



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Finance and Public Administration
References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**Inquiry into matters relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula
Department of Veterans' Affairs Submission**

This submission covers three areas:

- a) the circumstances surrounding the request by the Australian Government to the Turkish Government in August 2004 to undertake work to ease congestion on the Gallipoli Peninsula;
- b) the role of the Department of Veterans' Affairs in the road works and related construction activity at Anzac Cove in the lead up to Anzac Day on 25 April 2005;
- c) the heritage protection of Anzac Cove, including the proposed historical and archaeological survey of Anzac Cove.

Attached to the submission is a copy of an image of the Gallipoli Peninsula that may prove helpful to members of the Committee (Attachment A). There is no separate submission from the Office of Australian War Graves. It is an administrative unit of the Department of Veterans' Affairs without any formal or separate status. The 'Director of War Graves' is a statutory position established by the War Graves Act 1980. That Act states the 'Director shall, under the Secretary, administer, on behalf of the Department, both in and outside Australia, matters relating to the responsibilities of the Department in respect of war graves.'

Background

The physical appearance of Anzac Cove has changed significantly since the ANZAC landings of 25 April 1915. The ANZACs constructed roads and tracks from Anzac Cove to the north and south along the Coast and up to surrounding hills and built a road above the beach at Anzac Cove, running generally along the line of the current road.

Following the evacuation in December 1915, Turkish forces re-occupied the area and extended the road above the beach at Anzac Cove. In the 1920's, the Imperial War Graves Commission further extended the road from Maidos (now Ecebat) through Gaba Tepe (Kabatepe) to Anzac Cove and beyond to facilitate the building of cemeteries and memorials. The road has been progressively upgraded and repaired to cope with increased traffic, erosion and subsidence.

More recently, at Anzac Cove, the road cutting at the northern headland of Ari Burnu has been extended into the hillside; a short section of the seaward end of Anzac Gully has been removed; and

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the cutting through the southern headland of Hell Spit on the seaward side of MacLagan's Ridge significantly deepened and raised (with a stepped 'berm.') These measures have both permitted widening of the road and movement of the road axis inland. Further beach and road protection measures are proposed by Turkish authorities.

To the south of Anzac Cove, at Brighton Beach, road works have been undertaken; a coach/car park constructed on the seaward side of the road adjacent to Shrapnel Valley cemetery; and beach protection works are proposed by Turkish authorities.

To the north of Anzac Cove, at North Beach, a coach/car park has been constructed on the seaward side of the road near the foot of Reserve Gully (the southern valley of the Sphinx.) Soil has been dumped on the landward side of the road at the foot of Mule Gully (the northern valley of the Sphinx.) A number of new culverts have been constructed along the 6.3 km section of road.

The *Treaty of Lausanne 1923* defines the boundaries of the Anzac battlefield and grants rights to the (now) Commonwealth War Graves Commission to safeguard the cemeteries and memorials on Gallipoli. Turkey retains overall sovereignty.

Anzac Day ceremonies have been conducted intermittently in the vicinity of Anzac Cove since the early 1920s. The Dawn Service at Gallipoli was introduced on a more regular basis by the Australian and New Zealand Embassies during the 1980s and was conducted at Ari Burnu War Cemetery until 1999. The Australian National Service is conducted at Lone Pine War Cemetery.

The Anzac Commemorative Site was constructed at North Beach during 1999-2000 and officially opened by the Australian and New Zealand Prime Ministers during the 2000 Anzac Day Dawn Service.

Since that time the ceremonies have been planned and conducted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs in cooperation with the Australian Embassy, Ankara. The Secretary of DVA gave primary responsibility for this work to the Director of War Graves supported by the Office of Australian War Graves. In relation to the Dawn Service close liaison is maintained with the New Zealand Government.

The Turkish Government's approval of the Anzac Commemorative Site was the first time a place had been approved outside of the Treaty obligations concerning cemeteries and memorials.

The Anzac Memorial Site and associated plant and equipment is maintained by DVA.

Terms of Reference (a)

The then-Minister, the Hon Danna Vale MP, signed a letter to the Turkish Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Osman Pepe on 4 August 2004. It is understood that it was delivered by the Australian Ambassador some time later. The letter is attached (Attachment B). It outlined the issues where assistance was sought from the Turkish Government to cope with the increasing attendances at Gallipoli. They included improvements to the Anzac Commemorative Site and measures to reduce walking distances and ease traffic congestion.

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Traffic management responsibility resides with the Turkish Jendarme through the Governor of Canakkale's office. Traffic management for the Anzac Day services is a major issue. Several hundred coaches are needed to transport those attending the services. On 25 April the road is made one-way and all coach travel is diverted from the Visitors Centre at Kilye Koyu northwards through Bigali and Buyukanafarta.

The only exception was the introduction for the 2005 commemoration of a shuttle service for elderly that approaches the site from the south. This operates until 2.00am. The same approach is used for the official party coaches from approximately 3.30am.

In 2004 significant problems were experienced with the walking distance from the coaches to the Anzac Commemorative Site. Walks up to seven kilometres were required because of the absence of parking facilities.

At the end of the Dawn Service many people walk to Lone Pine and onto Chunuk Bair. Those who cannot walk wait to be transported in their buses. All the buses proceed along Ridge Road and Gun Ridge Road to Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair. This road is narrow and can be dangerous.

Minister Vale's letter concentrates on improving the parking arrangements for coaches on the northern side of the Anzac Commemorative Site to facilitate entry to the site, an enlargement of the Anzac Commemorative Site to cater for larger crowds and improvements to Ridge Road running past Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair. In particular, a substantial section of this road needed to be upgraded to improve traffic and safety in that area.

No request was made to widen or change the Anzac Cove Road.

We understand that final drawings and approval of the 6.3 km of road works along Brighton Breach, Anzac Cove and North Beach occurred in the second half of 2004.

Terms of Reference (b)

DVA had no role in road works, and related construction activity, at Anzac Cove in the lead up to Anzac Day on 25 April 2005. The Director of War Graves was aware of a proposal to widen the road from October 2004. He understood the proposal to be the widening of the road from 5.5 metres to seven metres. DVA, including the Director, was not aware of the extent of the works undertaken to achieve this widening until they had occurred.

Terms of Reference (c)

DVA has been asked to lead, on behalf of the Australian Government, the joint historical and archaeological survey of Anzac Cove. The first phase of the review took place from 15-21 May 2005 when an official delegation led by DVA visited the Gallipoli Peninsula and Ankara. Other delegation members were from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, ARUP Australia (civil and geotechnical engineers), Edaw Gillespie (landscape architect) and the Australian War Memorial. The delegation, accompanied by the Australian Ambassador to Turkey, met with key Turkish officials. They were briefed on Turkish proposals to complete earthworks, paving, drainage and shore protection. The party was invited, in keeping with Prime Minister Erdogan's

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offer to Prime Minister Howard, to offer views and suggestions on the proposed works. This process is proceeding.

A further joint historical survey of the Anzac area (including archaeological aspects) to provide a clear basis for balancing development plans for the park with the preservation of key sites will also proceed.

Conclusion

The foregoing summarises this Department's involvement in issues relevant to this Inquiry. The Secretary and his officers are available to answer any questions on these issues or any related matters that might assist the Committee.



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9 June 2005

Attachments:

- A. Map of Gallipoli Peninsula
- B. Letter from then Minister Vale to Turkish Minister for Environment and Forests, including attachments

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