

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

**15. Ms A. SANDERSON to the Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to creating jobs through its massive investment in tourism and its commitment to attracting world-class events, demonstrated by Sunday's Ultimate Fighting Championship event. Can the minister outline to the house how Perth and WA was promoted through this record-breaking event, and how will WA tourism benefit from this exposure?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

I thank the member for her question and her deep and abiding interest in UFC, which I came to realise post-the event after I did not arrange for her to get a seat! My apologies!

The UFC event —

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I did not; Tourism WA did.

Several members interjected.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** You just said you didn't arrange her a seat.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I did not.

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The UFC came to Western Australia as a direct consequence of advocacy by the tens of thousands of mixed martial artists and UFC fans across Western Australia who approached the then Leader of the Opposition some years ago to lift the ridiculous ban on the octagon in mixed martial centres and for mixed martial arts bouts. They demonstrated to the then Leader of the Opposition the sanity of the decision to make it safer for mixed martial artists to be able to engage in their sport—the fastest growing sport in the world—in Western Australia if they were inside an octagon. The now Premier took the right decision at that time to commit to lifting the ban. We did that after taking office, and as a consequence the UFC committed to coming to Western Australia. It was a huge event. It is the single biggest event as far as gate takings hosted at Perth Arena; \$3.6 million in box office takings at Perth Arena, 12 000 fans and, incredibly, more than 4 000 of those fans from interstate or overseas.

These are all genuine visitors.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** How many go to the footy?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Not many genuine visitors come to football, actually. These are genuine visitors. Thirty per cent of the crowd were from interstate and overseas—a massive boost to our hotel occupancy, a massive boost to our hospitality industry and a massive boost to tourism and growing jobs in Western Australia. It was a wonderful event. The crowd was incredibly well-behaved and it was a magnificent event. The reach for that event and the promotion of Western Australia was extraordinary. Those 12 000 people inside Perth Arena saw it on the big screens, live, as it was beamed into 150 countries around the world in 22 languages. A global pay-per-view audience in the order of 15 million watched as in between every bout, and in between every round of every bout, at least one video promoting Just Another Day in WA was broadcast, showing quokkas, dolphins, wine, food, the magnificent Kimberley and all the attractions across the regions of the state, promoted to an audience of tens of millions around the world. That was extraordinary.

It was an incredible package, but the only thing I can say we might have done better —

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The undercard was wonderful. The undercard was extraordinary. There were some incredible Australian —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The member for West Swan loved it. The undercard was wonderful.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** There were Australians, there were Kiwis —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Are you going to wind this up?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** There were Australians, there were Kiwis, there were Islanders. We could, however, have extended the search —

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** Oh, so close!

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, not close enough for you. I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** We could perhaps have gone to Rottnest Island —

Several members interjected.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Perhaps we could have had “Punchy” McGrath in the undercard!

**The SPEAKER:** I think you have just thrown your last punch!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Thanks, Mr Speaker. Perhaps we could have had in the undercard “Punchy” McGrath and “Flat-out” Collier! That would have finished off the evening wonderfully!