



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for City and Government Services

Redirected to: Minister for Sport and Recreation

In relation to: Access Canberra and Medical clearance to participate in combat sports

Hearing: 23 July 2026

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 76-77

Transcript provided: 27 July 2026

Answer Due: 3 August 2026

Mr Rynehart took on notice the following question(s):

MR EMERSON: Yes, I was going to—I think you asked about this, Mr Werner-Gibbins. The New South Wales in government 2024 provided and mandated free concussion training, I believe, for all combat sport participants, promoters, industry participants, officials and medical practitioners. And I think their laws require for a combatant to be declared medically—well, if they have been declared medically unfit they cannot participate in competition or sparring until cleared by a medical practitioner; whereas my understanding is in the ACT that clearance only applies to competition but not sparring.

Ms Cubin: I would have to take that on notice. The policy for controlled sports sits with Minister Berry, so I will just have to have some clarity around—

Mr Rynehart: Yes, we will come back on that.

MR EMERSON: Okay, and if so if there is any consideration of harmonisation or following what New South Wales has done, while you are taking it on notice.

Mr Rynehart: So that is possibly more for sports and rec, we will provide what we can, yes.

MR EMERSON: Okay. Thank you.

Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The ACT's controlled sports regulatory framework does not permit a contestant to return to competition in a registered event while subject to a medical suspension or where a post-fight medical assessment has determined that they are medically unfit to compete. This includes concussion-related medical suspensions and other restrictions imposed following a bout. Contestants who have been stopped on medical grounds must obtain an appropriate certificate of fitness before returning to competition.

The *ACT Controlled Sports Code of Practice 2024 (No. 1)* under the *Controlled Sports Act 2019* requires that a minimum 30-day medical suspension be imposed following a loss by knockout, technical knockout, concussion, or loss of consciousness. The medical practitioner may impose a longer suspension period where clinically appropriate. This aligns with NSW requirements regarding return to competition.

The ACT regulatory framework is directed at participation in controlled sports events and competitions, rather than day-to-day training activities such as sparring. However, the *Controlled Sports Code of Practice 2024 (No. 1)* recommends that contestants refrain from sparring and training during the period of medical suspension. This differs to NSW, where return to training (sparring) is regulated.

The capacity of combat sports regulators in any jurisdiction to oversee or enforce requirements within individual training environments is inherently limited. As with other contact sports, decisions about an athlete's return to training and sport following a head injury rely heavily on the judgement and support of medical practitioners, coaches, parents or guardians, and the athlete themselves. For this reason and noting the resources needed to monitor compliance, the ACT is not considering regulating training requirements at this time.

To support these decisions, many sporting organisations, including CombatAus and the ACT Academy of Sport, have adopted concussion management protocols informed by the *Australian Concussion Guidelines for Youth and Community Sport*. Developed collaboratively by the Australian Institute of Sport, the Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians, Sports Medicine Australia and the Australian Physiotherapy Association, the Guidelines provide evidence-based advice on the recognition, management and graduated return to sport following concussion. Importantly, the Guidelines emphasise an individualised approach based on symptoms and clinical assessment, rather than relying solely on fixed time-based restrictions.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026-2027

Signature:



Date:

By the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Chris Steel MLA

2/8/26