

STADIUM DEAL

Golf course³⁷ paid \$4.7m to close

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The State Government paid the operators of the former Burswood Park golf course nearly \$4.7 million to shut their business so it could build the new football stadium on the site.

The West Australian can reveal the payment after 18 months of refusals by the Government to release the figure.

After knocking back numerous requests from *The West* for the payout amount on the grounds of commercial confidentiality, Sports Minister Terry Waldron finally provided it as supplementary information to a Budget estimates hearing.

Premier Colin Barnett has said one of the advantages of the Burswood site over other candidates is that it is Government-owned land and unconstrained.

But in December 2012, the Government paid GolfWest, the operator of the golf course, almost \$4.7 million via the trust account of its lawyers, Hotchkin Hanly. The amount included \$94,234.88 in unpaid rent.

It is understood GolfWest had five years remaining on its lease of the golf course. The payment is the latest in a string of multi-million-dollar settlements to the private sector as part of various contractual dealings.

The Government has paid about \$7.25 million to the operators of the former Grand Palace Chinese restaurant after the Florence Hummerston Kiosk, in which the restaurant operated, was dismantled and moved to make way for Elizabeth Quay.

The owners are seeking up to \$20 million in the Supreme Court to settle the matter.

Labor accountability spokeswoman Rita Saffioti said the \$4.7 million payment to GolfWest was the latest example of large costs associated with the pursuit of Mr Barnett's "pet projects".

Mr Waldron defended the payment.

"To build the new Perth stadium, it was to be expected that there would be costs such as this," he said.

"That is part of the cost of providing Western Australia with a major new asset."