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Ministerial Statement

Mr MORRIS IEMMA (Lakemba—Premier, and Minister for Citizenship) [2.20 p.m.]: For three long harsh years the Korean Peninsula provided the backdrop for one of the twentieth century's most bitter conflicts, a conflict in which 339 Australians made the supreme sacrifice and a further 1,200 were wounded. The Korean War almost brought the world to the brink of global war. It crushed General Douglas MacArthur's illustrious career and ended the presidency of Harry Truman; yet sandwiched between World War II and the Vietnam War it is now largely overlooked by history—so much so that it goes by the name of "the forgotten war", which is deeply shameful and wrong. Thankfully, for the New South Wales community, Korea will be forgotten no more.

I am proud to advise the House that the veterans of Korea finally will have a memorial of their own in the nation's largest city—that is, a memorial in every sense, both appropriate and overdue. As my colleague the Minister for Volunteering announced on Saturday, a State-significant memorial to the Korean War will be built on a prominent site in Sydney's Moore Park, with 50 per cent of the funding provided by the New South Wales Government. The men who slogged it out in the cold mountains of Korea have waited 55 years for the memorial. I have had the privilege of meeting some of them, men like Harry Spicer and Gerry Bourke, at the annual reception for Korean War veterans. They are old now and they want nothing more than to know that this story will live on after they have gone. It will.

The member for Parramatta, who is also the Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier on Community and Veterans Affairs, has led the project. I honour her hard work in bringing so many different stakeholders together. I also thank the New South Wales Government Architect, Mr Peter Mould, and his team for managing the design competition. We now have a beautiful and highly symbolic design worthy of these men and worthy of its parkland setting. The project has also received outstanding support from the Korean community, Korean veterans and the Korean Consul-General. I thank them for their support and their generosity. Community consultation is currently underway and the development application will be lodged shortly with the City of Sydney Council. Construction is expected to start at the completion of the cricket season, with a view to dedicating the memorial around Anzac Day next year.

Considering other recent achievements in veteran affairs, the Kiwi digger statue on the Anzac Bridge, \$400,000 towards the new education centre at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway at Concord, the new Community War Memorials Fund, \$6.5 million upgrade of the War Memorial in Hyde Park and the Anzac scholarships I announced in April, this is a vintage year for acknowledging those who have served our nation and paid the ultimate price. I am especially honoured to be part of the Korean War Memorial project because no war in which Australians died for freedom deserves to be forgotten. Some 17,000 Australians served in Korea. The least we can do is remember, and we will.