

**PERTH KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL**

*Statement*

**HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan)** [5.19 pm]: I will keep my remarks brief. On 27 July, I had the privilege of attending a dedication service to the unveiling of a memorial dedicated to the Korean War, and in particular the Australian service personnel who served in that conflict. The date 27 July is significant because it signifies the seventieth anniversary of the armistice of that conflict. Unfortunately, prior to 27 July, Western Australia was noted for not having a dedicated memorial to that conflict. That conflict has had a signal influence on the geopolitics of the twentieth century and the twenty-first century. It is also a conflict in which more than 1 900 Western Australians served. It was a great privilege to see the culmination of the very quiet and very determined advocacy of a small group of people who comprised the Perth Korean War Memorial committee. I want to use this opportunity to identify them by name because their endeavours, certainly in the early stages, were not necessarily easy. I want to identify Honorary Consul to the Republic of Korea, Fay Duda; Bill Munro; James Rhee; Jin Kil Lee; Peter Heeney, Brett Dowsing; Clive Robartson; Duncan Warren; Jack Hwang; and Nigel Earnshaw.

Some 340 Australians gave their lives in Korea, many of whom are buried in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery at Busan. Regrettably, lamentably and inevitably, as a consequence of conflict some remain unrecovered inside the demilitarised zone. I can attest that many Western Australians served in that conflict. Thirty-four Western Australians were killed, six were classified as missing in action and five died post that conflict. It was pleasing to see this new memorial dedicated to their memory and that of their surviving comrades. I think it is worth reflecting upon the fact that the gentlemen who served in that conflict who are still among us are now in their 90s. It was a deep and humbling privilege to be in their company. It was also a moment, I think, of significant poignancy for their families. If people took the time to read some of the dedications in the cards that accompanied the floral wreaths, they would have seen that it was a truly humbling and privileged opportunity to discern that the reverberations of that conflict continue to this day. They are echoed in many Western Australians families.

I also want to absolutely give credit to the Western Australian government and the federal government for funding the memorial and indeed to a number of Australian and Korean companies. It is easy for us to consider something like this as part of the historical ephemera, but this conflict is obviously the daily reality of our Korean partners. The centrepiece of this memorial is a 10-tonne rock gifted by Gapyeong county in South Korea. It, of course, echoes the signal battle—the battle of Gapyeong—in which the Australian forces and, I think, particularly the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, were significantly outnumbered but were able to thwart the opposition's recapture of Seoul.

Western Australian companies, including Roy Hill and its Korean partner POSCO, made enormous private contributions that have enabled the establishment of this memorial. I urge everybody to go and visit the memorial in Kings Park. If a memorial can be beautiful and serene, I think this absolutely captures that. It is a unique blend of Australian service history and Korean culture. It was a privilege to be part of the ceremony. Again, I wish to highlight the supreme diplomatic and persistent efforts of that committee and the efforts of my colleague in the other place Hon Peter Tinley and a minister here, Hon Stephen Dawson, who played an enormous role, frankly, in cutting through the Gordian knot of bureaucracy to make it happen. It is absolutely to the credit of those two gentlemen that we have this memorial in Kings Park.