

ANZAC HOUSE — REDEVELOPMENT

Statement by Minister for Veterans

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Veterans) [1.06 pm]: This year is the ninety-seventh anniversary of the signing of the armistice that brought a conclusion to the Great War. Appropriately, in this centenary of Anzac, the Western Australian government has given in-principle approval to grant conditional tenure of ANZAC House to the Returned and Services League of Australia WA branch. This announcement further underscores the government's commitment to Western Australia's Anzac heritage and its current veterans. In 1976, the RSL relinquished the land on which ANZAC House sits to the state in exchange for the state building a new RSL headquarters. However, since that time the RSL, like Perth generally, which has grown in population, has also expanded its membership and services to veterans to a point at which it requires larger premises. Next year the RSL in Western Australia will commemorate the 100th anniversary since it was established. Since then, the RSL's core business has been to serve the needs of current and former members of the Australian Defence Force.

It is proposed that the land be transferred under conditional freehold, which would see the land revert back to the Crown if conditions are not met. This is an in-principle decision and subject to the RSL presenting the government with a detailed business plan, including appropriate planning and consultation with relevant stakeholders. Should the RSL meet the conditions of the agreement, the transfer of land will allow the RSL to redevelop ANZAC House into a headquarters that meets its current needs and future business model. A redeveloped ANZAC House would also afford the RSL with the opportunity to assist smaller ex-service organisations to co-locate their operations. Although there is still much work to do before the granting of conditional tenure is actually realised, the history of ANZAC House provides a demonstrated example of the RSL's willingness to work cooperatively with the state government on land tenure and development at the court precinct. This is a fitting gesture to commemorate Remembrance Day in this year of the Anzac centenary.