



# WA COMBAT SPORTS INDUSTRY UPDATE

## LEGISLATION

### Combat's sports legislation - what's happening?

The Professional Combat Sports Amendment Bill 2009 has been passed by Parliament.

The new Act establishes broader regulatory coverage of combat sports in WA as the term 'professional' has been removed ensuring that all combat sports contestants now have the same level of health and safety controls that have been experienced by professional participants since the Professional Combat Sports Act was first introduced in 1987.

### What does the legislation do?

The amended legislation will:

- provide for improved standards and management of both professional and amateur full-contact combat sports events in WA, with specific emphasis on the major entertainment events with public admission;
- ensure an improvement in risk management practices for all combat sports and protect the health and safety of participants competing in events and activities in WA;
- provide authority to the PCSC to effectively regulate both professional and amateur contests, which are not exempt under the legislation;
- provide recognition and exemptions to well governed and managed amateur combat sport organisations and their affiliates which conduct combat sports activities and events in WA;
- provide an avenue to recognise new combat sports activities and organisations which meet minimum standards approved by the PCSC;
- approve competition rules and provide clearer, more detailed guidelines and minimum standards in combat sports participation for contestants and industry participants; and
- provide a professional, well governed organisation which exists for the future development of the WA combat sports industry; and the regulation and conduct of combat sports contests in our State.

### The new legislation does NOT:

- enforce regulatory standards on all combat sports events and activities in WA;
- impact the conduct of the wide variety of non-contact combat sport activities that are undertaken by individuals and clubs throughout WA for fitness, competition and grading/proficiency outcomes; or
- enforce that all combat sports participants in WA (contestants, trainers, coaches, event organisers, etc.) should be licensed.

### Why were these changes necessary?

The amended legislation provides greater clarity and assistance to ensure that specific full-contact combat sports events which include both professional and amateur fighters in WA are conducted to the highest level of health and safety standards.

Concerns raised by the public and industry participants in 2006 regarding contestant safety and inappropriate conduct at several amateur combat sports events highlighted that some were held:

- without a qualified medical practitioner and appropriate medical checks;
- at inappropriate venues (e.g. suburban back yards);
- with unsuitable and unsafe rings and equipment; and
- with severe mismatches and professional fighters competing as amateurs.

The WA Government recognises that there exist many well governed and managed amateur combat sports organisations with quality policies and procedures in place to manage competitions to a high standard in WA – however there has been instances where events are held outside the jurisdiction of such organisations and/or the PCSC's control, hence exposing contestants to potentially dangerous situations.



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The focus of the legislative changes is to broaden the responsibilities of the PCSC to be able to oversee the conduct of amateur full-contact combat sports contests to the same level as experienced by professional fighters.

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### When will these changes be implemented?

It is proposed that the new Act and WA Combat Sports Regulations will come into effect at the beginning of July 2012.

### One of my hobbies is combat sport – how will these changes affect me?

Unless you are competing in a full-contact type 'contest' including an exhibition, sparring and/or charity event which has been arranged for profit, tickets sold, conducted for public entertainment and where fighters are paid ... then the new Act and subsidiary Regulations will not impact on your combat sport involvement at all.

Businesses conducting non-contest combat sports activities including: classes, training, sparring and gradings will not be affected by the new legislation. Exemptions within the Regulations acknowledge that non-contact club or organisation activities are conducted in a low risk environment with well development risk management regimes including use of protective equipment.

Only physical contact contests will be covered by the amended Act and Regulations. In recent years there has also been an increase in promoters organising 'professional and amateur' contests. The Regulations will ensure that amateur contestants will receive the same high levels of health and safety standards and protective checks as the professionals during these contests.

### Where to from here?

The Department of Sport and Recreation and the PCSC will be undertaking industry consultation to gain feedback on the draft regulations and potential exemptions. Consultation will be undertaken via written feedback, web based surveys and face to face seminars/workshops. At this time it is envisaged that the consultation period will begin during December 2011 and finish in February 2012 with industry seminars/workshops.

The Department of Sport and Recreation will continue to work with the PCSC as they implement the new Act and finalise the amended Regulations, to ensure that all parties are educated, informed and supported through the transitional phase leading up to the July 2012 roll out.

### How can I find out more?

Contact Greg McGuire, PCSC Project Officer, at the Department of Sport and Recreation on 08 9492 9700 or via email [greg.mcguire@dsr.wa.gov.au](mailto:greg.mcguire@dsr.wa.gov.au)



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