

## **KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL**

### *Statement*

**HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan)** [5.31 pm]: I am conscious of the fact that other members wish to speak on this very last sitting day before we inevitably head to the election, and it had been my intention to do so earlier, so I will amend and shorten my prepared remarks accordingly. I did not want it to pass unmentioned that last Thursday, 19 November, I had the great pleasure of accepting an invitation from the Perth Korean War Memorial Committee Inc and the Korean Veterans Association of Western Australia to attend the 2020 Korean War Veterans and Korean War Memorial fundraising dinner. I would like to speak very briefly in support of this worthy project. In simple terms, that project is to build a suitable memorial within the grounds of Kings Park, identified more specifically now within the vicinity of the Tobruk Memorial precinct, to honour the service of Australian forces, particularly those of Western Australian origin, who fought during the 1950–1953 Korean War. It is a project that I have been involved in almost since its inception, which is not to claim ownership of the concept, but it has certainly received my full support. I have moved it along to the best of my capacity, albeit from the diminished resourcing of an opposition member.

Last week, I was also pleased to announce that a future Liberal government would commit \$300 000 towards the building of that memorial, with the object of completing that task, as well as completing an adjoining friendship memorial, in time for the seventieth anniversary of the Armistice, which concluded that conflict to some degree. At a bipartisan level, my hope is that should the McGowan government be successful at the election, it would at the very least match that commitment. I acknowledge the efforts of Minister Dawson and Minister Tinley and the support they have shown for this project. I also acknowledge the hard work of the good people of the board of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, who have essentially approved stage 1 of the concept. This is providing a degree of reassurance to the volunteers who are working towards this particularly worthy cause.

This concept and commitment is deeply appreciated by the people and government of the Republic of Korea. I have borne witness to this gratitude on a number of poignant occasions over the last few years, when I have witnessed the awarding of Ambassador for Peace Medals on behalf of the Korean government to surviving veterans of that conflict. They are an ageing, diminishing but certainly noble cohort of our fellow Western Australians. It was also a pleasure to attend last week's function—a real reinvigoration—because of the concept of the giving of gratitude. That is not a sentiment that we, as politicians, bear witness to very frequently in the course of our public engagement, so it was refreshing and to some degree humbling to witness the expression of gratitude by the most official level of the Korean government to not only the Australian people and the Australian government but also, particularly, those servicemen and their families.

As members might know, the Korean War is commonly referred to as the forgotten war, for reasons that are understandable but also quite lamentable. I think we have within our grasp a clear opportunity to atone for that historical oversight. We should, and indeed must, take that opportunity should we have the power to do so. I have every confidence that this project will materialise in some form. I think there is also an opportunity, should it present itself, to reinvigorate this state's trade relationship with our Korean trade partners. It is a relationship that we do not often have cause to reflect upon, but I think we should absolutely do so.