

West Australian
 Wednesday 23/10/2013
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Glory gave \$25k to Nationals

COMPENSATION CLAIM

EXCLUSIVE

■ **Gareth Parker**
 State Political Editor

Businessman Tony Sage donated \$25,000 to the WA Nationals within months of his Perth Glory soccer club negotiating taxpayer-funded compensation that was authorised by Sports Minister Terry Waldron, a Nationals MP, without him referring the matter to Cabinet.

The Government, with Mr Waldron's sole approval, agreed to pay Perth Glory \$400,000 after complaints from Mr Sage that Glory was losing money as a

result of the taxpayer-funded refurbishment of nib Stadium in East Perth, where it plays home games.

The payment was made from the project's \$95 million capital budget, despite a warning from the Department of Sport and Recreation, obtained by Labor under Freedom of Information laws, that this could risk some elements not being delivered.

Glory also got a \$500,000 sponsorship from Healthway, the Government's health promotion agency, after DSR director-general Ron Alexander suggested in a briefing note to Mr Waldron, also

obtained under FOI, that Glory pursue sponsorship in return for a waiver against further claims.

The Government also waived the hire fee for audio and video equipment at the stadium, saving the club about \$20,000 a game.

Nib Stadium's capacity was reduced to between 9500 and 10,500

while redevelopment works were undertaken during the 2012-13 season.

In early June last year, Mr Sage claimed Glory should be compensated \$1.5 million. On August 18, Mr Sage spoke at the Nationals' State conference.

On August 23, Perth Glory chief

executive Paul Kelly emailed a senior DSR official refusing to open the club's books for the purposes of calculating compensation, but also writing that: "Over the last few weeks we have been updating interested parties on our claim and they are awaiting your reference."

Perth Glory and International Goldfields, of which Mr Sage was chairman and a substantial shareholder, each donated \$12,500 to the WA Nationals in 2011-12, according to a return filed with the Australian Electoral Commission. The official return was later modified, with Glory's donation reduced to zero and International Goldfields' donation increased to \$25,000.

Jacqui Boydell, then the Nationals' State director and now an Upper House MP, said the return was amended at the request of the entities, but she refused to say if it was Mr Sage or someone else who made the request. Mr Waldron denied the donation and the compensation package were linked and said the payment was based on advice from DSR.

A spokesman for Mr Sage denied the issues were linked and said he had regularly donated to the Liberal and Labor parties.