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AHC Submission to National Commission for the Centenary of ANZAC

The Australian Hellenic Council serves as the peak public affairs body of the Australian Hellenic community, seeking to bring together community organisations on a select range of issues of concern to Australian Hellenes countrywide. The cultivation of the multifaceted Australian-Hellenic relationship is one such issue. This incorporates promotion of the shared history of the two peoples.

The Australian Hellenic Council (NSW) proposes the organisation of a number of activities in Australia, Hellas and Cyprus between 2015 and 2018 to mark the Centenary of ANZAC, and the Centenary of the Australian-Hellenic military alliance.

Commemorative Coin Set

The Australian Hellenic Council (NSW) proposes that a set of six commemorative coins be minted to mark the Centenary of ANZAC and the Centenary of the Australian military presence in Hellas.

Combining images representing the two peoples, each of the coins should be dedicated to an event of significance to both the Australian and Hellenic armed forces. Each one of the set of commemorative coins should be dedicated to each one of the following events:

- a) World War One 1914-1918;
- b) World War Two 1939-1945;
- c) Prisoners-Of-War across all conflicts;
- d) Korean War 1950-1953;
- e) Gulf Wars 2000s;
- f) United Nations' Peacekeeping Forces 1946 onwards.

During World War One, Australians and Hellenes fought shoulder-to-shoulder for the causes of democracy and human rights. The coins the AHC is proposing be minted are designed to remember the ANZACs who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula, on the nearby Hellenic islands of Lemnos, Imvros and Tenedos, as well as along the Macedonian Front later on. Indeed, the name "Gallipoli" is the Anglicised version of the original Hellenic name of the town of Kallipole ("Beautiful City").

These men, and the women who nursed them, exhibited the courage, fortitude and mateship that are characteristic of both Australians and Hellenes. These qualities are integral aspects of the spirit of the Australian nation.

Two decades later, the Second Generation ANZACs again made their presence felt for the causes of democracy and human rights. Fighting against the Nazi invaders of Hellas across the length of the country, the Greek Campaign of 1941 culminated in the Battle of Kreta. This event (whose 75th anniversary falls in 2016) pitted the ANZACs and Hellenes against the largest airborne invasion in human history.

In three wars, ANZAC and Hellene Prisoners-Of-War have shared experiences. In World War One, ANZAC POWs witnessed the Armenian, Hellenic and Assyrian Genocides. During both World Wars, Australian POWs were assisted in their escapes from captivity by the native Hellenes of places such as Constantinople (modern Istanbul) and Kreta.

Australians and Hellenes served as part of the United Nations' forces defending the Republic of Korea during the conflict there. Similarly, during the Gulf War for the liberation of Kuwait and the subsequent sanctions period, ships of the Australian and Hellenic navies served alongside one another. Over the decades, both countries have provided personnel United Nations' Peacekeeping Forces all over the world.

This shared legacy of sacrifice and dedication deserves a set of commemorative coins, an issue available for the entire community to share in the Centenary of ANZAC.

Australian Prisoners-Of-War Memorial in Canberra

The Australian Hellenic Council believes that it has been a serious omission on the part of the Australian authorities for a memorial dedicated to Australian Prisoners-Of-War not to exist in the national capital. The creation of such a monument on ANZAC Parade in Canberra would not only commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australian servicemen and women. It would also educate visitors on the experiences of those who have served and were left behind after the battles.

Under the Infrastructure and Capital Works theme, the development of such a monument, as well as interpretive material to accompany the completed memorial, benefits the Australian people now and into the future. It completes the story of ANZAC by returning the forgotten ANZACs, the prisoner-of-war, to their rightful place alongside those who fought and survived, and those who fought and died.

Education

The Centenary of ANZAC provides the opportunity to raise awareness of the sacrifices of war in order to ensure a better future for all Australians. In particular, the generations who followed each conflict. This is the ideal opportunity for the development of programs, projects and/or activities that build on those that create new opportunities for Australians of all ages to examine, interpret and better understand the Australian experience of war.

The focus of these proposals by the Australian Hellenic Council are the lesser known aspects of the ANZAC story: the World War One Prisoners-Of-War, the Australians who served with the Dunsterforce in Persia, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Azerbaijan, the Australian Flying Corps and so many more. The ANZAC story is so much more than the Gallipoli landings and the Western Front.

Specific units of work should be designed for primary, secondary and tertiary students. In accordance with the principles of cross-curricular education of the Australian Curriculum and the International

Baccalaureate, units of study should be developed by current educators on the aforementioned topics and more. These units of work should incorporate cultivation of research skills, the development of websites which give access to records, such as the statements of former Prisoners-Of-War.

The Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) is currently developing syllabi for a number of subjects, including History. The proposed structure of the History curriculum for Australian schools states that Unit 4 involves investigation of Australia and the Modern World from 1901 to the present.

The purpose of developing units of work specific to particular topics and catered to specific class times is to develop more than comprehension amongst the students; it is to cultivate understanding of the range of experiences Australian servicemen have had in war and how these experiences have influenced the development of the Australian people.

The students who undertake this programme of study are the next generation of Australians. They need an understanding of the country's past before they can improve its future.

ANZAC Rescuers Exhibit in Australian War Memorial

The Dunsterforce and other ANZACs who rescued people from persecution during and immediately following World War One deserve a permanent exhibit within the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

During the Allied offensive along the Palestine Front, Australian Camel Corps soldiers regularly saved destitute survivors of the Armenian Genocide fleeing in the opposite direction. Following the 'Great War', veterans such as Sidney Loch (Gallipoli) and Thomas Walter White (Australian Flying Corps in Mesopotamia), contributed to the relief efforts across Australia in support of the survivors of the Armenian, Hellenic and Assyrian Genocides.

The greatest acts of rescue belong to the Dunsterforce. Formed in 1918, this select unit was named for its commanding officer, Major-General L.C. Dunsterville, a boyhood friend of Rudyard Kipling. It was formed to secure the oilfields of northern Mesopotamia and the Caspian Basin under British control, using Assyrian and Armenian troops trained by Allied officers.

This unit consisted of some 400 officers and men drawn from the British, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, South African, and Russian armed forces. Their official mission was "the organisation and training of Armenian and other irregular troops in the Caucasus" in an effort to deny it to the Turks. Setting a model emulated by Australian servicemen in many lands since – most notably in Timor L'este only a decade ago, the Australian Dunsterforce members in particular risked their own lives to save tens of thousands of Assyrian and Armenian refugees from massacre.

The exploits of Captain Savige, Captain Judge, Captain Hooper and their fellow ANZACs left an amazing collection of historical material produced during and shortly after their service in the Middle East. These memoirs and photographs document the exodus and resettlement of the indigenous Christian Assyrians and Armenians of modern-day eastern Turkey and northern Iraq.

These textual and visual documents of the experiences of Australian servicemen in historic Assyria, serve as powerful testimonies. Not only of the genocide of the Assyrian and Armenian peoples by the Ottoman Turks and their allies. Ninety years later, their memoirs and photographs remind us of some of the Australian Army's earliest experiences of multiculturalism.

The ANZAC Rescuers deserve a permanent exhibit within the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Their photographs, diaries and film footage serve as a powerful testimonial to the humanitarian spirit of the original ANZACs, an oft-overlooked aspect of the ANZAC Legend and quite fitting for commemoration of the Centenary of ANZAC.

ANZAC Pilgrimages

Similarly, the Australian Hellenic Council proposes the organisation of Australian pilgrimages to the battlefields, monuments and Commonwealth War Cemeteries across Hellas and Cyprus. With the majority of the remaining veterans who served in Hellas now too elderly to make such a journey, it is envisaged that the primary participants would be the descendants of First and Second Generation ANZACs, as well as secondary and tertiary students.

Amongst the Australian heritage sites within the Hellenic Republic are:

- the Commonwealth War Cemetery and the Commonwealth War Memorial at Phaleron in Athens;
- the former ANZAC base camps and the Commonwealth War Cemeteries on Lemnos;
- the camps and five Commonwealth War Cemeteries in and around Thessalonike (the Macedonian Front of World War One);
- the Loch Museum at Ouranoupolis, Halkidike Region, Macedonia, Hellas, dedicated to the efforts of Gallipoli veteran Sidney Loch and his wife Joice NanKivell Loch in support of that community of Hellenic Genocide survivors from the 1920s to their deaths in 1954 and 1981 respectively;
- the battlefields and Commonwealth War Cemeteries of Krete (Chania, Galata, Souda Bay, Rethymnon, Heraklion, Stavromenos, Prevely and others);
- the monasteries and homes where Australian soldiers were hidden by Hellenes in efforts to evade capture by the Nazis.

A number of commemorative ceremonies and other events such as public lectures, film screenings, exhibitions and receptions will be organised by expatriate Greek-Australian associations in centres such as Athens and Thessalonike.

The 2015-2018 commemorative period will be a time of great exploration of the Australian heritage in the Hellenic World. 2015 marks the Centenary of the ANZACs on Lemnos. 2016 marks the Centenary of the ANZACs on the Macedonian Front, as well as the 75th anniversary of the Second Generation ANZACs and their involvement in the 1941 Greek Campaign (including the Battle of Krete). 2018 marks the Centenary of the signing of the Armistice at Mudros, the surrender of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and the end of World War One. all these and more will be remembered and examined through pilgrimages and educational activities in Australia, Hellas and Cyprus.

As a nation, such pilgrimages provide opportunity to honour and commemorate 100 years of service and sacrifice by the men and women who have served Australia, Hellas, Cyprus and their allies in war, defence and peace keeping. They also encourage exploration of the legacy of World War One for Australians and what interpretations of this legacy mean for the future.

ANZACs on Cyprus

During both World Wars, Royal Australian Air Force personnel saw active duty on the island of Cyprus, then a British Crown Colony. The Australian Federal police and servicemen and women of

the United Nations' Peacekeeping Force on Cyprus (UNFICYP) have served with diligence since the creation of the force in 1964. Just as with the Hellenic Republic, the Australian Defence Forces have a long presence on the island, in a variety of capacities.

Cypriots were staunch supporters of the Allies and some 30,000 served in the British and Commonwealth forces during the Second World War. As far as the island itself was concerned, it escaped the war except for limited air raids. As it had 25 years earlier, it became important as a supply and training base, and naval station. Cyprus also served as a place of refuge for Australians escaping the Nazi invasion of Hellas. British Cyprus was reinforced by Australian troops following the loss of Kreta to the Axis. Following their heavy losses during that campaign, Nazi plans to launch a similar assault on Cyprus were abandoned.

Since arriving as part of the UN policing presence after the formation of UNFICYP in 1964, over 1400 Australian police officers have served on the island, earning the respect and friendship of the small communities they serve within the UN controlled buffer zone. Three Australians have died while on active duty.

2014 is the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the Australian Peacekeepers on Cyprus, while 2015 marks the 85th anniversary of the Cyprus Community of NSW, Australia's oldest Cypriot organisation. These and other associated milestones in the Cyprus-Australia relationship deserve due attention within the context of the Centenary of ANZAC.

The aforementioned commemorative coin, a travelling public history exhibition, public lectures, the screening of a new documentary on the experiences of the Cypriot volunteers in the British forces and the creation of commemorative gardens within the Cyprus Community Centre at Stanmore NSW (currently in the early stages of a major redevelopment) as well as the respective High Commissions in Nicosia and Canberra are amongst the proposals the Australian Hellenic Council is preparing for the Centenary of ANZAC.

Day of Remembrance

The Australian Hellenic Council will be proposing to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia that all its institutions throughout Australia - churches, monasteries, schools, and nursing homes - establish a particular Day of Remembrance for Australian and Hellene servicemen.

This day is to be marked by simultaneous Divine Liturgies and commemorative ceremonies, and will be held on a significant anniversary not already set aside as ANZAC Day (25 April), Hellenic Independence Day (25 March) and Hellenic National Day (28 October) already are. It will be a special Day of Remembrance to commemorate and celebrate the Australian-Hellenic relationship, incorporating all aspects of this symbiosis.

Specifically, the Australian Hellenic Council will be proposing 28 August (or the nearest Sunday) for this Day of Remembrance. It was on this day in 1829 that the first Hellenes disembarked at Sydney Cove. In the ensuing two centuries, Australians and Hellenes have lived, fought and died together on battlefields all over the world. Hellenes have served within the Australian forces, as Australians have served within the Hellenic ones.

ANZAC Aegean Regatta

Every summer, numerous events are held on the waters of the 'wine-dark' Aegean Sea: scores of national and international swimming, sailing, windsurfing and other water sports events. The Australian Hellenic Council proposes the running of a unique international regatta running the length of the Aegean: from the northern port of Thessalonike to the north-eastern island of Lemnos to the central port of Piraeus to the southern island of Kreta.

This route is specifically selected as it links some of the key places in Hellas where both First and Second Generation ANZACs served in the two World Wars. Drawing on the common love of the sea shared by Australians and Hellenes, as well as the bonds forged in the heat of numerous battles, such an event should be inaugurated from 2015 and become an annual event.

Under the International Relations and Cooperation theme, the ANZAC Aegean Regatta encourages the development of international relationships at the governmental, organisational and personal levels.

The Australian Hellenic Council offers the contacts of its member-organisations with national, regional and local authorities as well as with Greek-Australian associations in Hellas to bring this event to fruition. There are many organisations in Australia whose membership hails from the islands that dot the Aegean, as well as the Macedonian Brotherhoods of the state capital cities. All of them maintain close ties with the authorities in their particular regions of origin.

Similarly, there are a number of Australian Hellenes involved in yachting and sailing associations across Australia. One aim of the Regatta is to cultivate personal relationships between Australians and Hellenes across the globe.

Under the Community Engagement theme, the ANZAC Aegean Regatta encourages the involvement of the Australian Hellenic community as well as the Hellenic Republic in learning about Australia's military legacy. Such a project engages our community as well as the people of the Hellenic Republic with the importance the ANZAC legacy holds for Australians and Hellenes alike.

Athletic events

The Australian Hellenic Council will be endeavouring to facilitate the staging of a series of athletic events in Australia, Hellas and Cyprus involving national representative teams as well as club sides in sports such as football, volleyball, basketball, cricket, water polo, golf, and marathon.

There currently exist a number of Australian Hellenic sporting organisations, particularly in football. Contacts between clubs and their respective federations, as well as the respective Olympic Committees of Australia, Hellas and Cyprus could be utilised to facilitate a series of events in the three countries around anniversaries of particular importance between 2014 and 2018, as part of the commemorations of the Centenary of ANZAC.

In the spirit of ANZAC, traditional Australian sports played by Australian servicemen and women during their time in Hellas and Cyprus such as cricket, rugby and football could be re-created in the same areas as where the original ANZACs played.

These proposals incorporate elements of the International Relations and Cooperation, as well as the Community Engagement themes, to encourage the cultivation of international governmental and sporting relationships at all levels.