

Must we really do as the Romans did?

In the later period of the Roman Empire, the slow decline of social harmony, economic circumstances and rising political corruption led to the start of gladiator spectacles lasting 100 days, and the distribution of free or subsidised grain to keep the masses fed and entertained. Bread and circuses.

The underlying political malaise continued and the Roman Empire fell.

I was reminded of this history when considering the massive UFC fight on the lawns of the White House. Really? Is the American "empire" in a terminal state?

And then I thought we have to ask the same questions about WA. Hospital ramping. Schools in crisis. Housing shortage. Rising fuel and power bills. Strikes. No more demersal fishing. And the key offerings of our government are a race track and a rugby team? How worried do I need to be?

Ken Perry, Nedlands

Promoting violence

Where in the world is the USA heading under Donald Trump, with an Ultimate Fighting Championship spectacle on the lawns of the White House that was crammed with an avid audience of fans?

The USA is mired with violence on a daily basis. Cities and towns and schools witness rampant gun-toting incidents and death by guns and knives.

Television is full of cops and



UFC at the White House.

robbers programs, with rampant images of smash and grab and gunfights that make the old Wild West movies pale by comparison.

And now we have a US president showcasing the banal — and unfortunately popular — exhibition of putting humans in a cage and proceeding to beat each other, which often results in blood-spattered conclusions.

What example is this president giving to kids and young teens growing up in a sea of aggression?

As an Australian veteran myself, I know what war can do to societies. But the difference is, at least in Australia, defence against those who would do us harm is fundamental.

Unfortunately, Australia is now not much better in showcasing caged fighting as a highly prompted blood sport backed by, for example, the current WA Government.

The thing is, it is not a sport like footy or rugby or heaps of other great contested sports.

It is a celebration of banal behaviour that does nothing to promote anything beyond violence for violence's sake.

And now we have the leader of the free world using his own backyard for cage fighting to help celebrate his 80th birthday. How pathetic.

John McCourt, Perth

An outlet for grievances

A few weeks ago we witnessed the riots in Paris after its soccer team PSG won the Champions League.

Then this weekend we saw this behaviour repeated in New York after its basketball team, the NY Knicks, won the NBA title. Torching buses, smashing windscreens of police cars and damaging public property resulted in more than 60 arrests with 10 police officers injured. Stabbings and shootings were also reported.

Why have celebrations descended to this level? Quite frankly it is not surprising because the social fabric of society is coming apart causing people to take out their frustrations, especially in relation to inequality, discrimination and social injustice, under cover of celebrations.

These occasions provide the ideal opportunity for people to manifest their emotions and grievances. Unfortunately as unpalatable as these actions or reactions are, they are unlikely to go away anytime soon.

Bruce Strang, Jolimont