



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE

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PLANNING AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR OVERSEAS ANZAC DAY SERVICES 2020

IN the lead-up to Anzac Day, members of the public who are planning to attend services overseas are encouraged to register their attendance and travel plans.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said Anzac Day is very important to all Australians, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is still planning to deliver dawn services overseas at Gallipoli in Turkey and Villers-Bretonneux in France.

"DVA will also support services at Hellfire Pass in Thailand, Sandakan in Malaysia, and Isurava and the Bomana War Cemetery in Papua New Guinea. The services in the Pacific region will take on a greater significance this year as we mark 75 years since the end of the Second World War," Mr Chester said.

"I understand many people are concerned about the outbreak of COVID-19 and its potential effect on these international commemorative services. The Government is continuing its planning for these services, however, this is a rapidly developing situation and we will rely on the most up-to-date expert medical advice.

"In the lead-up to this year's services, those attending are reminded to register on the DVA website and are strongly encouraged to read the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel advice for security and COVID-19 updates at the [Smartraveller website](#), and to subscribe for updates. Security and health situations can change quickly. Travellers are strongly encouraged to obtain travel insurance, and to monitor DFAT travel advice before and during their journey for both their destination country and all countries they intend to transit.

"While these services are run by the Australian Government, we all need to be mindful that they are delivered in countries other than our own and we need to respect any decisions those countries make in relation to COVID-19.

"We understand the Anzac Day services in Turkey and France hold a special significance to many Australians who have relatives that fought and died there during the First World War and we are closely monitoring the situation and will provide updates as they come to hand."

Australians travelling to Gallipoli will need to prepare for conditions on the peninsula, including taking enough food and water, preparing for extreme weather and allowing enough time to transit through security checkpoints. The service is held in an isolated area within a national park which has

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no permanent infrastructure or shelter. Visitors are exposed to the elements for up to 24 hours and should prepare accordingly.

For the Anzac Day Dawn Service in Villers-Bretonneux, visitors need to be well-prepared as the weather in the Somme region in April can be close to freezing in the morning and hot in the afternoon, and they should also allow enough time to transit through security checkpoints. Visitors are also reminded to book their tickets to visit the Sir John Monash Centre early at sjmc.gov.au.

Security screenings at both services are similar to airport style security, and Turkish and French authorities are responsible for security at Anzac Day commemorations in their respective countries.

“Throughout the Second World War, Australians fought in theatres of war across the globe from Europe to North Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, to Asia and the Pacific, and importantly, right here at home,” Mr Chester said.

“While the war in Europe ended on 8 May 1945, Australians would go on to fight in the Pacific region until 15 August 1945 – now known as Victory in the Pacific Day.

“Seventy-five years on, the friendship between the people of Australia and Papua New Guinea continues to this day and the services in these areas will highlight the incredible service and sacrifice of those who served and died there.

“For those organising community services in Australia, I encourage you to reach out to your local RSL and where possible involve and honour our Second World War veterans this Anzac Day.”

DFAT will continue to organise local Anzac Day services at Australian High Commissions and Embassies around the world. Additional information of the commemorative services for Anzac Day in Turkey and France can be found on [DVA's website \(www.dva.gov.au\)](http://www.dva.gov.au). Attendees to all overseas services are encouraged to subscribe to travel updates on the [Smartraveller](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) website (www.smartraveller.gov.au).

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