manager Nicole Selesnew was shocked at the announcement.

"To be honest we thought we were not going to be successful," she said.

Stage two will include a new cricket and soccer oval while stage three will involve the installation of a new synthetic hockey pitch with competition standard lighting.

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