

KARRAKATTA CEMETERY — RENEWAL PROGRAM

Statement by Member for Mandurah

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [3.43 pm]: I rise today to alert Parliament to an increasingly concerning issue involving the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and its current renewal program. The renewal program has already seen a number of headstones removed from gravesites in Karrakatta Cemetery while proposing the removal of hundreds more, including the headstones of returned servicemen and, reportedly, at least two Victoria Cross recipients.

This morning a petition signed by some 1 972 citizens was tabled in Parliament. Unfortunately, the petition does not conform to the Legislative Assembly's standing orders. However, today I wrote to the Minister for Local Government to highlight the community concern about the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board's renewal program and requested that the minister immediately intervene and direct the board to halt its program, specifically the removal of headstones.

This issue is of great concern. The Minister for Local Government has a responsibility to immediately investigate this program and the removal of headstones in cemeteries in the metropolitan area. I assure the house and the minister that I and the opposition, particularly the members for Warnbro, Fremantle and Willagee, will pursue this issue vigorously in coming weeks.

I acknowledge the work and efforts of many people, including Sandra Playle, who has been steadfast in her campaign to research and identify those gravesites and areas within cemeteries that are at risk because of the renewal program. The members abovementioned and I call on the Minister for Local Government to immediately intervene in this issue that threatens the last resting place of hundreds of Western Australians, some of whom honourably served this nation at war.