

I move –

That the bill now be read a second time.

Madam President, the timing of the introduction of this Bill is indeed timely as it is appropriate. It gives the McGown Government an opportunity to show their support to our veteran community and a chance to show their patriotism.

Madam President, arguably the most sacred days in the Australian calendar are Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. This particular remembrance day commemorates 100 years since the Armistice – the cease fire of the Great War. A war Madam president they said was the war to end all wars. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case as the world was plunged into war approximately 21 years later.

Madam President, Australians from all backgrounds and walks of life come together to pay respect and homage to those who gave everything for the rights and liberties we sometimes take for granted today.

Memorials are solemn reminders of the sacrifices these brave men and women made. They are a symbol of bravery, of sacrifice, honour and freedom. They are held in reverence by the Australian public and as such, are rightly deserving of protection.

People who desecrate these memorials and monuments spit in the face of the Australian service personnel, both past and present, and the faces of the Australian public too. It is an insult to this great nation and its people.

This Bill seeks to provide a degree of legislative protection by criminalising the desecration of these monuments. Those who destroy, damage, move, deface or vandalise a memorial will be guilty of a crime and be liable for up to 5 years' imprisonment and be responsible for the cost of the repair or restoration of the monument.

Australians are free to disagree with and protest wars, but that right does not, and should not, permit the desecration of the memory of the greatest Australians. Those who insult the community in such a way should indeed be punished as the community expects, which is what this Bill aims to achieve.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and I table the explanatory memorandum.