

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SCHEME

318. Mr J. NORBERGER to the Minister for Veterans:

Our veterans and Australian Defence Force personnel contribute much to the way of life that we enjoy today. Can the minister advise what the government is doing —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr J. NORBERGER: Can the minister advise what the government is doing to assist ex-ADF personnel who are transitioning out of the military?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for the question. I point out that after we announced on 15 April the veterans employment transition scheme support, VETS, to attract high-calibre, skilled veterans into the public sector, it was supported by not only the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, but also the members for Willagee and Albany, whom I acknowledge for turning up to the launch to throw their support behind something that should be politically bipartisan. It was a good event, a good discussion and a good day. It is important that we acknowledge that there is a number of very skilled and very talented members of the Australian Defence Force who, when they leave the defence force, would make significantly capable public servants in Western Australia. We should be trying to have a public service that provides the best possible level of skill to serve the government of the day. ADF personnel gain a lot of talent in their service to the Australian Defence Force that is not always easily recognisable by both private sector and public sector employers.

We have worked with the Public Sector Commission and come up with the VETS program to try to break down some of the barriers and level the playing field for former members of the ADF who are trying to make that transition. It is not about giving them greater advantage than someone else; rather, it is about trying to level the playing field. We are doing a number of different initiatives, including one on the Jobs WA website that will help to break down some of the language barriers for veterans who probably have been ostracised from some of the public sector state-level speak for some time and help them make that transition and be able to compete for jobs in the public sector. We are also establishing a mentoring network. We have identified a number of skilled and experienced state public servants who started in the ADF and who have made that transition. We will be able to provide information to, as I said, help break down some of the language barriers and help some of the more confused human resources managers. The other day I heard that someone asked whether a cavalry officer still rides horses. We need to make it easy to get some of the high-calibre individuals from the ADF into our public sector.

Lastly, it is also a challenge to the private sector. We are saying that the state government is doing its bit to try to help ADF personnel get good jobs in the public sector, which will benefit everyone in Western Australia. Our challenge is to ask the private sector what it is doing and say that it needs to do its part as well. It is a great initiative and I thank everyone for their support.