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Questions for Federal Minister for Sport & Federal Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells.

6th July 2022

Response required by 13th July 2022

ALM: Congratulations on your recent appointment as Federal Minister for Sport and Federal Minister for Aged Care.

ALM: Do you see that, within the health portfolio, the two areas have any synergy?

ALM: Politicians will often perform diverse roles through a ministerial career, but do you have particular professional experiences in these areas?

ALM: You come into the sports portfolio at an exciting time with, on the major sporting events side, an unprecedented decade of events coming up - including World Cups in womens basketball, football, netball and rugby; the men's Rugby World Cup, the Commonwealth Games in 2026 and the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. This must be exciting for you?

ALM: Beyond these major events, do you feel they will have a 'trickle down' effect to mass sporting participation?

ALM: Is it the case that you have kept a low profile during your five weeks in post and are we in the industry to be encouraged that this has been a time of learning, or are you facing issues, as so many employers are, with getting a team in place?

ALM: Or given that the Labor manifesto made few specific policy pledges in health beyond commitments to funding for Medicare and aged care, with no mentions of support for physical activity and sport, might it be a matter that are you developing new policies in this area?

ALM: In terms of activity, health and wellness, in opposition last year and again in the early weeks of Government, Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers has said he would be using New Zealand's 'wellbeing budget' model for his own first budget in October. What Treasurer Chalmers' interpretation of wellbeing is remains to be seen but do you see that areas of your portfolio might be part of supporting such wellbeing?

ALM: I would also like to ask where you are getting your advice. Have you engaged, or do you plan to engage, with industry and industry peak bodies and/or to take on board their experience?

ALM: I would argue that you may get better advice from industry and industry peak bodies than from government agencies where appointments of Coalition leaning board members has been the norm in recent years. Is that something you look to rectify with less partisan appointments?

ALM: For example, just last month a report by industry peak body AUSactive (the leading united body for Australia's exercise, fitness and wellbeing/wellness industry) commissioned by The Global Health & Fitness Alliance and undertaken by Deloitte Report revealed that inactivity costs Australia's healthcare system \$2 billion per year (reference <https://www.ausleisure.com.au/news/inactivity-costs-australias-healthcare-system-2-billion-per-year>). Do you such findings encourage you to take action?

ALM: AUSactive has also called for the Federal Government to again deliver a national physical activity campaign, perhaps reviving the messages delivered by the iconic Norm during the Life Be in It campaign of the 1980s. Given compelling reasons to get Australians more active, is this something you would consider or back?

ALM: Where do you stand on obesity taxes and taxes on sugary drinks and junk food - another means through which Australia's obesity epidemic, especially in children, might be combatted?

ALM: Changing the focus to elite sport, Australian Sports Commission (ASC) Chair Jo Sukkar has called for sports to be less reliant on government funding and to be more imaginative in raising revenue and look to generate more sponsorship income. Of course that is to be encouraged, but with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese backing increased action on climate change is there a risk of 'sportwashing' sponsorships by major mining and oil and gas companies? - Hancock, Woodside, Santos etc

ALM: The sports rorts affair under last Federal Government was a sorry episode that given the stated integrity aims of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese all those with a commitment to sport and communities would hope will never be repeated. What are your objectives for the funding of sports facilities?, and do you even see it as an area the Federal Government should be involved in?

ALM: Mindful that industry resources have to be managed effectively, do you think it appropriate that the ASC produces the Clearinghouse for Sport publication in competition with private sector publishers? To my knowledge, no other Federal Government department or agency produces such a publication, and, with specialist, independent media under increasing pressure from the social media and online giants, such a program seems like unnecessary government overreach? Do you have a view on this?

Questions from

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