

**AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

*Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation*

**MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Sport and Recreation)** [9.06 am]: I rise to inform the house of a recent event staged by Boxing WA, which was a credit to that organisation for its attention to detail in the way in which it was managed and in the level of safety provided to participants. Between Thursday, 31 March and Sunday, 3 April, Boxing WA hosted the Australian Amateur Boxing Championships at the Embassy Ballroom in Carlisle, attracting some 150 boxers who were supported by team coaches, 25 referees and judges from all Australian states. Western Australian boxers represented out state in an excellent fashion. I am proud to inform the house that our boxers won 20 of the 70 medals on offer in the cadet, junior and senior divisions, easily exceeding the previous best performance of 13 medals in 2004. I have no doubt that a big part of WA's success at those championships was due to the excellent preparation and supervision of the Western Australian team by state coaching coordinator Geoff Peterson. Mr Peterson was the assistant coach to the Australian Olympic boxing team that attended the 2004 Athens Olympics.

I congratulate the four Western Australian boxers selected during the championships to be part of a six-member Australian team that will conduct a two-month tour of Europe. They are Erle Wiltshire, Glen Gran, Michael Hatwell and Adam Forsyth. I also acknowledge the outstanding performance of Erin McGowan, Claire Ghabrial, Rebecca Jefferson and Rozmarin Simich who won gold for WA at the championships, doubling the previous best performance by women. I had the privilege of attending the finals, and I was delighted with the performance of our boxers. More than 2 500 spectators attended the championships over the four days of competition.

Boxing WA clearly demonstrated through the championships that with good planning and management, amateur combat sports can be conducted in a safe manner. Events such as those held by Boxing WA, however, are in stark contrast to the practices of some local fighting promoters whose events compromise competitors' safety in the pursuit of profit. I have asked the Department of Sport and Recreation to look at ways to continue to improve the safety standards for the amateur combat sports industry, particularly in the light of allegations regarding a recent event staged in Midland, which greatly disturbed me. I finally wish to acknowledge the excellent work being undertaken by the Professional Combat Sports Commission to improve procedures and information for and the supervision of Western Australia's professional combat sports industry.