

VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

350. Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE to the Minister for Veterans:

Recently the nation acknowledged the ninety-ninth anniversary of the landings on the Gallipoli peninsula. Can the minister outline to the house what the state government is doing to engage and canvass the views of our veterans who play an important role in the community.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for Churchlands for his question. I will also start by acknowledging the input and counsel by both him and the member for Willagee in helping the government select, from a big list of very suitable applicants, 10 members for the new veterans' advisory committee. It is not just that we should remember, coming into the centenary of Anzac, those who have gone before us; it is also right and proper that we remember the veterans who are still with us today—from World War II through to Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor and all the other peacekeeping operations that Australians have taken part in. This is why the Premier made the commitment, going into the 2013 election, that we would give today's veterans a voice—a conduit to the government, if you will—so that we can listen to their concerns about mental health, medical health, ageing, and all the pressures that veterans in Western Australia obviously face.

We have honoured our commitment. We have established a veterans' advisory committee, which will be chaired by Max Ball, a 28-year Army Vietnam veteran. It will be a great conduit as well as a great opportunity for a range of people who come from a number of different conflicts, including some from the department's veterans' association, who can come together to help form a consultative body to help government understand the issues of today's modern veterans as far back as World War II, as I stated. It is wonderful to be part of a government that is honouring its election commitments. It is wonderful to give a voice to today's veterans so they can be heard amongst government and all departments. Obviously, as the Minister for Veterans, it is an absolute honour to represent that particular community in the state government.