

DEFENCE FORCE VETERANS

Motion

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [11.32 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house acknowledges —

- (a) the service of all Western Australian Defence Force veterans and serving personnel and their families;
- (b) the positive measures that have been taken by the McGowan government to help our veterans, especially with respect to transition; and
- (c) the commitment of the McGowan government to major memorial projects.

My intent is to speak broadly to this motion; I am sure that some of my colleagues will address the individual limbs of the motion in more detail. Members have heard me speak often in this place about veterans and the importance of looking after them. I start by acknowledging all veterans and serving personnel in Western Australia, and especially their families.

Service is a sacrifice to country, community and family for the pursuit of our safety and freedoms. What we ask of our serving personnel and their families is above and beyond anything that we ask of anyone else, and they do it with pride, courage, commitment and conviction. A career of service is a life of consistent disruption, prolonged absences from home, and a constant state of readiness to answer the call every time it comes. The lives of service people and their families are a far cry from the life of the everyday Australian. The physical, mental and emotional demands of the job can be extreme. They can be unrelenting. At times, for their family members, it can feel as though the pursuit of providing support is just the same. It is an insurmountable goal to secure the future and wellbeing of our veterans. However, Western Australians in particular have shown time and again our resilience and our spirit to keep going no matter what the challenge and no matter the difficulty of the task ahead. This government in particular has shown that it is willing to do the work necessary to invest in Western Australian veterans and their families, and, indeed, in Western Australia's ex-service organisations.

I briefly pause here to make the important point that the primary role of looking after our veterans is a core responsibility of the federal government, but I say that to then make the point that since the election of the McGowan government in 2017, this state government has made a concerted effort to not only increase the level of funding that goes towards veterans and our ex-service organisations, but also look at the way that funding is managed. For example, under Minister Papalia, we have seen a significant increase in quantum in the Anzac Day Trust. I have spoken about this before. But it is also critically important to look at the way that funding is allocated. A lot of hard work has been done by Mr Tony Carter, the chair of the Anzac Day Trust, working with the minister to now establish, for example, funding that is over two, three or more years, which allows some of our larger ex-service organisations to start a program that will continue on and to know that they have a certainty of funding behind them, which gives them that certainty to get on with the program. One example is the funding for our veterans who are transitioning into the workforce, which is a joint program through Working Spirit and the Returned and Services League of Australia WA. Working Spirit is a fantastic success story. I remember probably five or six years ago was the first time I met Karyn Hinder, the woman who founded Working Spirit. She is a former RAAFie. She had a goal to place as many veterans as she could who were transitioning out of the Australian Defence Force into the workforce. I do not remember her initial target, but it was low. I think it was something like she wanted to get 20 veterans into jobs in the next 12 months. The state government gave her a very small amount of funding at the time. She took it and ran with it, and she has now created an exceptional not-for-profit organisation. She has merged her small enterprise with RSLWA, and it now has a fantastic program for veterans in Western Australia who are transitioning out of the ADF. I will not say it is recurrent funding; it is a grant, but it is spread over several years to ensure that that organisation can do what it wants to do.

I also give a shout-out to Legacy WA and its work, especially for veterans' families. That organisation is changing what it does because of the changing landscape of what it is to look after veterans and their families. Historically, Legacy started after World War I, when there was a significant number of widows and families who needed to be looked after. That has changed now. In the modern military, we thankfully do not see the number of deaths that we used to see, so Legacy is pivoting towards looking after living veterans and their families when it is needed. This is great to see.

It is also fantastic to see Legacy and the RSL, the two bigger ex-service organisations in this state, working together. In an Australian first, they came together and put on the Better Together Ball, which happened a couple of weeks ago. It was an outstanding event. It raised a lot of money, but, importantly, also raised awareness about what is happening with veterans. It was well supported by government. Hon Kate Doust; Hon Bill Johnston, who is a Legatee; Hon Peter Tinley, who is an Army veteran; Hon Paul Papalia, Minister for Veterans Issues, who is also an Army and Navy veteran; the Premier, who was in the Navy; and the Governor were there. Hon Tjorn Sibma was also there.

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Hon Tjorn Sibma and I were so far down the dignitaries list that I almost forgot that either of us were there! It was a fantastic event; it was a night that celebrated everything that is really fantastic about the veterans community in Western Australia.

Only the week before, the defence industry dinner was held in the same room. This is just as pertinent to what I am talking about today. The links between the Australian Defence Force and the defence industry through the number of veterans recruited to some of our leading small to medium-sized enterprises in the defence industry were on clear display. Veterans who have served their country are now being employed by leading companies in the industry that serve defence directly, many of which are based in Henderson. I give a shout-out to many of those companies because they have deliberate recruiting policies for engaging veterans, and I congratulate them on that. The companies realise that when they employ a veteran, they end up with someone who is highly disciplined and highly skilled. They have an incredibly high level of skill. We have to remember that the federal government has literally put hundreds of thousands of dollars into training each of those individuals. They are motivated and they are goal oriented. Employing a veteran is the ultimate win-win for many of these SMEs and businesses around the state.

I also want to touch briefly on the last limb of the motion, which refers to memorials. It is important that we recognise our history. Not a huge amount of money by government standards is spent on memorials, but contributing to something of priceless significance that is a place for people to not only commemorate, but also gather and belong and, for some, to reflect and mourn is extremely important. There is a list of memorials, and I am sure that others will speak about some of them, but I want to reflect briefly on three of them. The Korean War memorial is due for completion in Kings Park shortly. I acknowledge the Honorary Consul of Korea, Fay Duda. I have known her all my life and she has worked tirelessly to get this very important memorial established in Kings Park. The funding from the state government that has gone to help the project has been very well spent. It is a memorial for an entire conflict, and it is not before time that we had something in Kings Park that acknowledges the Korean conflict.

In that same geographic area of Kings Park, we will soon have the memorial to the Battle of Crete. The memorial has been designed by Smith Sculptors. Hon Steve Martin spoke about being at the memorial in Geraldton for HMAS *Sydney II*, which is an outstanding memorial that was also designed by Smith Sculptors. The Crete memorial is an incredible concept built on the idea of a broken Greek column, with frescoes of Allied soldiers, Greek soldiers and a Cretan civilian. There was a desire by some to drop the height of the memorial, but the height is what is bringing the concept to life, because it is just that—it is a broken pillar and everything that represents. It is a critical design element. I am eagerly awaiting the completion of the memorial.

The third memorial that I will talk about, which is almost complete, is the memorial to HMAS *Perth* at the Navy League of Australia headquarters on the Swan River in Bicton. There is a link between the memorial and the one that I just spoke of for the Battle of Crete. As students of history will know, HMAS *Perth* was one of the key naval assets at the Battle of Crete. For the first time in her career, she took serious damage from that conflict and was sent back to Australia to be repaired and refitted. Because of that, she found herself as a light cruiser, along with USS *Houston*, which was a heavy cruiser, in the Sunda Strait. They came across an Imperial Japanese task force and both those ships were sunk. But I go back to the memorial. It is a fantastic design. There is a granite wall of remembrance and, I think, a half-scale replica of the screw, or the propeller, of the ship itself. What has now been completed is a fantastic glass-walled section, the design of which is taken from the lines of the ship. It will be a fantastic memorial on the river in Bicton. The member for Bicton has worked hard with the Navy League down there. I have seen her down there on a couple of occasions, and I have also been down there with Minister Papalia to look at where that memorial is at.

I want to conclude my remarks by coming back to the core of this motion, and that is recognising the incredible contribution that veterans both made to our nation and continue to make to our community. Australia has a very proud history of highly skilled and courageous defence personnel. The McGowan Labor government has acknowledged and does acknowledge the significant contributions made by veterans and those who are currently serving, and that is why it is a priority of this government to put funding into transition programs that facilitate and aid our veterans coming out of the ADF into new careers and jobs. We are delivering an incredibly high level of investment into support services for veterans and ex-service organisations and into commemorative memorials. I am very proud to be part of a government that takes its role in the welfare of our veterans community seriously, a government that is approaching each step with renewed vigour and ambition to reach its goals and make post-service life the best it can be for all Western Australian veterans.

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.47 am]: I know a number of members are very keen to speak on this motion, so I will endeavour to get through everything I can as quickly as I can. I acknowledge Hon Dan Caddy for bringing this motion before us. We would all agree that anything that recognises the service of those who have served and do serve our nation and our state, and their families, as well as the funding for many of the memorials, as the member talked about, and the ex-service organisations that support

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those veterans and service people, is a motion that we can all wholeheartedly support, as I do. It does not matter what side of politics members are on; this is an issue that transcends politics.

As Hon Dan Caddy mentioned, those people have given their lives in the service of our nation, and for that they deserve our deepest thanks. We also acknowledge their families. It is a tremendous gift to the community that those people have given us and the best we can do is to thank and honour them and to provide them with the support and services they need, as well as to help commemorate those who have served in past battles.

While I am standing, I also want to acknowledge those members of our families who have served, because many of us of course will be close to people who have served or are serving in our defence forces. My father was in the 28th Battalion of the Royal Western Australia Regiment in the Citizens Military Forces. One of my uncles was in the 3rd Battalion, RAR; one was in the 8th/9th Battalion, RAR; and another did two tours in Vietnam with the 1st and 3rd Squadrons, Special Air Service Regiment. My grandfather on my mother's side was in the British Army. Lance Corporal Leslie Burt served in North Africa, Italy and France in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and the Essex Regiment.

I am not alone, many Australians and Western Australians are close to people who have served. In fact, the Australian Defence Force strength as at June 2022 was 59 304 members with more than 31 000 people in the reserves. That is a significant number of Australians serving our nation in our armed services. According to the 2021 census, about 581 100 people have served in the ADF. That is 2.8 per cent of the Australian population. It is a significant number of people. Thirteen per cent of those people need assistance with core activities such as self-care, mobility or communication, and three in five previous service members have a long-term health condition. That is why state and federal governments, and all of us in this place, should be grateful for any and all the support and resources put towards assisting ex-service people.

Hon Dan Caddy talked about the Returned and Services League of Australia WA's Veteran Central. It is a fantastic initiative that is leading the nation in delivering services for veterans, providing them with not only the assistance they need in transitioning out of the armed services, but also health services—psychological services, ophthalmology, dental services and all sorts of other medical services. It is testament to the RSL in Western Australia that it had the vision for and got the support it needed to make that service work. Of course, a big part of that, as Hon Dan Caddy mentioned, is Working Spirit. I, too, have had the pleasure of meeting with Karyn Hinder a number of times over the years and visiting the Working Spirit exhibitions she holds with prospective employers and currently serving and ex-service personnel. Earlier this year, I attended a summit with the Leader of the Opposition and other members. It was absolutely fantastic to see how keen employers were to employ ex-service people and how keen and enthusiastic those looking to transition out of the services were.

Karyn Hinder has done a lot of work to get the organisation to where it is. It is a testament to her drive and commitment to give back to those who serve and who have served. I really want to acknowledge the wonderful work she has done. She started the organisation back in 2016 when she was still serving in the military. She is still employed as a reservist with the Air Force. Karyn had 27 years in the military, as a soldier in the Australian Army from 1993 and transferring to the RAAF in 2005. The idea of the organisation came out of a conversation she had with a colleague of hers who was going through some tough times. As a result of that conversation, Karyn really worked hard to establish what is now Working Spirit. The organisation finds employment for people transitioning out of the armed services. I know there have been a number of initiatives in lots of different areas, including the mining industry. Of course, most recently, the agriculture industry has looked at employing ex-service personnel. I think there are certainly opportunities there, as there are right across industry sectors of our broad economy.

People who have served and do serve have a great number of skills, as Hon Dan Caddy pointed out. Talking with Karyn at Working Spirit, it was interesting to hear about some of the issues around recognition for the qualifications that people in the military have and the need to align those with the qualifications in civilian society. It blows my mind that some of those qualifications do not really align, or match up, or are difficult to get recognised. That has been a big problem for people transitioning; despite having the skills, industry does not recognise their qualifications. There is work to do there, and it is being done. We need to put our minds to making sure that those qualifications are recognised.

I want to give a shout-out to Legacy WA as well as RSLWA. Legacy WA does a fantastic job working with families. It is incredibly important. As Hon Dan Caddy said, the Legacy WA–RSL ball was held on 12 November. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the ball. I was in Albany on that night attending the Albany RSL 105th anniversary dinner. Hon Alannah MacTiernan was there as well. It was a fantastic night at the Albany Entertainment Centre, with a huge number of people in attendance. It was a really fantastic night to celebrate the 105th anniversary of the Albany RSL. Of course, Albany is the home of the Anzacs in Western Australia.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: You're stealing my thunder. I was going to talk about that.

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: I have only a minute and a half left, minister, so I will not say too much more.

Albany is an important piece of the puzzle, if you like, of the military history of this country. For many, it was the last place people saw before they left for service in World War I. In the short time I have left, I want to acknowledge those who organised the Albany RSL 105th anniversary dinner. I also want to make the point that I firmly believe—I am sure others would agree—that the National Anzac Centre in Albany is incredibly important to our nation's military history. My colleagues and I encourage the government, and have made representations to federal ministers, to have the National Anzac Centre in Albany annexed to the Australian War Memorial, make entry free and continue to fund that incredibly important centre. It is absolutely marvellous. If members have not had the chance to visit it, I suggest that they do. The experience of the history one can get going through the facility is absolutely amazing. I think it is incumbent on all of us to find a way to make sure that facility gets the funding it needs to continue to run and become more accessible to everyone.

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan) [11.57 am]: I thank Hon Dan Caddy for moving this very thoughtful motion today. In light of the fact that Remembrance Day was on the eleventh of this month, it is indeed timely. The first part of the motion acknowledges our constituents in Western Australia who have served or are serving. It is very important to do that and to continue doing that. Hon Colin de Grussa referenced his own family. He is right that a lot of us in this place and throughout this building have family members who have served or are serving. We have seen the ramifications for some of their service to their state and country. In particular, I think of my uncle, who is only a couple of years older than me, who has only just come out of serving in the Army. He joined at the age of 16. He has served in a range of countries and is now dealing with the outcomes of his service with pretty significant PTSD. I have seen the impact of that on his working life and his family. I know this state government and the federal government are doing significant and important work to try to provide support to people in his situation to assist them to work their way through the transition into a different way of life that will benefit them and their families.

A lot of us attended the Legacy WA–RSLWA ball a couple of weeks ago. It was the first joint ball and I hope they made a lot of money because the work they do is very important and the projects they highlight are of great benefit. The state government has certainly contributed a reasonable amount of money to the projects that Legacy WA has been involved in. This year, \$380 000 was provided to Legacy WA in the form of grants. That replicates a similar amount that was provided in 2020. That will enable Legacy to run a number of projects that provide for independent living, an intake program to provide respite support, and the camps in Busselton that it has continued to provide for the children of serving members and veterans and their families.

Hon Dan Caddy referenced the links to Legacy. The link to Legacy was very important to my husband, Bill Johnston, and his family. Bill was a Legatee. Today, he shared with me a document that I had not seen before. It was written by the person in Legacy to whom he was linked as a child. Bill's father had joined the Navy in 1942 at the age of 17, and he served until 1946, so he was still a boy if we think about it. Upon his return, he married and had eight children. Sadly, when Bill was aged two, his father died as a result of his wartime engagement and the impact upon his health. The family became involved in Legacy, and Legacy was able to provide significant respite to help my mother-in-law, Carmel, look after her children. Bill talks about going on camps and about the level of support those people provided to help his family work through its issues. Although that is now close to 50 years ago, the work that was done by that organisation is still being replicated on a daily basis. It is important that Legacy and the Returned and Services League of Australia are now coming together more often and working jointly on projects rather than acting in separate arenas.

Another area to which the government is providing support, particularly in the south metropolitan area, is the work that is done by the Royal Australian Air Force Association. Hon Tjorn Sibma has had some involvement with RAAFA, as has Hon Dan Caddy. During the recent state election campaign, the state government provided a grant of \$90 000 to the RAAFA Aviation Heritage Museum to enhance its exhibitions. One is the Sugarbird Lady project. There is also an interactive trail for young people to follow. It might not be a huge amount of money, but it is important for the projects that RAAFA is running because it enables young people and students in our community to gain an idea of what occurred during wartime and to understand the outcomes and impacts of those events. I want to acknowledge Ian Craig from the RAAFA museum, and John Murray, the CEO of RAAFA, for the ongoing significant work that they and their board are doing to provide veterans with assistance and support in a variety of areas.

RAAFA is currently heavily involved with the Andrew Russell program, which is looking to build a facility in Cannington with about 27 units to provide transitional housing support to veterans who have become homeless and provide them with counselling. I understand that there will also be a purpose-built facility to provide additional supports. It is very important to provide a place such as this. The state government has provided more than \$150 000 as the starting point for the project. Peter Tinley, the member for Willagee, has been actively engaged in the project and in pushing it along at both the state and federal government level. I also want to acknowledge the current state Minister for Veterans Affairs, Paul Papalia. As a veteran himself, he is passionate about those issues. Hopefully, by working together with the federal government under the new Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel,

Matt Keogh, they will be able to provide more support for those types of facilities. Work is also taking place with the local government in Rockingham to provide additional supports for transitional housing for vets. Homelessness arrangements for vets are slightly different from normal homelessness arrangements. Veterans are dealing with different types of trauma, and it is important that they are provided with purpose-built facilities to provide the level of support that they need to enable both themselves and their families to resolve the issues that they are dealing with and try to get back into a better frame of mind for their lives.

I think back to the uncle whom I mentioned earlier who is constantly going backwards and forwards trying to find his place in life again and how difficult that has been for him and his family. RAAFA is doing an outstanding job, not just from the historical perspective in the museum, and more work needs to be done to support that, but also certainly in the work that it is doing with the Andrew Russell program. I look forward to that project commencing construction and being completed, and, hopefully, being replicated in other parts of the state. I imagine that would also be important in our regional areas.

I also want to touch on the Crete memorial that was mentioned by Hon Dan Caddy. That sounds like a fantastic project. That is also close to my family's heart. My great-uncle Frank Graffin passed away in Crete at the age of 22. That has always been a significant issue for the family. He went to battle with five of his brothers and his brother-in-law and, sadly, was the only one who did not come home. I want to acknowledge Geoff Gallop, one of our former Premiers, because many years ago when Geoff and his late wife, Bev, went to Crete to acknowledge that particular Perth group, the 2nd/11th Battalion, they found my great-uncle's grave, laid flowers and took photos so that we could provide that to our family and we could get a bit of closure, if you like, from knowing where his body was located. That was a really important thing for him to do. I look forward to the Crete memorial being completed, because I know it is significant for a lot of people in Perth.

The state government is also doing a lot of positive work in the area of employment engagement for veterans. Hon Colin de Grussa referenced in his comments that it is important to recognise the skills that veterans have gained in the roles that they played in their wartime or peacetime engagement. Those people can make valuable contributions to our community and it is important that we provide services to help them.

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan) [12.07 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this very important motion. From the outset, I want to thank Hon Dan Caddy for moving another very important and meaningful motion, as we have heard from the previous speakers. Indeed, we in Western Australia need to thank our veterans for having served this nation so amazingly well.

Last Sunday, I had the opportunity to represent the Premier at a commemoration ceremony for the 2/2nd Commando Squadron Association. I understand that Hon Alannah MacTiernan has been a patron of that association for quite some time. At that ceremony, I was sitting next to a gentleman who is probably in his 70s, and we had a chat. He asked me whether I had served, and I said yes, and I said to him that I could see that he also had served, because he had a pin on his tie for the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. He told me that he was a national serviceman who had enlisted and had gone to Vietnam. I later found out that he was actually a recipient of the Medal for Gallantry. We chatted more after he gave a very rousing and amazing ode—the best I have ever heard. I had actually met him a few years ago. He told me that he is now involved with the association that assists the current cohort of executives in carrying on the tradition of recognising the service of those who served in World War II.

Here is a bit of a story about the 2/2nd Commando Squadron, which consisted mostly of Western Australians and was sent to East Timor. When the 6 000-strong Imperial Japanese Army arrived in East Timor, the troops, which were mostly British and Dutch, were overwhelmed, but this group of soldiers went to the hills and continued guerilla warfare against the Japanese. It was believed in Australia, for some two or three months, that this unit was missing.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan: I think it was for nine months.

Hon PIERRE YANG: It was officially listed as missing for over three months. Perhaps there were other views as well. In any event, in April 1942, the unit was able to make contact with Darwin after assembling a number of radio sets together—the true spirit of improvisation of the military—and let Australia know that it was still in Timor and still fighting the Japanese. Supplies and ammunition were sent to the unit so that it could continue to hold the Imperial Japanese Armed Forces in Timor. The soldiers showed incredible stamina and effort in assisting the overall war effort. The Japanese had to commit another nine battalions to contain the activities of the 2/2nd Commando Squadron, and that actually had a huge impact in the Pacific theatre.

When we were going through our officer training at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, the case study throughout our course was the Kokoda campaign, which was conducted primarily by the Army Reserves, which was called the Citizens Military Forces back then. As we know, Australia cannot send Army reservists overseas, but Papua New Guinea was an Australian external territory, so we sent our reserve forces to Papua New Guinea. When the Australian forces received the news that the Imperial Japanese Army had landed in the northern part of Papua New Guinea,

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they advanced along the Kokoda Trail to take them on. Obviously, the battle-hardened, well-trained, well-resourced Imperial Japanese forces quickly overpowered the Australian Army, which was primarily made up of reservists who had little training and less-than-competitive equipment. However, they fought incredibly hard and bravely to reduce the rate of advance of the Japanese forces, at which point the 2nd Australian Imperial Force had come back from North Africa. That was another great decision by Australian Prime Minister John Curtin—to bring the troops back from Africa and Europe to make sure that Australia was defended.

We can imagine now that if the 2/2nd Commando Squadron had not done what it did in East Timor, another 6 000 men could potentially have joined the Imperial Japanese forces in Papua New Guinea. Obviously, history does not allow ifs and buts, but a realistic scenario was that Port Moresby could have fallen into Japanese hands. In that final stage of the battle, when the AIF soldiers arrived, they could hear gunshots and artillery rounds from Port Moresby. The Japanese forces were really close to the southern coast of Papua New Guinea. Thanks to the efforts of all involved in the 2/2nd Commando Squadron, the task faced by those soldiers in Papua New Guinea was not as strenuous. The last 2/2nd Commando Squadron veteran passed away in 2020. It was a heartwarming experience for me to see that we, as a nation, are carrying on the tradition of recognising those who have served our nation.

I want to conclude my contribution by reciting the citation for the award of the Medal for Gallantry to Private Burridge. It reads —

Private John Burridge commenced his National Service obligation on 1 May 1968 and after recruit training was posted to 5th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment on 9 July 1968. He arrived in South Vietnam on 15 February 1969 as a machine gunner in 11 Platoon.

On 4 April 1969, while on Operation Overlander, 11 Platoon came under heavy enemy machine gun and rocket fire from a bunker position at a range of 20 metres.

I will not have enough time to read it all out, so I will just say this: he was able to move to a position to apply consistent fire onto the enemy's position so that his comrades could move forward and take it. For his courage and disregard for his own safety, he was awarded this medal.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (South West — Minister for Regional Development) [12.17 pm]: I thank Hon Dan Caddy for bringing forward this motion and giving members on both sides of the house an opportunity to reflect on the contribution of servicemen and raise a number of related issues. Our government has been served well by two distinguished ex-service personnel in Minister Paul Papalia and Peter Tinley, both of whom had distinguished overseas service, not to mention a number of fabulous reservists, like Hon Pierre Yang.

One thing that Hon Dan Caddy talked about was the importance of encouraging and seeing the talent of ex-service personnel, recognising the important skills they can bring, and seeing their military experience as being beneficial to the community post-service life. Hon Dan Caddy talked about the defence industry veterans employment scheme. I guess I first became conscious of just how a post-military career can play out when visiting Malacca and various places throughout Malaysia. A number of people had been in the British Army, and when the British pulled out in 1971, many of the large multinational companies zeroed in on the British officers, recognising that they had incredible skills and had been up there for many decades, contributing in banking, hydrocarbon companies and a whole range of different roles. Hon Colin de Grussa might have reflected on how sometimes the skills are not perfectly aligned to the qualifications in the private sector and I think that is how this defence industry veterans employment scheme is very useful. It offers \$5 000 to veterans to get those skills recognised. To date, 28 of those scholarships have been awarded.

We are looking at a range of other programs that I think Hon Dan Caddy spoke of, such as the veteran employment program, which is funded through the Anzac Day Trust grants, helping ex-service personnel find meaningful careers in their post-veteran life. Hon Colin de Grussa raised an issue that I was keen to raise about Albany and the National Anzac Centre. We were both there. I want to acknowledge president Helen Tasker and secretary Michael Tugwell for the work that they do. I am probably going outside of government policy, but they cannot sack me now—I have only got a few weeks to go! I absolutely agree that the National Anzac Centre should become part of the National War Memorial. I was there on the opening day of that centre; it was very powerful.

For those who perhaps are not aware, the first time the concept of Anzac came together was in December 1914 in Albany where, for the first time, New Zealand and Australian troops came together. It was from there, amazingly, being escorted by a Japanese warship that they went from Australia to the Middle East. I think this is now well established, but also the very first Anzac dawn service was undertaken by Padre White—I think he was a Catholic priest; I will not get into his religion. He did the first dawn service in 1930, and then walked up Mt Clarence and observed a wreath being laid on King George Sound. It is an incredibly important part of our history. I certainly support the idea of that wonderful, incredible museum becoming part of the National War Memorial, but, importantly,

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also having some special recognition and support for the RSL in Albany to run its very significant Anzac event. There is a very good case to say that although all those services are important, there is a special place in the iconography of the history for Albany and that should be recognised. We have those discussions about that.

Hon Pierre Yang talked about, and I want to recognise, the 2nd/2nd Commandos. My first contact with those guys was in 1976 when we first started protesting about the Indonesians going into East Timor. There would be these people who were really very different from the normal bunch of radicals at the demos. They were very straight-backed and tall gentleman, and they all had the little double diamond badges. The double diamond badge was the badge of the 2nd/2nd Commandos. They came out in force to all the demonstrations. It is an extraordinary story; they were sent into what was actually neutral territory because it was Portuguese. They were sent in there in the first instance, and the argument is that when the Japanese found they had gone in, they went in after them. While they were isolated from the rest of the Army, I think the isolation was for a period of nine months, they established incredible bonds with the local people. From the time of the end of the war, those guys kept reaching out to Timor. I never met him, but I met Norman Thornton's children, from down in Denmark. He was one of those people who established those strong relationships with their criados. Fabulous people like Ray Aitken; Paddy Kenneally; John Carey's father, Jack Carey; and Keith Hayes really put in so much effort decade after decade assisting East Timor, before the Indonesian invasion, even during that Indonesian invasion and during the reconstruction period. They never ever forgot the people who had worked to protect and save them during that war. It is an extraordinary story and it has always been fantastic to be associated with those wonderful human beings.

Today, we are all at one embracing veterans, recognising their contribution and recognising how we need to weave this in to not only provide opportunities for veterans, but also make sure that the story that has been such an important part of our nation's life is properly remembered and recorded.

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [12.27 pm]: I want to commence by noting my appreciation for the motion put by Hon Dan Caddy and reflecting on the contributions made by all speakers this morning. It has done this chamber credit. I quite obviously want to begin by acknowledging, certainly, limb (a) of this motion, which is to acknowledge —

the service of all Western Australian Defence Force veterans and serving personnel and their families ...

In the time available to me, I will not be able to give the extensive contribution that I was hoping to, but I want to touch briefly on the issues around transition, particularly transition to employment. I want to acknowledge the efforts that the government has contributed in this space and also highlight the contribution of individuals, particularly Karyn Hinder, who has been mentioned previously by a number of speakers. She is an absolutely fabulous advocate, and extremely effective, modest and capable. I also wish to acknowledge the growing focus on the opportunity for Western Australia to develop a deeper and broader defence industry.

Obviously, there is a natural synergy between the employment needs of ex-service personnel and the defence industry, which is quite obvious and probably does not need to be belaboured. However, there will be a portion of ex-defence personnel who prefer not to seek employment opportunities in the defence industry per se and their needs also need to be taken care of and considered. My colleague Hon Colin de Grussa made a valuable contribution in explaining the translation between skills and credentials earned through uniform service and their direct civilian occupation equivalent. I do not think we have quite got there yet. I think a more readily expressly codified ready reckoner, if you will, may have been developed in the United States, but I do not think that is necessarily translatable to our industrial complex.

There is a point to be made, which I think all members of the chamber get, but perhaps members of the private sector do not fully appreciate, about the values, skills and capabilities that ex-service personnel bring with them. I will not have the opportunity to speak to this at length, but some years ago I commissioned Conrad Liveris to do a very small study into employer attitudes on ex-service personnel in the Western Australian employment market. I have talked about this before. Some of the findings were stark and confronting. I will list them very briefly. Of the unifying perceptions, there was a misapprehension that employers did not fully understand the work of the Australian Defence Force; they did not appreciate the level of continuous training that serving personnel have to undertake; and there were some pernicious socio-economic assumptions as well, which I will categorise in very inelegant language this way: we do not want to employ dumb grunts or the officer corps. In other words, the private sector does not want to employ people who it considers are so useless they can find employment only in the services and they do not want to deal with the cavalry officer stereotype. Both of those assumptions are very gnarly, uninformed, ignorant and pernicious. However, they did exist and continue to exist, to a degree, in other segments of the private sector employment market and are most appallingly held by those in the professional services industry. We all must work collectively to unpick and remediate those views if we are to assist people in moving on with the rest of their lives after they have dedicated a significant portion of it to protecting us.

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 24 November 2022]

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Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Kate Doust; Hon Pierre Yang; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Tjorn Sibma

At another stage I might reflect on the sod-turning ceremony next week of the Korean War memorial in Kings Park. I will not have the opportunity now to highlight the spectacular role played by individuals in bringing that to fruition. Hopefully, I will in time for the seventieth anniversary of the Armistice next July. I will take up that opportunity on another occasion.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.