

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

### *Statement*

**HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan)** [5.23 pm]: I rise very briefly to note that it is Remembrance Day this Saturday. As shadow Minister for Veterans Issues, I want to make a very brief statement to that effect. On 11 November we commemorate the general Armistice of 1918 that marked what was to be the war that ended all wars. Sadly, that was not the case. That war saw the loss of 61 532 Australian lives, including an estimated 7 000 from Western Australia. I said in another statement last week that the First World War largely serves to anchor our national commemoration and contemplation of Australian lives lost in military service. Considering the scale and the psychological shock of that conflict, and the fact that political, cultural and economic reverberations of that conflict still resonate today, that should be no surprise. But we should not forget or minimise the significance of Australian lives lost in the service of this country in other, less well known conflicts and operational theatres prior to that war, and certainly subsequent to it.

I want to draw attention to a couple of lesser-known operational theatres in which significant numbers of Australian lives were lost. I will not go through the whole tally but it serves to illustrate the point. Commencing with the Sudan conflict in 1885, nine Australians were lost. In South Africa between 1899 and 1902 an estimated 588 Australian lives were lost. It was my privilege to attend the rededication of the Boer War memorial at Kings Park last Sunday where that loss was once again commemorated. Closer to home, in the Indonesian confrontation 21 lives were lost and another two on the Malay Peninsula. In the last century, in excess of 100 002 Australian lives have been lost in the course of military service. This does not represent the many thousands who died later as a result of their injuries. This shows that our armed forces personnel have been part of actions across the globe. Like their comrades in the First World War, many have suffered and paid the ultimate sacrifice in lands unfamiliar to them, far from their home and far from the comfort of their loved ones. We are often urged to let silent contemplation be our offering on days like Remembrance Day and other commemorative services. That is very easy for us to do. The more difficult thing is to actually provide support to the returned services people, in whatever respect they served this country, and to their families. I want to mark this house's gratitude for Australian service men and women and, once again, compel us to mark our respect. Lest we forget.