

CENTENARY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: My question is addressed to the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Veterans Affairs. How is the Government commemorating the centenary of the First World War?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I thank the member for Baulkham Hills for his question. I acknowledge his role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for the Centenary of Anzac and his service as a former peacekeeper and officer of the Australian Regular Army. Yesterday marked the commencement of commemorations for the centenary of the First World War. The centenary, which lasts until 11 November 2018, will be one of the most significant chapters in our country's history. It will provide all communities across New South Wales with the opportunity to unite in remembrance of those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

New South Wales sent more than 164,000 enlistees in the Australian Imperial Force and the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force. That figure represented almost 40 per cent of all men in this State between the ages of 18 and 44 at the time, which was the highest percentage of any State in Australia. In the words of former Chair of the NSW Centenary of Anzac Advisory Council, General Sir Peter Cosgrove, the centenary is a commemoration, not a celebration. The New South Wales Government is committed to commemorating our State's veterans and ensuring their sacrifices are remembered and honoured with dignity and respect.

Yesterday I was proud to join the Premier to announce a \$38 million plan to redevelop the Anzac War Memorial in Hyde Park. It includes the building of an education centre and a water cascade that will transform the site to realise the original vision of Bruce Dellit when he designed the memorial in 1930. The project is genuine legacy infrastructure that will serve as a centrepiece and enduring reminder of the Centenary of Anzac commemorations for the people of New South Wales. With the construction of a larger exhibition and educational space beneath the memorial, the new centre will provide generations of school students from across New South Wales with opportunities to learn about the Anzac legacy and the State's war history in a compelling and interactive way. The new centre will connect with the school curriculum and take students on a journey that will bring this vital part of New South Wales history alive.

The project has been welcomed by the veteran community. Returned and Services League of Australia (NSW Branch) President Don Rowe, OAM, and Sydney Legacy President Eric Easterbrook have expressed their strong support for an education centre at the Anzac War Memorial. I acknowledge the individuals and organisations that have made this significant project possible: the Trustees of the Anzac War Memorial; the NSW Centenary of Anzac Advisory Council, chaired by Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie; RSL NSW

President Don Rowe, OAM; and New South Wales Government Architect Peter Poulet.

As part of our commemoration of the Centenary of Anzac 100 high school students from across New South Wales will attend and represent our great State at the 2015 Gallipoli Anzac Day Dawn Service, which marks the 100th anniversary of the landing of the first Anzacs at Anzac Cove. The New South Wales Government is proud to offer these students from years 10, 11 and 12 this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to Turkey to be part of this historic occasion. The students will be selected from across the educational spectrum—from metropolitan and regional schools and from public, independent and Catholic schools.

Examples of other centenary commemorations in New South Wales include the re-enactment of recruitment marches and the State Library exhibition of World War I diaries. Earlier today the Premier very eloquently repeated some of the diary entries that he saw at the exhibition. They were quite moving indeed. I have also seen some of the diaries. It is extraordinary to think that they were written by people who were 18 or 19 or as young as 17 years of age. They wrote with a maturity far exceeding their years. I encourage everyone to attend the exhibition. Other community-based initiatives include United We Stand, Joining Forces and Wartime Legends.

The Government believes in delivering legacy projects that result in positive outcomes for all of New South Wales and delivering the key infrastructure we need to commemorate the Centenary of Anzac. The redevelopment of the Anzac War Memorial and the 2015 Gallipoli School Tour, together with other community-based initiatives, stand as a clear commitment from this Government to reflect the time-honoured promise we make in the Ode of Remembrance to preserve the legacy of our diggers by remembering their sacrifices every day at the going down of the sun and in the morning. Lest we forget.