

WANDERING WARRIORS FUNDRAISER — POLLIE PEDAL

Statement

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [8.55 pm]: I rise to let members know that for the past three days I have been cycling from Perth to Margaret River with the fundraising group Pollie Pedal 2023. Never has this chair felt more comfortable than it does today after three days on a bike. I thank the few members who have donated to the cause, the Wandering Warriors, the organisation we are raising funds for. The bike ride goes until Saturday, and I will hopefully jump back on for Friday and Saturday. Please jump on the Wandering Warriors' website and donate.

I will explain a little about its cause. The Wandering Warriors is an organisation that raises funds for veteran causes, particularly the Special Air Service and the special forces. I knew something of what that group of people do, but having spent a number of hours on a bike over the last three days, talking to veterans and hearing them speak at functions after a hard day in the saddle, my level of admiration for the service they give this country has grown enormously.

I was very privileged to receive an invite to a special commemorative service at the Mandurah War Memorial on Saturday night for two fallen British servicemen, Corporal Ben Nowak and Trooper Phillip Lawrence. They lost their lives fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the families of those two young men have since moved to Mandurah. Local federal member Andrew Hastie organised this service at the Mandurah War Memorial. We were fortunate to be joined on the ride for the first two days by Johnny Mercer, himself a veteran and the United Kingdom Minister of State (Minister for Veterans' Affairs). On behalf of the British government, he attended the service and paid tribute to the ultimate sacrifice of those two young men. Their families were there. Members attend a lot of Anzac Day services and memorial services, but I have to say that when the mums and dads of two young men are sitting beside you in the front row, and the ode that says that they shall not grow old is read out, it is particularly moving. It was a privilege to do that.

After the ride, we heard from various members of the veterans community. The message they want to tell us is "skills not scars". That is what they want their potential employees and business partners to hear. Wandering Warriors provides educational opportunities, particularly at university level, for young men after their time serving, particularly in the SAS, and the Wandering Warriors does a wonderful job in that regard. It has been my great privilege to raise a bit of money for that very wonderful cause, and hopefully I will be back on the bike on Friday and Saturday to finish off that ride.