

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS — DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

93. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to reports in the United States highlighting that domestic violence arrest rates of mixed martial arts fighters are double the national average. Does the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence fully support the Labor government's position on lifting the ban on the violent sport of cage fighting?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I do not know whether the member is aware but mixed martial arts is legal in Western Australia now and has been for some time. It has never not been the case. Labor took to the election a policy to make sure that that fighting was safe. It occurs in the suburbs —

Mr A. Krsticevic interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Carine.

Ms S.F. McGURK: It occurs in the suburbs in boxing-type rings, and injuries were occurring because there was no proper security around the fighting. That was debated within our party and a policy was taken to the election. Like many commitments made before the election, this government is making good on fulfilling those commitments.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: She is still on her feet, members! You cannot ask your supplementary yet.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I think it would be fair to say that a number of people involved in mixed martial arts would take offence at the suggestion that they are more likely to be involved in domestic and family violence. Last year, I attended Hamilton Senior High School, which had commissioned the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA. The women's council had been working with the high school on a prevention of family violence strategy throughout the school. The school invited "The Hulk", Soa Palelei, a well-known Ultimate Fighting Championship fighter.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms S.F. McGURK: He is a well-known UFC fighter and has been a senior and world champion fighter. He attended the high school to talk about his amazing story. Many people in this chamber might be familiar with it; it got some press coverage last year. He had been physically assaulted as a child by his, I think, uncle and had run away from home but had found a community and some solace in the UFC community. He trained and became a very successful fighter. He has a very powerful story. He went along as part of the women's council work at Hamilton Senior High School to talk about the need for people to be involved in their community, and to send a message against family violence. As I said, a lot of people involved in UFC would take offence at the link the member has tried to draw between family violence and the UFC.