

CHAPTER 4

Summary of the evidence and current initiatives

4.1 This chapter begins by reviewing the recent controversy over construction works at Gallipoli. It then notes future initiatives between Turkish and Australian authorities to develop and preserve the site.

Summary of the evidence

4.2 Chapter 1 recognised that on some measures, the Australian and Turkish peoples' cultural attachment to the site of Gallipoli has increased appreciably over the past decade. For instance, there has been greater formal recognition of the Gallipoli site from both the Turkish and Australian Government. In 1997, the Turkish Government declared the peninsula an international peace park. In 1999, the Australian and New Zealand Governments proposed an ANZAC Commemorative site, which was built north of Ari Burnu the following year.

4.3 The building of the Commemorative site was a response to the sharp increase in the number of visitors to Gallipoli. On 25 April 1988, 200 people attended the Dawn Service at ANZAC Cove; on 25 April 2004, 18 000 attended the ceremony at the new Commemorative site.¹ The vast majority of these were Australians and New Zealanders. The number of Turkish visitors has also increased markedly. In 2003, an estimated 600,000 Turkish people visited Gallipoli; in 2004, the number had risen to 1.2 million; in 2005, in excess of two million Turks are expected to visit the site.²

4.4 Inevitably, this level of visitation has put considerable strain on existing facilities, particularly the access roads to key sites. Under the 1923 *Treaty of Lausanne*, it is the responsibility of the Turkish Government to ensure the upkeep of the roads to the many Allied and Turkish memorials on the Peninsula. The Turkish Government has recently pledged \$A100 million to upgrade facilities (including roads) on the peninsula.

4.5 Chapter 2 recognised that Australian and Turkish authorities had common concerns about the need to ensure the safety of the vastly increased number of people travelling on the coastal and inland roads. Not only had the volume of traffic increased considerably, but the existing roads were narrow and subject to erosion. The Turkish Government has already spent in excess of \$A25 million building a series of car parks and upgrading 6.3 kilometres of coastal road. Turkish authorities told an Australian official in October 2004 told that the existing road would be widened from 5.5 metres to 7.0 metres. However, in some places, the new road clearly exceeds this dimension.

1 W. Sellars, 'Desecration', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 2005, p. 29.

2 T. Stephens, op. cit.

Engineers instructed that the existing road be brought significantly inland to reduce the risk of erosion and collapse. Both Australian and Turkish authorities feared the existing road might collapse into the sea.

4.6 Chapter 2 also noted that the Australian Government's formal request to the Turkish Government was for improvements to the inland road from Chunuk Bair to Lone Pine. It then suggested turnaround facilities for coaches near the Ari Burnu Cemetery and north of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Mr Beck advised that Turkish officials had ignored or declined these requests. DVA officials claimed that repairs to this northern access road did make a marginal improvement in walking time to the 2005 Dawn Service. Moreover, Australian officials have maintained that the work along the coastal road was needed, and was delivered by the Turkish authorities in time for the ANZAC Day commemorations.

4.7 Chapter 3 outlined the controversy surrounding the roadworks. It was generated by claims from Australian journalists that bones had been found at the site. This aroused concern from the archaeological community in Turkey and Australia, and the public at large. The intrusiveness of roadworks, it was claimed, was also affecting the landscape itself. The road had been widened beyond the extent indicated to Australian authorities. The excavation work had cut deeply into the cliffs, changing the appearance of the 1915 landscape. The fill from this excavation was dumped onto the beaches at Brighton and ANZAC Cove.

4.8 Chapter 3 also noted the position of Australian authorities on these matters. It highlighted:

- the explanation of Turkish authorities that archaeological work had been carried out prior to the roadworks, and that no human remains have been uncovered
- the assertion of Turkish authorities that if any remains were unearthed, construction of the road would be stopped immediately
- the assertion of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that no bones had been disturbed
- the belief that the proposed 75 centimetre widening of the coastal road either side would have no adverse impact on the environment
- the failure of Turkish contractors and authorities to inform Australian officials that the road would be widened beyond these parameters
- the need, in many parts, to bring the existing road significantly inland to ensure the new road is not as susceptible to erosion
- that the fill dumped onto the beach was dirt, not rubble, and that it has been removed
- that the uncovering of bones and the presence of silt in the Cove's waters is more likely to have been caused by erosion than the recent roadworks

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- the clear statement of DVA and OAWG officials that their concern was not simply to ensure the safety of roads, but also to address concerns that the construction had uncovered remains and was damaging the landscape, and
 - that Minister Kelly was informed of the environment and heritage issues concerning the roadworks.

4.9 However, the Committee finds that these claims are not entirely valid and obscure the Australian Government's inaction and negligence during the construction work on the coastal road. Australian officials were aware in early March of the extent and damage that the construction was causing to the landscape, yet the Australian Government failed to act authoritatively at a political level until 26 April.

4.10 The allegations that bones were unearthed and the landscape has been damaged remain credible evidence. No statements from Australian Government sources contradict this evidence. Indeed, the Committee has photographic evidence that the fill dumped onto the beach was substantially more than what was claimed by the DVA Secretary.

Proposed road construction and environmental planning

The Inter-Departmental Committee on Gallipoli

4.11 One of the major initiatives of the Australian Government on matters relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula has been to establish an Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC). The IDC is chaired by PM&C, and has representatives from DVA, DEH and DFAT.

4.12 The IDC is currently considering matters that arose from the meeting of the Australian and Turkish Prime Ministers in April 2005. In broad terms, the task is to balance issues relating to military heritage, environmental protection and road construction in the Gallipoli area. The IDC will meet on an as-needs basis.

4.13 The Committee heard that DVA has the lead role within the Committee on two key issues. They are:

- to provide suggestions to the Turkish Government on the completion of roadworks at ANZAC Cove, including any need for shore protection and
- to lead on the broader historical and archaeological review of the area, which balances visitor safety, military heritage and environmental considerations.³

Completing the coastal road

4.14 On the first IDC issue, the Committee heard from the DVA Secretary that the coast road will require a further two stages before completion. First, two further layers of asphalt will seal the road. Second, there is the possibility that a rock wall will be

3 *Committee Hansard*, p. 71.

built along parts of the road to safeguard against further erosion. This is the issue of shore protection.

4.15 The DVA Secretary told the Committee there was a 'fairly compelling argument' that the road will require some form of shore protection.⁴ The Australian Prime Minister was briefed on the possibility of a rock wall, and subsequently wrote to his counterpart in Turkey to seek discussions on the subject. In response, Mr Erdogan has invited Australian officials to suggest their preferred forms of shore protection. Mr Sullivan told the Committee that DVA will be taking these suggestions to the Turkish Government 'on Monday' (20 June 2005).⁵

Viewing points

4.16 In a supplementary submission to the Committee in August 2005, Mr Sellars expressed strong concern at recent proposals by the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry to develop a number of scenic viewing areas for visitors at high points on the battlefields of the Gallipoli Peninsula.⁶ These areas would be accompanied by carparks. In particular, Mr Sellars argued that any construction at Chunuk Bair, Hill Q, the Nek or near the Sphinx would be carried out over terrain that was fought over by the Allies. Historians and experts advising the Gallipoli Historical National Park have recommended against any construction at these sites. However, there is no obligation for the National Parks Authority to heed this advice. A response from DVA to Mr Sellars supplementary submission sidestepped addressing the matters he raised and left the impression that the Australian Government has not yet been officially informed of these proposals.⁷

The Chunuk Bair to Lone Pine road

4.17 The Committee acknowledges the Turkish Prime Minister's plans to commence construction work on the Second Ridge road from Chunuk Bair to Lone Pine. The Turkish Government clearly regards this project as a priority, given it is a key access road to the major Turkish memorials. The Australian Government also recognises that work on this road is urgently needed. Indeed, the August 2004 letter from the Australian Veterans' Minister made first reference to the Chunuk Bair to Lone Pine Road. Air Vice Marshal Beck explained to the Committee that 'within our traffic plan, that [road] was the major difficulty we faced'.⁸

4.18 Both the Australian and Turkish Governments also acknowledge that close by the Second Ridge road, there are areas of extreme military heritage sensitivity. Mr

4 *Committee Hansard*, p. 66.

5 *Committee Hansard*, p. 66.

6 Mr W. Sellars, *Submission 15a*, 16 August 2005.

7 Department of Veterans' Affairs, additional information, 9 September 2005.

8 *Committee Hansard*, p. 69.

Sellars commented in his submission that 'any roadwork on the scale of that carried out along the coastal strip...will cause massive damage to the heritage value of the...region'.⁹ He further claimed that this work would disturb many more human remains than were unearthed by the roadworks at ANZAC Cove.

4.19 Australian and Turkish authorities are clearly aware of these risks. Mr Beck told the Committee he had received advice from *Arup Engineering* in Istanbul that a safe, two-way road could be made without impacting on anything other than the existing surface.¹⁰ Mr Sullivan noted that the Turkish Government has invited DVA to offer views on how best to carry out the roadworks. He added:

My understanding is that if, in looking at widening that road or looking at making it into two-way traffic, it impinged on the military and cultural heritage issues of the road the Turkish Government would not agree... [W]e would have to look at other solutions.¹¹

4.20 The Committee heard opposing views about the need for repairs to the road from Chunuk Bair to the Kemalyeri memorial (see the map in Chapter 1). Mr Beck told the Committee that parked coaches along this road posed 'a major problem' for people getting to Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair for the services.¹² However, Mr Sellars noted that work had been done on this road in 2003.¹³

The need for a comprehensive audit

4.21 On the second IDC issue of an historical and archaeological review of the area, discussions between the Australian and Turkish Governments are in their infancy. Mr Sullivan told the Committee he planned to use his June 2005 visit to Turkey to discuss the issue of an archaeological study with his Turkish counterparts, and ascertain 'what the two prime ministers meant when they agreed to this joint second study'.¹⁴

4.22 Mr Sullivan noted that in the past, DVA has employed historians to assist with heritage issues at ANZAC Cove. He explained that the proposed study would 'concentrate our historians on scoping, from their perspective, areas of great significance'.¹⁵ Mr Sullivan accepted that a full military audit of the whole battlefield area may be 'part of what we...end up doing'.

9 *Submission 15*, p. 5.

10 *Committee Hansard*, p. 70.

11 *Committee Hansard*, p. 70.

12 *Committee Hansard*, p. 69.

13 *Submission 15*, p. 3.

14 *Committee Hansard*, p. 75.

15 *Committee Hansard*, p. 75.

4.23 The Committee is surprised at the lack of preliminary research prior to 2005 roadworks given the risks involved, the significance of the site, and the knowledge of DVA, OAWG and DFAT officials that construction was planned. It is particularly alarming in light of the allegations presented in Chapter 3. The Committee finds that Australian officials should have been more active in communicating the need for political intervention to the Australian Government.

4.24 The Committee is concerned that the military and heritage protection be afforded not only to the battlefield landscape, but also to the waters of ANZAC Cove. The Committee heard evidence that the recent road construction has damaged these waters. A submission from Tim Smith, the Director of Joint Australian-Turkish *Project Beneath Gallipoli*, highlighted the importance of a thorough maritime archaeological survey of the Cove. Mr Smith noted that his team is currently undertaking the first such survey, designed to identify 'the full range of cultural relics in the near-shore and under-water component of the battlefield site'.¹⁶

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends a full military-historical audit of the entire battlefield area at Gallipoli, with Australian priority for the ANZAC area. This survey must be made public and must be continually updated.

A comprehensive conservation management plan

4.25 In proposing an audit and an on-going survey of the site, the Committee also acknowledges the need for an appropriate plan of action flowing from this information. Ten of the fifteen submissions to the inquiry specifically recommended a conservation management plan as the best process for addressing physical conservation and visitor pressure at Gallipoli.¹⁷

4.26 A submission from the National Council of Australian Trusts argued:

The basis for all conservation management is detailed knowledge about the site. This provides the information base for the identification of the site's heritage values and for the site's significance to be assessed. Therefore we welcome the proposed historic and archaeological surveys of ANZAC Cove, but only if they are to be carried out by experts, and only if the information gathered is then used to develop an effective management instrument.¹⁸

4.27 A submission from the Australian National Committee of the International Council of Monuments and Site (ICOMOS) similarly claimed that the joint historical surveys 'will not in themselves achieve the essential formulation of effective

16 *Submission 13*, p. 2.

17 *Submissions 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14*.

18 *Submission 14*.

conservation management strategies at Gallipoli'.¹⁹ The Council endorsed a joint conservation management process as a matter of urgency. The submission noted that Australia is a world leader in the field of conservation management planning.

4.28 The Committee agrees that a comprehensive audit is only the first stage in the conservation management plan. It is crucial that this information is subsequently coordinated among the Turkish, Australian and New Zealand Governments, and among experts within non-government organisations.

4.29 The Committee welcomes the recent initiative of the Australian Government to establish an IDC that coordinates military heritage protection and visitation pressures. It also acknowledges and supports the cooperation of the Turkish and Australian Prime Ministers to undertake an archaeological survey of the Gallipoli site. However, the approach needs to be formalised and more systematic.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that a working group be established by the government to advise it on the coordination of the conservation management planning of the Gallipoli site. This group should include key government departments (including DVA, DEH and OAWG), the Returned Services League, the Australian War Memorial, and historians and archaeologists with specialist knowledge of Gallipoli.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the activities of this working group are documented in annual reports. These reports should be sent to the proposed parliamentary committee (see recommendation 6).

4.30 The Committee insists that the activities of this working group are open to the scrutiny of the Parliament. It is particularly concerned that military commemoration in Australia has become politicised. The Committee therefore believes that oversight of the entire commemorative function ought to be passed to a joint standing parliamentary committee.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends to the parliament that it establish a joint standing military commemorations committee. This Commemorations Committee will exercise bi-partisan oversight over all commemorative programs, including the management of all sites of Australian military heritage. It is hoped that the establishment of the Committee will remove the risk of political exploitation of commemorative events by the government of the day.

19 *Submission 8*, p. 2.

Recommendation 7

The Commemorations Committee should receive quarterly reports from the relevant government agencies on all commemorative activity and planning, including all memorial construction, event preparation, meetings, agendas, outcomes, public education and budgets.

The Commemorations Committee should also receive advice from the working group on all military heritage conservation issues, and develop a rapport with comparable groups in Turkey and New Zealand.

National Heritage Listing

4.31 One of the inquiry's terms of reference was to examine the heritage protection of ANZAC Cove. In this context, the major issue is the Australian Government's proposed National Heritage Listing of ANZAC Cove.

4.32 The discussions with Turkey on the issue of National Heritage Listing commenced in 2002. The Committee was told that officials from DEH and several other Australian agencies were present at these discussions, and that DFAT had kept Turkish representatives informed of the progress made. DEH advised the Committee that discussions were held with Turkish officials on 22 separate occasions.

4.33 On 18 December 2003, Prime Minister Howard commented: 'it seems to me...entirely appropriate that the ANZAC site at Gallipoli should represent the first nomination for inclusion on the National Heritage List'.²⁰ The following day, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that given the understanding between Australian Government and Turkish authorities, ANZAC Cove would be heritage listed.

4.34 However, 18 months later, the Committee was told that discussions are continuing between Turkey and Australia on the Heritage Listing of ANZAC Cove. Mr David Young, First Assistant Secretary in the Heritage Division of the DEH, noted that the conversation between the Australian and Turkish Governments is at a 'pretty sensitive stage'.²¹

4.35 Mr Young explained to the Committee that the two Prime Ministers are now seeking an 'appropriate mechanism for symbolic recognition' of the site.²² He noted that 'symbolic recognition' may or may not include listing; it is a way 'to engage with Turkey to find a mutually acceptable way forward'. Mr Young claimed the term

20 See A. Albanese, 'Howard back-flip on ANZAC Cove listing', *Media Release*, 27 April 2005.

21 *Committee Hansard*, p. 104.

22 *Committee Hansard*, p. 105.

'symbolic' is used to assure Turkey that Australia has no intention to apply its domestic environmental legislation to ANZAC Cove.²³

4.36 More to the point, Australia has no capacity to do so, given Turkish sovereignty over this land. Even a domestic Australian listing of ANZAC Cove would require the consent of the Turkish Government, and may only have symbolic effect in Turkey. This is a significantly different approach to that originally advocated by the Prime Minister, and it signifies the failure of the Department and the Government to persuade the Turkish Government of its expressed commitments.

4.37 The Committee acknowledges that negotiations with the Turkish Government on the issue of National Heritage Listing are at a sensitive stage. It believes that the Turkish Government should be credited with the declaration of the Gallipoli Peninsula as an international peace park, in recognition of its significance as an original World War I battlefield of immense importance to the nations who fought there.

4.38 In its submission to the Committee, the Australian Council of National Trusts recommends that the Australian Prime Minister support the Turkish suggestion of nominating the Gallipoli Peace Park as a World Heritage site. The Council argues that this would serve as:

A constructive means to achieving agreement for the development of an effective conservation management process, because...the Gallipoli sites...[would] be managed through an agreed conservation management plan.²⁴

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government should maintain a dialogue with the Turkish Government on the symbolic recognition of Gallipoli, with the express objective of a management plan for the protection of Australian military heritage at Gallipoli.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that special arrangements be established whereby discussions and negotiations with the Government of Turkey with respect to the international recognition of Gallipoli should be reported to the new parliamentary standing committee on a quarterly basis.

23 *Committee Hansard*, p. 106.

24 *Submission 14*, p. 2.

Findings

- Recognising its accepted status as an international cemetery where over 130,000 people died, Gallipoli has not been adequately surveyed, researched, or catalogued for its military heritage value, nor for the sensitivity of its natural environment, so as to inform current and future management policy.
- The failure to undertake such research has resulted in significant public concern in both Turkey and Australia at the destructive nature of the 2005 roadworks.
- An archaeological survey of the roadworks site was conducted after the event by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), at the request of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The survey was cursory and inadequate, and the advice provided has been directly contradicted by local people.
- Sole reliance on CWGC advice, rather than direct Australian initiation of an archaeological survey by Australian experts, was a serious error of judgement. The Australian Government must be held accountable for this oversight.
- The significant degradation of the beach and coastal waters at ANZAC Cove could have been avoided had the area been properly researched.
- On 26 April 2005, the Prime Minister of Turkey initiated an assessment of the damage to military and cultural heritage at ANZAC Cove, and to rectify this damage. These research projects should have preceded the roadworks, not followed them.

Heritage issues

- The Government of Turkey should be credited with the declaration of the Gallipoli peninsula as an international peace park, in recognition of its significance as an original WWI battlefield of immense importance to the nations who fought there.
- The Committee find that progress on the Heritage listing of the site on the Australian Register of the National Estate is at a sensitive stage. Since discussions on this issue commenced, there has been a shift from heritage listing under Australian legislation to more symbolic means of recognition.
- Notwithstanding the current assessments being undertaken, much more research needs to be done not just of the immediate ANZAC area, but the entire peninsula. A systematic survey of the entire peninsula would obviously need the agreement and cooperation of Turkish authorities, and as such, the Australian Government should make representations on this matter to the Turkish Government.

- Future roadworks must be subject to detailed scrutiny to ensure that no damage is done to any military heritage.

Senator Michael Forshaw
Chair

