

Oval facility receives \$8m pledge from both parties

STATE ELECTION

■ Keir Tunbridge

The biggest sporting facility upgrade in Albany's history could be fast-tracked following a last-minute Liberal election pledge of \$8.75 million for the project this week.

Deputy Premier Kim Hames made the funding promise in Albany on Tuesday, which would pave the way for the next stage of the \$19 million Centennial Park redevelopment to move forward – the centrepiece AFL and WAFL grade oval.

The announcement was welcomed by incumbent MP Peter Watson, who offered a promise that WA Labor would match the funding pledge if elected on Saturday.

The money would negate the need for the City of Albany to apply for Federal funding through the highly competitive Regional Development Australia program, which would hold the project up by at least four months.

City acting director of community services Cameron Woods said the first cab off the rank would be the oval facility, which the City aims to have ready by November 2014 to be used for Anzac centenary commemoration events.

As well as the premier oval, the comprehensive project includes new multi-use fields and clubrooms, improved lighting and drainage throughout the precinct, children's playgrounds, cycle paths, car parking and a commun-



Mayor Dennis Wellington
Picture: Laurie Benson

ity park. Stage one of the wider project was Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre.

Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington said there was no guarantee the City would be successful in its RDA application.

"This money now fast tracks it, so there would be Saturday's election result, and Monday we'll be there with our hand out," he said.

"We're off and running. We're very excited, it's a great fillip for us."

Albany Liberal candidate Trevor Cosh said the project had been talked about since 1976 and it was time it moved forward.

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