

# Glory pocketed \$250,000: Buswell

**EXCLUSIVE**

■ Gareth Parker

West Australian  
Thursday 24/10/2013  
Page: 1

The State Government wrote off almost \$250,000 after Tony Sage's Perth Glory refused to pay a bill for taxpayer-funded public transport for home games at nib Stadium worth nearly \$400,000.

Relations between the Government and Mr Sage last night reached a flashpoint after Transport Minister Troy Buswell accused Perth Glory of "pocketing money" from taxpayers and its fans and said the club was "the worst" major sporting organisation

the Government had dealt with on transport issues.

Mr Sage said that rather than pocketing a cent, he had lost \$15 million as owner of the Glory and the Government was providing public transport services the club and its fans did not want.

The source of the dispute is a public transport levy, about \$2.20 a ticket, that Glory collected from its fans in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 A-League seasons. The club was billed by the Public Transport

Authority for special bus and train services for each home game at nib Stadium, with ticketholders given free public transport to and from games.

In both seasons Glory paid only some of the invoices. Glory has now withdrawn from the scheme, so fans will not get free public transport to and from games and no special bus or train services

▶ **CONTINUED** P7

## Glory pocketed subsidy: Buswell

◀ **FROM** P1

will be provided, beginning with Glory's home opener against Melbourne Heart on Sunday.

WA's two AFL clubs, basketball's Wildcats and rugby's Western Force all participate in the joint ticketing scheme.

Mr Buswell said yesterday the Government believed it was owed almost \$400,000 by Glory in unpaid public transport fees but had settled for \$150,000 in three quarterly instalments.

"We had a number of conversations with Perth Glory about that, and in the end I formed the view it would be better to take the \$150,000 that was on offer as part-payment, or settlement, of the \$400,000 of outstanding debt than to enter in what would have been a protracted process legally to extract that money from Perth Glory," Mr Buswell said.

Mr Sage disputed this, saying legislation required that only events with attendances bigger than 20,000 were compelled to participate in the joint ticketing scheme. Glory's average attendance in recent seasons has been

about 8500.

Mr Sage said Glory was confident it would have won the matter had it gone to court, which is why the Government had settled for the \$150,000 payment.

"They (Government) kept on billing us even when we said we didn't want it," Mr Sage said. "Seventy per cent of our fans didn't use it (public transport)."

Mr Buswell said Glory was not putting its fans' interests first.

"From my point of view, in terms of the transport arrangements — and don't forget we deal with all major sporting codes — they have been the worst organisation to deal with," he said.

Mr Sage said Glory had received much less Government money than AFL, basketball, rugby and netball.

"I'm never going to get my money back. I do it because I love it," he said.

"I'm not asking for anyone to get the violin out and feel sorry for me. But it's \$15 million out of my pocket. We have not received one cent of public money until we received compensation last year."