

**BRIEF MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
**MINISTER FOR SPORT AND RECREATION**  
***Combat Sports Industry – Weight Cutting***

The findings and recommendations of the State Coroner on the tragic death of Jessica Lesley Jackson, an 18-year old Muay Thai contestant, were recently released.

Firstly, I'd like to extend my deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Jessica and thank them for their efforts to help improve safety within the combat sports industry.

The loss of any young person is deeply regretted, but Jess's death is not only a tragedy, but a call out to the entire Combat Sports community.

During the recent inquest, Coroner Linton acknowledged the importance of cultural change to remove the emphasis on extreme weight cutting within the sport.

The Commission accepts it has a clear role to play in driving cultural change. It is equally clear, and highlighted in the report, that this will not be achieved unless it is supported through the efforts of all within the industry, including contestants, parents, medical practitioners, trainers, gym owners and promoters.

The report and recommendations acknowledge that the Commission's development of a 'Strategy to Address Rapid Weight Loss by Dehydration' has already had some beneficial results, focused on three key pillars - weight assessment, regulation and education.

Over the past 18 months, the Commission has worked hard to raise awareness and educate the entire the Combat Sports community of the dangers of rapid weight loss through dehydration. As part of this work, the Commission, led by Bob Kucera, has launched a compulsory online education unit for contestants and industry participants such as trainers, managers, promoters and officials, which must now be completed as part of their registration.

As Minister, I accept the recommendations, as well as the comments made by Coroner Linton as to the complexity of the issue, and the attempts by the Commission to develop a comprehensive approach.

Firstly, the Commission and I will consider what legislative amendments may be required to continue to increase safety aspects for contestants. If not already covered by both local government and/or Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety legislation, giving the Commission itself greater powers and the capacity to enforce them will also be explored.

Secondly, the Commission is already examining a scheme that requires contestants to provide pre-contest weights. This will form part of the intended research programmes coupled with the already announced strategy.

Once again I must express the importance of a collaborative approach between the Commission and the Industry to continue riding this tide of change.

Jess has left a legacy that should be a wakeup call to all throughout the industry, not just in Western Australia, but hopefully World-wide. The fatal consequence of rapid weight loss through dehydration must drive that change, for the benefit of the entire combat sports community.