

Peter Primrose MLC

Minister for Small Business,
Minister for Volunteering, Minister for Youth,
Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs



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Premier's ANZAC Memorial Scholars gather in Sydney

Twenty students are in Sydney today in preparation for tours of Australian battlefields and war cemeteries overseas later this year as part of the 2010 Premier's ANZAC Memorial Scholarship.

The Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs, Peter Primrose, said the scholars would hear from RSL President Don Rowe, the Belgian and Korean Consuls General, and history teachers about what they could expect on the pilgrimages later this year.

"This is an amazing opportunity for these students. They will not only learn more about our Anzac history, but will bring back to their communities a strong commitment to make sure the sacrifices of the past are remembered," Mr Primrose said.

"The successful scholars are from schools all around the state and the orientation session gives them a chance to get to know each other and the teachers that will accompany them before they make their pilgrimages overseas."

Two tours will take place this year. The first, in June, will visit battlefields and historic sites in South Korea and will coincide with Korean War memorial ceremonies taking place. The tour party will also travel to Hiroshima in Japan to view memorials and Australian war graves in Yokohama.

In September/October the second tour group will travel to Belgium to study the battlefields of the Western Front, visit memorials and attend commemorative ceremonies.

"This is a remarkable bunch of young people who are only a few years younger than many of the original Anzacs were when they were sent overseas, so they will have some sympathy and understanding of what those servicemen and women must have gone through," Mr Primrose said.

"I am sure that these tours will help the students gain a better understanding of the sacrifices and the bravery of World War I and the Korean War."

The year 10 and 11 students were selected on three main criteria: leadership within their school community; study and commitment to Australian history; and involvement with Anzac remembrance in their local community.

James Brorson, a Year 10 student at Hunter Valley Grammar School, Ashtonfield, who is travelling on the South Korea tour, said he had always been interested in history but

discovering his family involvement in World War I and World War II had deepened his awareness.

“It will be a massive experience to see what the Anzacs went through, to see the places that they had to fight in and feel the emotion of it all,” James said.

“It’s important for people to understand this part of our history. I am interested in the brotherhood of the soldiers and their courage even in the face of some terrible conditions.”

Laura Trevaskis, a Year 11 student at Campbelltown High School of the Performing Arts who is travelling to the Western Front, said she was looking forward to learning about the stories and the strategies of Australians in World War I.

“Young people should understand how the past forms the present and the future, and the impact that wars have had on how Australia developed,” Laura said.

Laura said that, like many, she may have difficulty comprehending the scale of the bloodshed on the Western Front.

“I think going to see the war graves will be confronting,” Laura said.

“I struggle with how many lives were lost and how young so many of them were, but I think it will be good to open my eyes to it all.”

The Premier, Kristina Keneally, announced the names of the 20 recipients of the 2010 Premier’s ANZAC Memorial Scholarships in December.