

# Department of Veterans' Affairs.

## *“A Century of Service”* Community Research.

Report

Prepared for Department of Veterans' Affairs

CB Contact David Bruce, Research Director

Phone (02) 6249 8566

Email [David.Bruce@cbr.com.au](mailto:David.Bruce@cbr.com.au)

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[www.cbr.com.au](http://www.cbr.com.au)

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# Executive Summary

## Commemorating our military history is important

It is almost universally recognised that commemorating our history of military service is important. Even those people who are staunchly opposed to violence and war respect the sacrifice and commitment of the individuals who served.

The benefits associated with commemoration are:

- A sense of pride and unity that brings the community together and makes us feel good about ourselves – both for what we have collectively done in the past, and for the fact that we make the effort to remember it now.
- Remembering the past sacrifices (and mistakes) that have been made, in the hope that by doing so we are less likely to have to make them again in the future.
- Ensuring that people who might be called on in the future to make such sacrifices are more likely to do so, knowing that they will not be forgotten.

Many of the characteristics we associate with being Australian are seen as having originated in our military history, and so this history is still considered highly relevant in the modern day.

## The community expects 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries to be marked

There is almost no awareness or anticipation of the impending 100<sup>th</sup> World War I anniversaries, including the Gallipoli landings and Anzac Day. However, most people with sufficient historical knowledge to put dates to these events can also do the maths easily enough to work out that they will occur in just a few years' time.

More importantly though, virtually everyone in Australia recognises that the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of anything is important and it is expected that it would be marked in some way different to 'any other year'. This is particularly so of Anzac Day, where there is a clear expectation that the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be commemorated in some specific manner. There were quite strong opinions about how those commemorations should (and should not) feel.

## **Anzac Day is the pre-eminent event**

While there is respect for the wider range of anniversaries that will fall across the 2010-2018 period, and there are other significant dates and events in this span, Anzac Day is very clearly the dominant one.

This is partly because of its current structure and significance, making it much more concrete and salient to the community; but also because it is used as a symbol and ritual to mark a wider range of events than the Gallipoli landings in isolation, and can therefore encompass recognition of these other events.

For those individuals, families and places with a particular connection to other events, marking those anniversaries will be personally significant. Official commemorations of these will likely attract interest and participation from those with a connection; but universally these are expected to be secondary to the Anzac Day commemoration. 'Commemoration fatigue' was often mentioned as a possible consequence of trying to engage people in a four-year series of high profile commemorations.

Remembrance Day is also seen as considerably 'smaller' and more specific than Anzac Day, marking the end of WWI only. It is also seen to have dwindled in significance in recent decades, and its revival is considered one of the potential opportunities associated with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## **There is a desire to commemorate a wide range of service, but combat service remains the most important**

The concept of a Century of Service was quickly grasped by the community, and widely liked. Though it was not intuitively understood from the name in isolation, a simple definition or explanation was sufficient for the majority of people. Women and ADF families in particular liked the opportunity it offered to recognise a wider range of service, including the service of women and families in Australia during wartime, peace-keeping and disaster response activities, and support and ancillary roles.

There were some concerns about the definition, with the Boer War in particular being known as a pre-1914 conflict in which Australians took part. However, simple acknowledgement of pre-1914 service was sufficient for most people to be satisfied. In reality, there may be little need for a definition of the exact 100 years being recognised. People could identify several plausible 'start dates', but had no strong preference for any of them; and were generally not wanting a specific commemoration on a specific date anyway. A broad interpretation of a 'century' would be acceptable, and respected for its inclusiveness (the biggest risk to the concept would come from perceptions of excluding any specific groups).

While liked however, it was a concept that the community evidently found difficult to visualise; and while enthusiastic, they were not passionate.

The Century of Service theme was clearly compatible with, but secondary to, the recognition of service associated with Anzac Day. There was a general willingness for Anzac Day to take on a formal role in recognising the wider scope of service, and especially on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary to mark the concept of a century of service – however retaining the primacy of commemorating combat service was implicit for many people.

## **The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Anzac Day is considered a once-in-a-generation opportunity by some, but there are risks and issues that need to be considered**

While there were some issues that needed to be carefully considered, there was a widely held feeling that the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Anzac Day was a significant opportunity to achieve some positive outcomes. For some groups, especially the Indigenous community, it was seen as a rare opportunity to make a very significant contribution.

### ***What the community wants from the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries***

There was no particular need seen for a new permanent memorial to be established to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Anzac Day or the Century of Service, though the anniversary was seen as an opportunity to restore or maintain the existing war memorials across the country. There was an expectation that some sort of lasting token(s) would be distributed, with coins and stamps widely anticipated, and tokens for school children and / or families with a service history commonly suggested.

However, the greatest legacy of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary was thought to be in terms of invigorating the memories of our past and, importantly, the mechanisms for communicating them into the future. As it was widely felt to be important to remember our past, this contribution to sustaining these benefits into the future was the ultimate benefit many people wanted to achieve. This could take many forms, from a formal curriculum element to simply engaging children in the process and tradition – but the end outcome of perpetuating the collective memory was the objective.

### ***Opportunities to take advantage of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries***

Beyond this directly relevant outcome, there were several other potential opportunities that were identified by various individuals and groups.

- **Reconciliation:** two groups were identified as having been poorly commemorated in the past, and it was thought that the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary was an opportunity to correct this.
  - ➔ **Indigenous service:** Although only sporadically mentioned in the general public groups, greater recognition of Indigenous people who served in Australia's military was a dominant theme for the Indigenous groups. To many Indigenous Australians, Anzac Day has felt like '*a party that we have not been invited to*', and they do not feel many of the values that the general public associate with Anzac Day, such as mateship, comradeship and a sense of community or connectivity. While they did not want it to become an apologetic over-reaction, a deliberate recognition of the service and sacrifice of Indigenous Australians would be seen as a strong gesture of good will; one that could potentially have broader positive impact as well as engaging them more in the 2015 commemorations and Anzac Day beyond that.

- ➔ **Vietnam Veterans:** Were widely perceived to have been harshly treated by the community – perhaps the only time in our history that the service of individuals has not been separated from feelings about the conflict they served in. Acknowledging and correcting this was seen as an opportunity the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a theme of service could address.
- **Other Veterans.** Placing a greater emphasis on acknowledging current personnel in active service and those who have served in less commemorated actions such as peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts, was felt to be particularly important. This was voiced strongly by ADF service personnel and their families and was mirrored by many people in the community.
- **Unity:** Australia is a diverse country, with metropolitan and regional divides, generational differences, and a wide range of cultures represented – including some who have been opponents in past and current conflicts. Commemorating our military service is something that has the potential to create a sense of ‘togetherness’, but this is often short-lived. The chance for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations to achieve a longer-lasting sense of unity was commonly referred to either directly or indirectly.
- **Improve knowledge:** Knowledge of our service history is generally poor, and it declines with the time and personal distance that separates younger people from major historical conflicts. However, even older people often have only sketchy or incorrect knowledge. Only some of this lack of knowledge is recognised, but there is a general sense of embarrassment felt about poor knowledge. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries clearly provide an opportunity to increase and correct knowledge about key aspects of our service history. People do not want detailed historical information, but a knowledge of key events and an understanding of the attitudes of the Australians who were involved would be of general interest. Personal stories are of interest, and could be used to convey broader concepts.
- **Re-define Anzac Day:** Most people have some awareness that the origin of Anzac Day is tied to the Gallipoli landings, though knowledge of what, when, where and why these landings happened is far from universal. It is widely assumed that Anzac Day now commemorates much more than those events, but there is no known definition of exactly what it *officially* commemorates. With the loss of all WWI veterans and the changes to the composition of marches, and the willingness to embrace a wider range of service on Anzac Day, there is the opportunity for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Anzac Day to be an official re-defining of the day and what it will mean for the country from here on.
- **Re-vitalise Remembrance Day:** Remembrance Day is perceived to be declining in meaning and in the observance of a minute’s silence. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary was seen as an opportunity to reverse this trend and return Remembrance Day to its former status.

## ***Risks and issues to consider***

There are four areas of potential concern surrounding the commemorations. None of these are definitive problems, but rather points that should be explicitly considered in order to ensure they do not introduce unexpected negative complications.

- **Multiculturalism:** Commemorating our military history in a multi-cultural society is something of a double-edged sword. While the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries are thought to provide some opportunity for creating a greater sense of unity, it is also recognised as a potential area of divisiveness. There are strong views either way in terms of how to recognise any 'non-Australian' military service of those who now live here, and this lack of consensus is well known. It was clear that erring by making commemorations '*overly politically correct*' would generate more negative reactions from the general public and in particular from ADF personnel and their families, but that the community does not know what recently arrived Australians think about the whole idea. This research did not explore the views of that group, and this is an area which we suggest could benefit from quite explicit further research, if not at this general stage, then certainly at the stage of any concept testing.
- **The balance of Commemoration versus Celebration:** These two words are used interchangeably by most people until prompted to consider the difference. At that point, they clearly perceive a difference – with commemoration being solemn and respectful, while celebrations have a happier feel. Commemoration was universally seen as the more appropriate, and once this distinction is made most people attempt to use the terms more deliberately. However, while commemoration should be the dominant tone, there was a desire for the anniversaries not to be unrelentingly gloomy. It was thought that a sense of celebrating what service has bought us (freedom, our current lifestyle) could be an appropriate element, probably at the conclusion of commemorations, and in a style that did not detract from or overshadow the serious aspects.
- **Current events:** Though only suggested in the research groups, and mostly by younger participants, the potential impact of current events should be considered. In general, people were able to distinguish between the service of individuals and attitudes towards politics and conflicts. However, an unpopular conflict which was happening at the time of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations could impact on how some people felt and their willingness to engage with the events. If thought to be a strong influence on prevailing attitudes at the time of the anniversaries, it may be necessary to refine the events or the tone of the commemorations to minimise the risk of rejection from any segments of the community.

The importance of recognising and showing appreciation for Australia's active military personnel and those deployed in service was a commonly held feeling amongst the groups; and in particular amongst ADF families. This could be a mechanism for mitigating the risk of current events having a negative impact on attitudes towards the commemorations.

- **Veterans' standard of living:** There were also isolated concerns that there was a potential hypocrisy implied in revering our Veterans for a brief commemoration, and then allowing some of them to live in poor conditions the rest of the time.

## How to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries

Participants were asked to provide some thoughts on what they wanted to see and feel in commemorations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, and what they wanted to avoid. They were able to express quite clear and consistent views, and these were strongly consistent with their broader discussions of the topic.

### *What to seek*

Firstly, the values and feel that people wanted the commemorations to reflect were:

- Pride
- Respect
- National identity and unity
- Gratitude, thank you and 'thanks giving'
- Respect and recognition for all those involved in Australia's military history
  - ➔ Service (Army, Navy, Air Force) and forms of service (not just combat)
  - ➔ ADF families and support services
  - ➔ Wars (complete history of Australia's military involvement, including unpopular conflicts)
- Inclusive of the entire Australian community
  - ➔ Ages (in particular younger generations)
  - ➔ Cultures (not getting too 'bitsy' or losing the fundamental "Australian" theme, but an opportunity to break down some barriers)
  - ➔ Places (ie: everyone in Australia has something to access; not just major city focused)
- Accessible (suit elderly and those with young children; not limited in numbers who can participate; as well as public transport and disabled accessibility)
- Educational
  - ➔ Increase community knowledge
  - ➔ Pass on the tradition and understanding to future generations
- Memorable / lasting / impactful long-term
- Culturally sensitive and inclusive
- Relevance and consistency with what has gone before
- Recognise war as a vehicle for peace
- Give Veterans (and those with family members whose lives have been lost in service) space to do their own commemoration how they want to
- Individual recognition (ie: every soldier is recognised individually at some point)



### **What to avoid**

On the whole, the risks that people wanted to avoid in the commemorations were the reverse of those factors considered to be important 'selection' criteria, though this was not universally the case. The things participants identified for being avoided were:

- Irrelevancy
  - ➔ Too modern / too far from traditions
  - ➔ Overly politicised or commercial
- Events that seek to make commercial gain for anyone / organisation
- Culturally disrespectful / discriminatory / exclusive
- Too celebratory (an inappropriate tone of a party or over-use of alcohol)
- Glorifying violence / war
- Disrespectful / trivialised / offensive
- "Overly PC" (politically correct) or safe / too sensitive to cultural minority groups
- Sensational / dramatized / flashy
- Too gloomy (needs to allow a positive end / make it uplifting after being reflective)
- Changing / diluting traditions

The community have a strong feel for the tone of commemorations that they feel would be appropriate. A concern was that the media, for their own benefit, may seek a more sensationalised or dramatic tone, and negatively impact on the overall feel.

### **The community is largely of a common mind**

The research deliberately looked across a range of groups in the community. These included: generations; the presence of children; metropolitan, major regional and small country town residents; people who are 'engaged' or 'disengaged' with current Anzac Day commemorations; Indigenous Australians; Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and their families; and people who have been to overseas Anzac Day commemorations.

As would be expected, there were differences across these groups. However, at a macro level they were much more similar than different. To highlight the main points of interest across these groups:

- **Younger generations** have more distant and often weaker personal connections to historical events; less life experience with which to interpret what knowledge they do have; no personal experience of 'existential' type conflicts; and different media consumption patterns.

- **Those with young children** (and those who are elderly) find the Dawn Service to be too inconvenient to participate in. Those with young children also felt quite strongly about the importance of educating younger generations about Australia's military history (as an end in and of itself, but also as an avenue for their own self-education).
- **People who live in regional areas** place high importance on any commemorations reaching out to be accessible to everyone in Australia; and attitudes towards multiculturalism may be less progressive in some regional locations.
- **Disengagement with Anzac Day** / commemorating military history is most pronounced in younger people, who have less knowledge and personal experience against which to offset a lower interest. Personal connections, a strong sense of national pride, and family habits or traditions are amongst the main reasons for engagement, but there are multiple routes to engage and equally to disengage with the topic.
- **Indigenous Australians** sense a lack of recognition of their service, and would like to see that rectified – but overall are sympathetic to the concept of recognition of military service and there is no evident barrier to Anzac Day being a day of shared commemoration.
- **ADF personnel and their families** are (as would be expected) highly engaged with the concept of commemorating military service. Families in particular are keen to recognise the contribution of the families of service people, both in what they do and in what they are prepared to give up. Importantly, neither of these groups appear to hold any strong views that are incompatible with the rest of the community around how to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, or around what Anzac Day means to them.
- **People who have gone to overseas commemorations** may fall into several types: those paying homage to our history or to a personal connection and who have a passion for and knowledge of the events; those who are trying to create a connection and sense of understanding that they do not have; and those for whom it is a 'tick box' to be done, but who feel limited intrinsic connection to the site. These last two groups do not necessarily have particularly good knowledge of the history, and may be exploring rather than seeking fulfillment of a specific need.

Despite these nuances, there was little between these groups that was incompatible. Rather, there was evidence of ways in which commemorations might be shaped to maximise appeal to each group (and inclusiveness is amongst the most important characteristics wanted for the commemorations), both in terms of events and particularly in terms of communications.

## Communicating the commemorations

There are two main areas of communications required: 1) background and contextual knowledge; and 2) the commemoration schedule.

With respect to the background and contextual knowledge:

- People are generally not going to be actively seeking this information, but will have sufficient interest to pay attention when they come across things that seem interestingly presented.
- There is a latent sense of embarrassment about not having some basic knowledge, especially amongst parents who are concerned that their children will ask questions to which they do not know the answer, and this may be able to be harnessed to encourage attention.
- Much of the material may be too abstract or beyond personal experience for people to take in easily; however personal stories are of wide interest and may provide the best vehicle for many communications.

With respect to the commemorations events and schedule, people primarily want to know the logistical information – what, when, where, how to get there, where to park and so on. However, there is a desire to know well in advance (months and years) about commemorations so that people can make plans to travel to anything that is particularly important to them.

Amongst those people who are currently engaged with Anzac Day and commemorations, there was some interest in knowing more than the logistics, but also the *why* of commemorations (eg: why were particular commemorations chosen for a particular anniversary?). It was clear that at least some of this group would be interested in exploring and interacting with the commemorative process. Of those who were not currently engaged, it is likely that such a capability would have benefits for both general and commemorative knowledge if it could be structured in such a way as to engage them.

There were several general communications principles identified:

- There are generational differences in how they would like to get detailed information:
  - ➔ Gen Y and Gen X prefer an interactive on-line capability;
  - ➔ Boomers and Builders prefer newspaper supplements to convey this information, but a significant number also did not reject using interactive services.
- Television and radio is expected to draw attention to these sources of detailed information – people are not actively seeking this information, and an awareness raising strategy will be required.
- Children and schools (primary schools in particular) are an important conduit and motivation.
- Personal stories are what people are looking for, and what they are most likely to engage with (there is a perception that there is as much information as anyone could want about Gallipoli already available – but despite this actual knowledge is poor). Personal stories also play a role in compensating for the loss of veterans as they age, as it is a way to keep their personal experiences alive.

# The Research

The landing of Australian and New Zealand forces at Gallipoli on April 25 in 1915 is controversial from a military perspective. However, and at least partly as a reaction to its arguable military logic and the actions of the respective protagonists, it has become a significant historical moment for Australia. Ninety-five years later, ANZAC Day has evolved into one of a handful of nationally significant markers - and arguably the most powerful and revered. In a country with relatively little overt religious observance, ANZAC Day has taken on some near-sacred characteristics, as well as its obvious nationalistic ones.

World War I - of which the Gallipoli campaign was but one of many noted individual battles - was fought from 1914-1918. In 2010, we are but four years from the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the precursor events and the opening of hostilities. Across the period from 2014 to 2018 there will be many significant events which will reach their centenary, and many of these will be marked in more and less significant ways across the world. For Australia, while there are a number of other anniversaries which will be important, none is likely to match the impact that the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 will have.

Recognising the importance of commemorating the centenary of the ANZAC landings, and doing so in a way that is appropriate and that resonates with the community, the Australian Government has put in place a process to plan these events. This includes the establishment of a *Commission on the Commemoration of the ANZAC Centenary* (the Commission), whose members include former Prime Ministers and the current President of the RSL, and which has called for public submissions on how to mark the upcoming anniversaries.

Partly to support the work of the Commission, and partly to achieve more general objectives, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA, the Department) commissioned Colmar Brunton Social Research to conduct a significant research project in July to September 2010; the results of which are described in this report. The purpose of the research was:

- To assist the Commission in its considerations of submissions, such that it can identify those which are most likely to resonate with the community; and
- To provide guidance to the Government on what and how to communicate with the community about the anniversaries.

Within these broader research objectives the research also explored a range of issues, including:

- To understand what is important to the community, and specific groups within it;
- To understand generational differences, and issues for specific audiences;
- To understand the relative balance of Gallipoli versus other military experiences, including current deployments; and
- To find out what people know, what they would like to know, and what misinformation might be prevalent in the community.

## Participants in the research

A total of 36 general public focus groups were conducted across both regional and metropolitan locations Australia wide. Each group contained around 8 participants and was approximately 1.5 hours in duration.

Generation	Living with children	Engaged with ANZAC Day	Disengaged with ANZAC Day	Total
Y [18-30]	No children*	2	2	8
	Young children	2	2	
X [31-45]	No children*	2	2	12
	Young children (under 10s)	2	2	
	Older children (10-18)	2	2	
Boomers [46-60]	No children*	2	2	10
	Young children (under 10s)	1	1	
	Older children (10-18)	2	2	
Builders [61+]	No children*	2	2	6
	Older children (10-18)	1	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36</b>

\* "No children" may include *never had children* or where *older children have left home*

These groups were conducted in each state. Two to three were completed in each capital city, and in most states one was done in a major regional centre and one in a smaller town located within 1 hour's drive of that major centre. Generations, family structure and engagement were spread across states and across metropolitan and regional areas to ensure that no biases were introduced. This model covered a cross section of household structures, including eight groups with 'pre-children' families, ten with young children, ten with older children, and eight with 'children left home / never had children'.

### Indigenous Australians

Four focus groups were conducted with members of the indigenous community across a spread of regional and metropolitan locations: Darwin (NT, major regional centre), Alice Springs (NT, minor regional centre), Sydney (NSW, capital city) and Townsville (QLD, major regional centre). These groups mirrored the general public focus groups in terms of the number of participants involved and duration, as well as the discussion flow.

### ADF personnel and families

ADF personnel and their families were of particular interest to the research, to ensure that all 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations are appropriately sensitive to the broader ADF community, their values and attitudes towards Australia's military history and current commitments.

Two traditional face-to-face focus groups were conducted with family members of ADF personnel (one in each of Townsville (QLD, major regional centre) and Perth (WA, capital city)), along with three on-line focus groups with participants from around Australia.

To maximise the reach of the research with the potentially hard to reach population of ADF personnel, six on-line focus groups were conducted with participants from across Australia; no constraints were placed on age and gender for these groups.

Each on-line group was also approximately 1.5 hours in duration, and with the discussion flow largely mirroring that of the face-to-face groups (minor changes to the discussion guide were made to ensure discussions remained relevant to these specialised groups).

*Colmar Brunton would like to thank the Department of Defence for their assistance in obtaining participants for these parts of the research by distributing information about the project through their support networks. This support was much appreciated.*

### People who have attended overseas Anzac Day commemorations

People who have previously attended overseas Anzac Day commemorations are of particular interest to the project, as the question of likely interest in attending the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations at overseas locations, especially Gallipoli, is very important. Four on-line focus groups with people who have attended such commemorations were conducted, with participants from across Australia; no constraints were placed on age or gender for these groups. Three of the four groups focussed on people who had attended a commemoration since 2006 (in 2005 there was a problematic commemoration at Gallipoli, and it was felt that focussing on more recent visitation would be both richer and less likely to be distracted by the events of 2005). The fourth group had no time constraint, and included several participants who had earlier experience of overseas commemorations.

# Research findings in detail

## 1. Commemorating Australia's Military History

Across the board, community members were unanimous in recognising the high importance of commemorating Australia's military history, despite the range of groups in the community included within the research. That is: generations; the presence of children; metropolitan, major regional and small country town residents; people who are 'engaged' or 'disengaged' with current Anzac Day commemorations; Indigenous Australians; Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and their families; and people who have been to overseas Anzac Day commemorations. Even those people who are staunchly opposed to violence and war respect the sacrifice and commitment of the individuals who served and see commemoration in some form as appropriate.

### 1.1. What does it give us

When discussing the reasons why commemorating Australia's military history is important, several key themes emerged. Commemorating military history provides Australia and Australians with the opportunity:

- To thank and show appreciation for the people who have made a sacrifice (for Australia)
- By remembering the past sacrifices that have been made, and to learn from (the mistakes of) the past
- To make it more likely that in the future other people would be willing to make a similar sacrifice if necessary, knowing that the country will not forget them

#### **As a country**

As a country commemorating Australia's military history provides people with a sense of:

- Pride in the people who have made a sacrifice
- Unity; a sense of community and togetherness with fellow Australians past and present
- National identity and connectivity to Australia, as 'Australians'
- 'Feel good factor'. Feeling good about ourselves – both for what collectively Australia's military service has achieved in the past, and for the fact that we remember that today

### At a personal level

Pride was identified as a consistent theme when discussing what Australia as a country and Australians as individuals get out of commemorating our military history. At an individual level commemorating Australian military history was also thought to provide people with a better understanding of 'what happened' during previous military events and accordingly a deeper sense of appreciation and respect for the sacrifices that both past and present military service personnel have made towards preserving the 'Australian way of life'.

At an individual level commemorating Australia's military history provides people with a sense of:

- Personal connection to their family history
- Pride in being an Australian
- Perspective and understanding of the sacrifices made during Australia's military history
- Respect for and appreciation of the sacrifices made – both past and present

People who have a personal connection to someone who has served also express and strengthen their connection through commemoration.

## 1.2. What values are associated with our military history

The values associated with our military history were highly consistent across groups, regardless of respondents' levels of engagement with Anzac Day commemorations. These values were also closely aligned with what we as individuals and as a nation get out of commemorating Australia's military history, primarily:

- Respect
- Pride
- Community / togetherness
- Appreciation

Another consistent theme which emerged amongst respondents was how important Australia's military history, in particular the events of WWI and the Anzac Day tradition, has been in crafting and defining what it means to be an Australian. The characteristics displayed by our past and present military personnel, that were felt to be synonymous with being an 'Australian' and which set Australians apart from other nations include:

- Mateship and comradery in banding together and always supporting your mates
- Honour for yourself and your country
- Bravery and courage when the 'odds are stacked against you'





## 1.4. Visiting sites of military significance

Overall, people felt that visiting Gallipoli (and overseas military sites of significance in general) is about personal choice, and is particularly relevant for those with a personal connection to the events which took place. For those who do visit, attending overseas events is about one or more of:

- Paying homage to our history or to a personal connection
- Creating a connection with fellow Australians and with Australia's history
- Gaining a greater sense of reality and understanding of the original Gallipoli events and feeling the intensity of the experience
- To 'tick a box' on a travel itinerary (i.e. done Paris, done New York, done Gallipoli etc)

There was a widely held perception that visiting Gallipoli has become increasingly popular in recent years amongst younger generations, especially Gen Y (which is supported by visitor statistics). Several key themes were identified as the likely drivers for this recent trend:

- The need to 'connect' with Australia's history and to gain a sense of the reality and nostalgia of the Gallipoli experience.
  - ➔ Particularly important given the personal distance that separates younger people from major historical conflicts such as WWI.
- To gain a greater appreciation of the harsh reality and severity of the Gallipoli experience and to say thank you to those who have lost their lives.
- The appeal of experiential learning is common amongst Gen Y, who are characteristically eager to personally 'experience' Australia's history; as opposed to simply reading about it.
- A 'rite of passage' for young Australians.
- For some, visiting Gallipoli plays a smaller role in a large international travel experience and is more of an itinerary item.

Although visiting Gallipoli was felt to be an individual choice and more important to those with a personal connection, having an Australian presence at Gallipoli and other military sites of significance was considered important by virtually everyone. Ensuring an Australian presence at historical military sites is about showing respect for and appreciation of the sacrifices past military personnel have made on Australia's behalf, and maintains international perceptions that Australia is a country that suitably honours the sacrifices and service of its people.

### All sites

Overall, Gallipoli was considered the most important military site to have an Australian representation, owing to the high profile of Anzac Cove and its connection with the 'birth of Australia', the Anzac 'Digger' and Anzac Day tradition.

- There was, however, a consistent underlying acknowledgement that to some extent all military sites are of equal importance, because every life given and lost in service by Australian military personnel is of equal value, and that for individuals whose relatives were lost at other sites, they will be very important.
- There was a call for a greater Australian presence at a larger number of military sites to pay respect to other (ideally all) military events of significance, including Vietnam (Long Tan, Khe Sanh), Korea, Kakoda and the Gulf War.

## Gallipoli

Whilst it was seen to be important that Australia (as a nation) be represented at Gallipoli and other sites of military significance out of respect and appreciation, most respondents did not consider themselves visiting these sites to be of personal relevance or significance. The minority of respondents who had themselves visited the Gallipoli were more likely to:

- Be highly engaged with commemorating Anzac Day (and military service generally)
- Have family / other close connection in ADF or military history
- High sense of national pride
- General interest in military history.

## On Anzac Day

When discussing the idea of Australian representation at Gallipoli, in general and in particular to mark Anzac Day, a number of common themes were identified.

- There was some concern that recent Gallipoli commemorations were becoming overly 'commercialised' and 'celebratory' in nature, detracting from the seriousness and deserved sombre nature of the occasion.
- 'Music concerts' and alcohol for most were considered inappropriate and disrespectful at Gallipoli where people should be commemorating (not celebrating) the events that took place at this historic site.
- More positively, the increased presence of young Australians at recent Gallipoli services was felt to help preserve the Anzac memory and pass the tradition on to the next and future generations.

## 1.5. How well we commemorate our military history now

Most participants felt that Australia as a nation does a fairly good job at commemorating our military history, primarily via Anzac Day events and traditions.

- There was a sense that more could be done to pay our respects to those who have served Australia in past, less well-known, military actions; and particularly to recognise our current active service personnel.
- Ensuring that we as Australians remain 'humble / modest' in recognising and commemorating our military history was consistently felt to be important (and was also consistent with perceptions of the 'Australian character'). This call for humility was highlighted by, and considered in contrast to, the more explicit and 'over the top' way in which 'Americans' were felt to commemorate (or rather celebrate) their military history.

### What we do well

Respondents spontaneously and universally identified Anzac Day (the Dawn Service and Marches) as the single most important and recognisable Australian commemorative military event. Other demonstrations of how Australia commemorates its military service personnel which were well received included:

- Remembrance Day (minute silence)
- Australian War Memorial (Canberra)
- Cenotaphs in rural and regional Australia
- Retired Serviceman League (RSL)
- Legacy (Caring for Families of Deceased Veterans)

### What we could improve

When discussing areas for improvement regarding how Australia commemorates military service, a number of key themes emerged. It was felt that Australia could improve how we commemorate our past and present military personnel by placing a greater emphasis on acknowledging and showing appreciation for:

- Australia's involvement in ALL military events, in particular those other than the 'great existential wars' of WWI / WW2, such as Vietnam, Korea and The Gulf; as well as humanitarian and peace keeping efforts such as East Timor.
- Current active service personnel (e.g. Afghanistan).

Participants also talked about:

- Greater investment by the Australian Government to support and promote the improved health and wellbeing of returned veterans (in particular those from Vietnam) by way of pension, health care etc.
- A greater focus in schools on educating younger generations about Australia's military history to:
  - ➔ Promote an improved understanding of the *what* and *why* behind Australia's historical military involvement
  - ➔ Pass the tradition on to ensure our history is not forgotten and we learn from (the mistakes of) the past
- Acknowledgement of the role of Indigenous Australians in our military history (and current service).
- Controlling the increasingly excessive use of alcohol and 'yobbo' during Anzac Day commemorations nowadays which detract from the original spirit of the day and negatively impact on the veterans' commemorations and traditions.
- Promoting respect and appreciation of the Anzac Day tradition to guard against '*it's just another holiday*' mentality.

## 1.6. Anzac Day

Across the board, Anzac Day was spontaneously mentioned as the single most recognised event on the Australian military calendar and the most poignant demonstration of how Australia as a nation and as individuals commemorates past and present military service.

- Consistently the 'Dawn Service' and 'Anzac Day March' were regarded as the most positive and important elements of Anzac Day commemorations.
- Sentiments towards the Anzac Day tradition of 'two-up' were mixed however. Although born out of respect towards past 'Diggers', current day 'two-up' was felt to be increasingly associated with the Anzac Day 'holiday', 'heavy drinking' and 'gambling'. For these reasons a number of respondents expressed concerns that modern day 'two-up' is disrespectful.

### **What do we commemorate on Anzac Day**

Most respondents were aware of at least some link between Anzac Day and the military events at Gallipoli. The fundamentals of Gallipoli (i.e. the impossible odds faced by the Australian and New Zealand soldiers upon landing at Anzac Cove) were well understood by most; but few participants had much knowledge beyond these high-level defining characteristics.

Overall however, there was a general – though not quite universal - assumption that Anzac Day now commemorates Australian military service across all conflicts past and present. To some extent this has happened as a natural evolution of Anzac Day as the presence of WWI veterans has declined and families, veterans of other conflicts, and current service personnel have become more visible in the marches in particular. Most people seemed aware that there had been no formal definition of what Anzac Day commemorated.

- This view was also true amongst serving ADF personnel and their families, who were very cognisant of the importance of Anzac Day in commemorating the service of all ‘fallen brothers’, and service personnel from each and every military activity (including peace keeping and humanitarian efforts) that Australia has contributed to. For this group Anzac Day was also recognised as a day to pay tribute to the many sacrifices made by the families of ADF personnel.
- Amongst more disengaged participants, the exact military events that Anzac Day commemorates was even less clear; these respondents being more likely to identify WWI as the dominant and single focus of Anzac Day commemorations.

### **How has Anzac Day been changing**

When discussing how Anzac Day has been changing over the years, a number of key themes emerged. There was a feeling that:

- Attendance levels at Anzac Day events (i.e. Dawn Service and March) have grown in recent years, after nearly dying out during the Vietnam era.
- More young people are now actively getting involved.
- There had been, and remains, mixed emotions over the recent “controversy” relating to whether children of past veterans can march with their service medals on their behalf - though the acceptance of children and family members marching was felt to be at least partly responsible for the resurgence of Anzac Day.

While it was perceived that the scale, recognition and meaning of Anzac Day has been re-growing in recent times, it was also universally acknowledged that this had largely been without compromising the traditions and structures of the commemorations. There were concerns that some aspects of the day were being used in non-traditional ways – such as two-up games being seen as opportunities for drunken gambling by young people rather than respectful symbols of the past – but the fundamentals of the day had retained their original feel and gravitas. This appeared important, and is an essential consideration in any future planning for Anzac Day, including the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## 1.7. Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day was seen to be fading in recent years, despite this event being well recognised by respondents as Australia's most important and recognizable military commemoration outside of Anzac Day.

- Many, particularly older and engaged participants, commented with frustration how 'lax' Australians as individuals and Australia as a nation have become in upholding the traditional minute of silence as a sign of respect on Remembrance Day.
- By and large there was a consistent call for Remembrance Day commemorations and traditions to be re-invigorated.

## 2. Reactions to the Century of Service Concept

### 2.1. Understanding and interpretation

Overall people responded positively to the Century of Service concept. Although not instantly understood from the title alone, when presented with supporting information (i.e. the celebration of 100 years of Australian military service post Federation) its intent was easily enough understood by all and almost universally accepted.

### 2.2. General reactions

On the whole, people were very positive towards the idea of a Century of Service commemoration for a number of reasons:

- Greater recognition of military service is always welcomed
- 100 years in absolute terms is a milestone which deserves acknowledgement
- People identified the Century of Service as being an opportunity for Australia to place a greater emphasis on commemorating our military service – past and present

#### Likes

Consistently the scope that the Century of Service concept allows in recognising ALL military service (Army, Navy, Air Force) – past and present, across ALL forms of service (not just combat), were considered the most positive aspects of the concept. The concept was also considered appealing via its inclusivity to commemorate Australia's complete history of military involvement.

The milestone of 100 years of Australian military service was also seen as an opportunity to:

- Re-invigorate Australia's military history to increase the awareness and understanding of our history to all Australians
  - ➔ As expressed by some older people in particular, as a vehicle of education the Century of Service has the ability to increase the understanding and appreciation for the concepts of duty and service (i.e. thinking of the greater rather than the individual good) to today's 'individualistic' younger generations.
- Pass the tradition of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day on to young Australians / the next generation (to communicate into the future)
  - ➔ To re-launch Australia's military history within the education syllabus
- Recognise, educate and build awareness of the contribution of Indigenous people to Australia's military history
  - ➔ Although this was only mentioned occasionally by non-indigenous participants, this was the central issue raised by the indigenous participants, who saw the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Century of Service concept as a rare and unique opportunity to correct the perceived lack of specific recognition of the past.



- Acknowledge Vietnam Veterans and correct the mistakes of the past. Vietnam Veterans were widely felt to have been wrongly treated by the community upon their return by virtue of Australians' inability to separate their feelings about the Vietnam conflict from the service of the military personnel involved.

## Concerns

The primary, and for most people only, concern around the Century of Service concept was regarding how to define the start date of the 100 year milestone.

- Although there was low awareness of Australia's involvement in military conflicts pre-1914 service, the Boer War, Maori Wars and Boxer Rebellion for example, were conflicts repeatedly mentioned throughout the groups as falling outside of the current definition of a Century of Service.
  - ➔ Excluding pre-1914 service from the concept was a concern for some, particularly (and not surprisingly) ADF personnel and their families. Although the definition of the Century of Service concept was understood, there was a call for all those involved in pre-1914 conflicts to be explicitly acknowledged.
- Most people were satisfied with a simple acknowledgement that the definition is not an absolute absence of service, but the first time Australians fought after Federation.
- Most were not overly concerned with a precise start date – but rather were happy with the concept of being 'around 100 years'.
- There was some hesitation around the four year duration of the Century of Service concept; namely how successful a commemorative event of such a lengthy duration would be at building and maintaining continued public interest and engagement over this period, beyond the 'main events' of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

## Scope

Most respondents recognised the opportunity that the Century of Service provides to broaden the scope of recognition and appreciation of the full gamut of all service and non-service personnel involved in our complete military history. In addition the 100 year milestone was also seen as an opportunity to better recognise all military services and all conflicts in which Australia has been involved. There was a strong call for emphasis to be spread over:

- Military services (i.e. Army, Navy, Air Force)
- Military events / conflicts (i.e. WWI, WW2, Vietnam, Gulf War etc)
- Peacekeeping efforts and disaster response activities (i.e. East Timor)
- Wide range of military service (i.e. combat, support and ancillary roles)
- Contribution of Indigenous people to Australia's military service – both past and present
- 'At home' service and the service of women and families in Australia during wartime
- Multi-cultural contribution to, and face of, the Australian military

While there was a definite willingness for commemorating a wider range of service than direct combat, especially amongst women and ADF families, it was also widely recognised that it is in combat service that the greatest hardship and sacrifice rests, and that the primacy of this should not be too diluted by any broader definition.

### 2.3. Relative to Anzac Day and Remembrance Day

Overall the Century of Service concept was well received. The majority of people 'get it' and are enthusiastic about the idea once explained; however many found the concept difficult to visualise, and their response was 'positive' rather than 'passionate'. If used correctly the Century of Service concept should be an effective tool to convey a range of additional messages both in conjunction with and separate from the key commemorative events.

The Century of Service was seen as a rare opportunity to expand the depth and breadth of traditional Australian military service commemorations.

However, by no means was it felt to be appropriate for the broader Century of Service concept to supersede Anzac Day. The Century of Service should be secondary to the Anzac Day and Remembrance Day commemorations. The concept was seen to provide a solid platform from which the traditional and principal Anzac and Remembrance Day commemorations could be re-invigorated and the minute of silence tradition reinstated.

Another common positive to come from the concept is its ability to be used as a valuable framework for a longer lead up to the specific commemorations - a lengthened lead time to generate interest and engagement and enable learning and a greater appreciation for the actual event when it is held.

## 3. The 2014-18 Commemorations

### 3.1. First impressions

#### **Awareness and reactions to 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries**

Overall there was a very low, if not absence of, awareness or anticipation regarding the impending 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries including the Gallipoli landings, Anzac Day or Remembrance Day. When presented with the idea, most people had sufficient knowledge of the historical events to calculate that these anniversaries are only a few years away. People uniformly and spontaneously considered the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries to be:

- Momentous milestones in Australia's history
- Worthy of significant celebration / commemoration - particularly Anzac Day
- To be marked in some way which is different to 'any other year' (but while still being consistent with traditions)
- For current Australians to commemorate
- For future Australians to look back and reflect upon

#### **Commemorations or celebrations**

Until directly asked, people often used the terms "commemorations" and "celebrations" interchangeably when referring to Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and the Century of Service concept. After consideration however, the distinction between the two was clearly identified:

- Commemorations are more dignified, reflective, respectful and sombre in tone
- Celebrations are more fun, outgoing, loud, associated with parties / holidays etc

In the main, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries were seen as commemorations, not celebrations. If there is a celebration, it is the end of WWI (Remembrance Day) - although those with English heritage are aware that this celebratory approach is out of keeping with the role of Remembrance Day in the UK.

It was agreed that what could be celebrated is the freedom, Australian values and way of life that the sacrifices made by our military service personnel in defence of the country have afforded all Australians. Such 'celebrations' should not overshadow the commemorations - but a positive, celebratory conclusion could be a more uplifting finale to the commemorations and prevent the period from being *too* gloomy overall.

## 3.2. What we want to get out of it

### Definite things

A consistent theme across all groups was the opportunity that the 2014-2018 commemorations provide to:

- Continue the memory of Australia's military history and the tradition of our commemorations
- Highlight the futility of war and protect against us making the same mistakes again.
- Encourage other (and future) Australians to join the Australian Defence Force and if necessary make a similar sacrifice, knowing it will be remembered.

The 'feel good factor' associated with demonstrating our own capacity to remember and commemorate the sacrifice of others was seen as another important outcome of commemorations in 2014-18.

### Opportunities / possibilities

A number of positive outcomes which *could* come from the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries were identified, including:

- Renew and refresh Anzac Day traditions
- Define and potentially broaden what Anzac Day officially commemorates (many people see it now as being more than just Gallipoli, but not aware if this is formally the case). The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries create a one-off opportunity to redefine what Anzac Day is moving into for the next 100 years.
- Promote a greater sense of unity (in a cultural and generational sense)
- Improve the status of veterans of the less popular modern wars, especially in terms of ensuring Vietnam Veterans hold their 'rightful place' in how we commemorate our military history (i.e. making it up to Vietnam Veterans for the reaction they originally received from the Australian Government and Australian people)
- Acknowledgement of the service of Indigenous service people
- Increase the general knowledge of Australia's military history amongst the community
- Spruce up / refresh all existing war memorials nationwide and
- Reinvigorate Remembrance Day as a national commemoration

## Lasting outcomes / “the legacy”

There was a strong sense that the community would like something lasting to come out of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries – whether directly or indirectly.

- **Education:** was widely considered the most important legacy of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, reinforcing the importance of children in the whole realm of commemoration and learning from the past. Ranging from a greater precedence in the on-going curriculum through to specific anniversary related learning and activities, often including relating to individual soldiers, the legacy was seen to be a strong and sustainable passing on of history to new generations.
- **Memorials and monuments:** were not generally desired (only Canberra and Sydney participants thought that any permanent memorial would be potentially relevant); though there was interest in using the anniversaries as a prompt to restore / maintain existing memorials across the country. Also, there was some mention of placing plaques on existing memorials to mark the 100 year anniversary, serving as a permanent indicator that even 100 years on we still commemorate, and as an incentive to future generations to continue the tradition.
- **Tokens:** were expected in some form (eg: coins in circulation; stamps; coins for school children; trees to plant); and there was some interest in the general community in a presentation of tokens to families who had any service history. The view of ADF families towards this idea of a token of appreciation was mixed. Some were very open to receiving recognition of the sacrifices made by ADF families in support of ADF personnel, whilst others were more reserved and felt that it may detract from the true Anzac Day focus: those who have lost their lives, veterans and current service personnel.
- **Social:** social outcomes were seen as a possible and beneficial outcome, but were often more esoteric and quite indirect, such as better sense of unity and our place in the world. A more direct social outcome which was both overtly mentioned on a number of occasions and implied in others was a better acknowledgement of veterans of modern conflicts, especially Vietnam; and amongst the Indigenous participants a more specific recognition of Indigenous service.

## 3.3. Risks and possible issues

There are several areas of potential concern surrounding the commemorations. None of these are definitive problems, but rather points that should be explicitly considered in order to ensure they do not introduce unexpected negative complications.

- There is a degree of concern around how to involve and include non-Anglo-Australian cultural groups, especially those who may have previously been opponents in conflicts. Some participants have strong views either way on the inclusion of non-Australian service in any commemoration; but many are simply aware it is a possible point of contention and unsure which way to lean. Understanding the views of these cultural groups may be a very important input, at both the overall level and certainly in

the context of any specific concepts. This information would potentially assist in deciding how to commemorate the anniversaries, but may also be valuable to communicate to the wider community so that they are more aware of and confident in how the diverse multi-cultural elements of our society feel. .

- There is a distinction between “commemoration” and “celebration” (as described elsewhere in the report). In the main, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries are seen as commemorations, but a restrained element of celebrating what we have won (our values, the freedoms we have now) by the actions being commemorated would not be out of place. Getting the balance right is important – too celebratory would not be right; but it should not be too gloomy either.
- There are some contextual concerns which caused overt or implied discomfort for some in the community:
  - ➔ How do we commemorate service when many veterans have poor health and live in poor conditions (e.g.: on pensions, limited health care etc). Do we risk holding them up to make ourselves feel good for one day, but then ignore their plight the rest of the time; and
  - ➔ How do we commemorate service when we are currently involved in a conflict which has limited popular support, and still may be ongoing in 2014-18.

There are other risks which have been identified around the commemoration of the 100th anniversaries. These are things that are to be avoided if possible in the way we choose to officially commemorate these anniversaries:

- Watering it down too far for the sake of political correctness, to the point where it antagonises those who see it as a strong national reference point;
- Failing to respect the traditions of past commemorations (especially for Anzac Day). This may be a challenging balance to find, as some level of modernisation may be attractive to younger generations, but a put-off to older generations.
- Making such a big deal of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries that it is difficult to muster enthusiasm and participation for the following year(s);
- Someone or some organisation profiting in some way from the event (e.g.: politicising or commercialising the event for perceived gain);
- Being too over the top;
- Glorifying war and violence;
- Offending those people and families who are currently serving;
- Not showing enough respect to ‘forgotten’ wars;

There were also several concerns which are perhaps beyond the direct ability of the Australian Government to control, but which could negatively impact on the way the commemorations are seen by the community:

- There is a clear tone that the community wants to see for the commemorations, but it could be turned into a 'media circus' [for the commercial benefit of the media outlets] which could cause that tone to be missed; and
- The risk of the commemorations being negatively affected by alcohol and inappropriate behaviour - 'like Australia Day'.
- Not recognising the losses and sacrifice by those nations who were our enemies in these conflicts.

### 3.4. Priorities and integrating

#### Key events

It was clear that the single 'main event' will be the Anzac Day Centenary in 2015, given its established significance within the Australian commemorative calendar.

- Remembrance Day 2018 was also seen as a key event – but at this stage is expected that it would be smaller than Anzac Day.
- There is a willingness, particularly amongst those individuals and families with connections to other events, for there to be a range of smaller commemorations and events throughout the 2014-2018 period – but to try to sustain anything continuous across that timeframe will result in 'commemoration fatigue' and a loss of engagement. There was also a risk that the smaller commemorations, if too many in number and lacking in focus, could 'dilute' the importance of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day events.
- Because engagement seems to be very much about personal relevance, and people want personal stories, there is the potential that many small events could attract strong but very specific engagement from people with a link to a particular anniversary. It is these sorts of things that people want to be able to plan ahead for.
- It was also felt to be important that sites of particular significance in Australia's military history are considered as potential sites for commemorative activities; that is those sites in Australia that people feel a connection with (e.g. Darwin, Lightning Ridge, Albany etc).

## 3.5. Criteria for choosing amongst commemoration suggestions

### Things to seek

Consistently people identified a number of 'selection criteria' or important elements that choosing amongst commemorative events should consider. Firstly, the values that people wanted the commemorations to reflect were:

- Pride
- Respect
- National identity and unity
- Gratitude, thank you and 'thanks giving'

It was also important that the commemorative events be:

- Relevant (consistent with the tradition of what has gone before)
- Recognise all those involved in Australia's military history – past and present
  - ➔ Service (Army, Navy, Air Force) and forms of service (not just combat)
  - ➔ ADF families / support services
  - ➔ Wars (complete history of military conflicts, including unpopular ones)
- Inclusive of all
  - ➔ Ages
  - ➔ Cultures (not getting too 'bitsy' or losing fundamental Australian theme, but an opportunity to break down some barriers)
  - ➔ Places (ie: everyone in Australia has something to access)
- Accessible (suit elderly and those with young children; not limited in numbers who can participate; as well as public transport and disabled accessibility)
- Educational
  - ➔ Increase community's knowledge
  - ➔ To pass on the tradition / understanding to future generations
  - ➔ Be thought provoking and allow people to reflect on the sacrifices of veterans.

From the perspective of Veterans, people felt it important that the commemorations provide:

- Individual recognition (i.e. every soldier is recognised separately at some point – for example via an honour roll which includes the names of all war veterans across Australia's complete military history)



- Allows Veterans the space to do their own commemorations - how they want to

Finally, people saw the commemorations as a vehicle to:

- Promote war as a vehicle for peace
- Educate the younger generation of Australians to sustain the memory of Anzac Day and Australia's broader military history into the future

### Things to avoid

When considering the 'exclusion criteria' or important elements that commemorative events should avoid, again a number of consistencies were identified:

- Irrelevancy
  - ➔ Modernity or being too far from traditions
  - ➔ Overly politicised or commercial
- Commercial or individual gain i.e. events that seek to make commercial gain for anyone or any organisation
- Culturally disrespectful / discriminatory / exclusive
- Too celebratory (party / drunken / circus)
- Glorifying violence and or war
- Disrespectful / trivialized / offensive
- Overly 'PC' (politically correct) or safe / too sensitive to cultural minority groups
- Sensational / biased or containing "spin" about the conflicts – people wanted to reflect honestly about these past events
- Pervasive negativity and gloom. Commemorations need to balance sombre and respectful tones with some positive and uplifting elements
- Changing or diluting commemorative traditions (in particular in relation to long-standing Anzac and Remembrance Day traditions)

## 4. Group variations and issues

Most of the variables are intertwined in some ways; or at least their effects are more pronounced when combined. However, while it is possible to identify some nuances associated more or less with particular groups, overall the similarities were far more important than the differences.

### 4.1. Generation

- Younger generations have more distant connections to WWI, and their experiences of conflicts have only been with 'modern', distant and often unpopular wars (they don't have any experience of 'fighting for survival'; or the entire country being at war).
- Older generations have much more general knowledge, so the effects of being disengaged are not so pronounced. Older generations had firsthand knowledge of the experience of family members in various conflicts and wanted to access detailed information. Younger and disengaged people have very little knowledge upon which to call.
- Even the younger generations understand the values of commemoration, but it has less salience to them and they have no real point of reference (for some, this may be part of the attraction of going to overseas sites – an attempt to 'make it more real' for themselves).

### 4.2. Family

Young children are a very important piece in the communications challenge. One of the primary motivations for commemoration is to remember and learn from the past, and ensuring 'the kids' are aware of our past is a strong motivator (for all generations). This desire was sufficient to 'engage' disengaged parents, at least on behalf of their children.

- Children are a 'way into' communicating with many adults, especially parents.
- Where 'schools' are referred to, this is mostly primary schools.
- Parents of young children are concerned that their kids will come home from school and ask them questions that they cannot answer (they would find this embarrassing – even disengaged parents).

## 4.3. Engagement

Engagement is not a permanent, stable condition. There are many pathways to engagement / disengagement, and movement is possible. Engagement can happen when:

- There is a personal connection / relevance (ie: family history)
- There is a strong (and unashamed) national pride
- A family tradition of commemorating Anzac Day (habit)
- Wanting to pass the value / knowledge on to young children

In contrast, disengagement can happen when:

- There is a negative experience (eg: emigrate to Australia and be seen as an opponent [mainly older people post WWI and WWII]; or a bad experience around a personally relevant person, such as a Vietnam Vet).
- General dislike of war / violence (though most of these people can still respect the service of the individuals, they are disengaged from the institutionalised commemoration of things related to war).
- A family connection is lost (eg: the death of a veteran that causes a reduced connection and loss of relevance).
- Lack of knowledge about the topic.
- Inaccessibility (dawn services are not convenient for the elderly or for families with young children; marches can have other physical limitations).
- Kids grow beyond the age where parents feel the need to take them to instill the values and knowledge.
- See Anzac Day as only WWI, and of fading relevance.

## 4.4. Location

Although on the whole findings were consistent across Australia, location factors showed a number of slight nuances, including:

- Regional residents are extremely keen that any commemorations should be accessible to them also, not just in capital cities, and see the anniversaries as an opportunity to 'spruce up' their war memorials.
- In very small regional locations, the older participants were the least likely to welcome any attempt to broaden the cultural range of commemorations.
- Canberra and Sydney participants tended to think that their cities were the logical location for any centerpiece of the commemorations.

## 4.5. ADF personnel

The attitudes expressed by ADF personnel largely mirrored those of the general public. Owing to the nature of their position and connectivity with Australia's military history, their views were often more strongly felt – but there was nothing in the views of the general public that was at odds with the views of ADF personnel (or vice versa). In particular ADF personnel:

- Were particularly passionate about Australia's military history and the importance of recognising and showing respect for the sacrifices made by past and present service personnel; especially seeing most are too humble to seek recognition themselves. *'We must remember them'*.
- Advocate how influential our military history has been in shaping Australian values, our national identity and forging the way of life we all enjoy today.
- Place a high value on education to raise awareness and help all Australians:
  - ➔ Better understand and appreciate the sacrifices made by our military personnel – both past and present
  - ➔ Preserve the legacy of our military history for future generations to continue.
- Feel the Anzac Day values with a greater intensity, in particular the more personally relevant virtues of bravery, courage and strength.
- Expressed concern about the increasingly excessive use of alcohol during Anzac Day commemorations nowadays.
- Were particularly passionate about the need to promote respect and appreciation of the Anzac Day tradition to guard against this important commemoration being seen as *'just another holiday'*.

In terms of how well Australia currently commemorates our military history, ADF personnel placed a greater emphasis on the importance of recognising:

- Modern day service: that is, a greater recognition of modern day service personnel and Australia's more recent commitments (past 10-20 years) outside of direct combat (i.e. peace keeping and humanitarian efforts).
- Less well known conflicts: Such as Korea, Sudan, and Afghanistan etc.
- ADF families and the 'sacrifices' made by the families of service personnel in terms of what they do and what they give up – to be acknowledged; not only for the purpose of recognition alone but to help raise awareness amongst the public of what life in the ADF looks and feels like.
- All those involved: anyone who has 'stood up' and helped Australia throughout our 100 year military history to be acknowledged (e.g. military nurses, factory workers, transport, SES and Ambulance services etc).

When presented with the Century of Service concept, ADF personnel were:

- Open to the 100 year concept but had some reservations about the 1914 start date; they expressed the importance of recognising and being sensitive to the contributions made pre-1914 and had some concern that this definition could be seen to dishonor these previous sacrifices;
- Of the same view as the community in that a greater focus should be placed on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorations compared to 'other years'
- Particularly sensitive to 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorations being sensationalised or leveraged for commercial or political gain and in doing so, the true meaning of these historic events being lost.
- Cognisant of the importance of reinvigorating Remembrance Day and other significant military events, to avoid their memory 'slipping away'.

## 4.6. ADF families

This group also had a higher knowledge and understanding of Australia's military history and sensed a broader scope of Anzac celebrations (all wars, all Australian servicemen etc) compared to the general public. The views of ADF family members in relation to the importance of commemorating Australia's military history were consistent with ADF personnel and with the general public. As a collective, this group felt strongly about:

- The importance of commemorating those currently deployed in service, so that they get due recognition.
- The importance of Anzac Day commemorations in fostering unity and bringing families and generations together.
- The role of the Century of Service commemorations in encouraging a greater sense of national unity in an increasingly multi-cultural Australia. For ADF families Anzac Day is not about concessions or 'pandering' to the sensitivities of individual cultural groups, but rather embracing a unified Australia.

## 4.7. Indigenous Australians

Greater recognition of Indigenous people who served in Australia's military was a dominant theme for the Indigenous groups. The key messages from the Indigenous participants were:

- Having not been formally recognised for their contribution to Australia's military history, to many Indigenous people Anzac Day has felt like 'a party that we have not been invited to'. Accordingly engagement levels amongst this group were low.
- Indigenous people spoke of the hurt that this lack of recognition of the sacrifices made by indigenous people has caused, but spoke with hope and enthusiasm about the unique

opportunity of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries for recognition, reconciliation and raising the awareness of the contribution that indigenous people have made to Australia's military history.

- The Century of Service was also seen as a rare opportunity to make a very significant contribution towards reconciliation in both a specific and more general sense.
- Although most were not calling for an apologetic over-reaction, a deliberate recognition would be seen as a strong gesture of good will that could have ramifications beyond the specific setting.

## 4.8. People who have been to Anzac Day overseas

Understanding the attitudes and motivations of those people who have been to Anzac Day commemorations overseas (specifically at Anzac Cove) is an important consideration, given the potential for a higher than typical number of people to seek to visit relevant sites on Anzac Day 2015. For this group, attending Anzac Day commemorations overseas has been about one or more of:

- Paying homage to our history or to a personal connection
- Creating a connection with fellow Australians and with Australia's history
- Gaining a greater sense of reality and understanding of the original Gallipoli events and feeling the intensity of the experience
- To 'tick a box' on a travel itinerary (i.e. done Paris, done New York, done Gallipoli etc)
- A rite of passage for young Australians

Although visitors with a personal connection to Gallipoli tended to have a higher level of knowledge of the original events than most people - in particular those seeking connectivity or 'ticking a box' at Gallipoli – in general even amongst these visitors there was a fairly limited understanding of the actual events.

Having experienced Anzac Day at Gallipoli, this group felt passionately about the importance of encouraging young Australians to also make the trip, in order to

- Get a sense of what it must have been like for the people who fought and died there
- Connect with Australia's military history
- Appreciate and understand the Anzac Day 'reality'
- Experience the intensity and feeling of Anzac Day

## 5. Implications for a Communications Strategy

### 5.1. What is known

Overall, most people had very little definitive information about Australia's military history outside of the basics. People for whom there was a personal relevancy or family involvement in the ADF historically had a more detailed knowledge of Australia's military history; on topics such as:

- Which wars Australia has been involved in (eg: WWI, WW2, Korea, Gulf and Vietnam conflicts)
- Major battles and significant military events (eg: Gallipoli, the bombing of Darwin and Pearl Harbour, Hiroshima and Coral Sea, Long Tan etc)

Overall, there was poor general information about many related areas- for example knowledge of the processes and attitudes around conscription.

There is a degree of embarrassment about the lack of knowledge; a sense that people feel that they should know more than they do

- However, most are not going to seek out information independently or without purpose
- Many will be open to information and education that is presented in ways that are interesting and engaging to them

### 5.2. What is wanted

The information that people wanted fell into two main areas: 1) general background and contextual knowledge; and 2) the commemorations.

#### **General information**

Owing to the general lack of knowledge or understanding that most people have regarding Australia's historical involvement in military conflicts, most were open to receiving - or at least having access to - top level information about the 'entire gamut' of Australia's military history, including

- Which conflicts Australia has been involved in; when and where
  - ➔ Timeline of 1914-1918
  - ➔ Complete timeline from 1914 to present day for the broader Century of Service
- Why conflicts happened in terms of the political, social and economic contributing factors (may be less broadly of interest)

Presenting people with the 'facts' of war, such as the number of dead and injured soldiers for

example, whilst felt to provide a valuable context of military events, was not seen to be overly engaging to most. For many it seemed to serve to disconnect them from the reality of war.

There was a strong and consistent call for more personal stories across all groups - day-to-day accounts about a range of Australians involved in and affected by Australia's involvement in conflict and peace keeping efforts, both past and present. Specifically more detailed 'a day in the life' type accounts of soldiers', nurses' and ADF family members' experiences of war were of interest, and appear to have the potential to be a vehicle for communicating more abstract concepts that people switch off from if presented directly. Personal stories also mitigate the loss of our ability to source personal stories directly from veterans.

Personal stories and narratives:

- ➔ Are keys to 'humanising' Australia's military history and engaging younger (often more detached) generations with our military history in general, and the Century of Service commemorative events more specifically
- ➔ Make events more real (less abstract), give history a face and avoid giving the events 'spin'; and
- ➔ Should be used to illustrate general, contextual type information as much as possible

There are many issues around which information could be built to assist the community to find it easier to engage with commemorating service. Some examples of topics that were discussed by participants (though by no means an exhaustive list) include:

- ➔ Conscription and Australians' willingness to participate, including how they feel about their participation (including past and present)
- ➔ How are Australian service people seen overseas? (there is an assumption that Australian service people are highly respected)
- ➔ Our opponents' views of conflicts (eg: how the Turks feel about Gallipoli)

Regarding this background and contextual knowledge:

- People are generally not going to be actively seeking this information (even many of the engaged), but many (even some of the disengaged) have sufficient interest to pay attention when they come across things that seem interestingly presented.
- There is a latent sense of embarrassment about not having some basic knowledge, especially amongst parents who are concerned that their children will ask them questions for which they do not know the answer, and this may be able to be harnessed to encourage attention.
- Much of the material may be too abstract or beyond personal experience for people to take in easily; and personal stories are of wide interest and may provide the best vehicle for many communications.



## Commemorative information

With respect to the commemorations, events and schedules, people primarily want to know the logistical information – what, when, where, how to get there, where to park, how to get involved and so on.

- It is important that considerable lead-in time be given when providing the community with the details of commemorations, to allow people time to plan to attend events that might happen in different places that are of interest or relevance to them. Some people also wanted information about how they could get involved in helping (not just attending) – to actually participate in the development and running of events.
- Many of those who were currently engaged in commemorating Australian military service were also very interested in the ‘why’ of which commemorative events are planned. It was clear that at least some of this group would be interested in exploring and interacting with the commemorative process
  - ➔ Why were particular commemorations (eg: format, timing, location) chosen for a particular anniversary?
  - ➔ What actually happened during the conflicts which the commemorative events are honoring?

## 5.3. How to communicate (channels)

On the whole, people are not (and do not expect to be) actively seeking information on the commemorative events. Accordingly, an effective communications strategy will require two levels – an awareness raising strategy and the communication of the more detailed information. These will be best served by using different channels to maximise engagement levels amongst different community sub-groups.

In terms of the detailed information, there was a strong generational influence on preferred channels:

- Gen Y / Gen X preferred primarily new media and interactive on-line channels:
  - ➔ Anzac Centenary website, social media (Twitter, Facebook etc)
- Boomers / Builders preferred primarily traditional media channels:
  - ➔ Newspaper supplements, RSL and community notices - but a significant number also did not reject using interactive services.

For the awareness raising element, TV and radio were consistently preferred to both draw attention to the topic, and to inform about the sources of detailed information.

Other communication principles identified:

- Children and schools (primary schools in particular) are an important conduit and motivation.

- Personal stories are what people seem most likely to engage with. There is a perception that there is as much documentary information as anyone could want about Gallipoli already available – but despite this actual knowledge is poor. Personal stories were consistently referred to as a way of bringing the history to life more, and making it more understandable and meaningful. This was consistent across generations.
- It was felt important that the media promote the commemorations to ensure maximum reach, anticipation and involvement, but participants were wary of there being a media ‘circus’ which missed the preferred look and feel of the commemorations.

## 5.4. Who to voice / face the commemorations

There was a unanimous and explicit preference that politicians not be involved in any activity to promote the ‘Centenary of Service’ concept or 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary events. Politicians were interpreted as potentially being involved for their own political benefit, which is one of the key things that participants wished to avoid. Having ‘modern day’ politicians promote these commemorations was seen to be disrespectful (via exploitation and inauthentic associations) and inappropriate in tone for the sombre nature required when honoring Australia’s military history.

Potential and more appropriate ‘faces’ were:

- Military service men and women (past or present)
- Military leaders (e.g. ADF chief)
- Community leaders (e.g. RSL chief)
- Everyday Australians (with a clear link to our military history through either current or past family involvement)
- For some a celebrity face may be appropriate, particularly to engage younger generations, but this person would still need to be relevant and with a clear link to our military history

Other important considerations when selecting a ‘face’ for the commemorations and supporting communications were:

- Incorporation of at least some military uniforms (though it was not necessary to see exclusively uniforms, especially where the wider definition of service was relevant)
- Needs to cover multiple generations (a common suggestion was multiple generations from a single service family).

# Appendix

## Discussion guide: General public

### SECTION A: INTRODUCTION (MANDATORY QMS REQUIREMENTS)

- Focus groups concept and self
- Recording / observing
  - o One person talking
  - o Agree / disagree / constructive
- Informal / food and drink / toilets
- No mobile phones

### SECTION B: INDIVIDUAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

MODERATOR TO NOTE: If at any stage in the discussion participants make a distinction between a 'commemoration' and a 'celebration', allow them up to 5 mins to discuss – but do not initiate the discussion

Importance of commemorating military history generally [15 mins]

Australian military personnel, men and women, have been involved in many events over a long period of time, including some who are on active service right now.

Without getting into the details of any specific events yet, how important is it for us to commemorate our military service and some of the key events?

- How come?
- What do we get out of commemorating these as a COUNTRY
- And what do we get out of commemorating these PERSONALLY

Overall, how well do Australia and Australians commemorate these events now?

- What are the good things
- What are the bad things

### Century of service [20 mins]

Between 2014 and 2018 we will mark 100 years of Australian military service. This will begin with the anniversary of the start of the First World War in 2014, continue on with the centenary of Anzac Day in 2015 and move through to the centenary of Armistice in 2018.

A National Commission has been set up to consider how the Australian community can be engaged in commemorating these anniversaries. The public can make submissions to this Commission about their ideas on how we best mark these anniversaries.

Thinking about these anniversaries and their commemorations...

MODERATOR NOTE: provide historical context from briefing notes if these are unknown to participants and pre-1914 service / combat / events are raised as a barrier to the century of service concept.

How important is it to commemorate:

- “100 years of Australian service”?
- The 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, the events that lead to Anzac Day
- The 100th anniversary of Remembrance Day

What sorts of things do we want to get out of commemorating 100 years of Australian service and the anniversary of Anzac Day?

- Personally
- For Australia

Anzac Day [20 mins]

Let's think now about Anzac Day in particular: What do we commemorate on Anzac Day?

How well do we commemorate Anzac Day now?

- What are the good things
- What are the bad things
- Has Anzac Day been changing over the years?

Is what happened at Gallipoli still relevant to Australia today?

- How come?

While we are talking about Anzac day, visiting Gallipoli on Anzac day has become popular among many young Australians. Why do you think this is?

- Is it important to Australians to visit Gallipoli?
  - o If so, why?,
  - o If not, why not?
- Does it make a difference to go on Anzac Day rather than on any other day?
- Do you think visiting Gallipoli will become more important to some people in 2015 given it is the centenary?

### **Commemorations of a Century of service [20 mins]**

Would we want the 100th Anniversaries to be different to what happens in other years?

#### **PROBE FOR ANZAC DAY AND REMEMBRANCE DAY DIFFERENCES**

- In what way?
- How come?

Would we expect there to be anything permanent or lasting that comes out of the 100th anniversary commemorations?

- Is it important that there is something permanent and lasting that comes out of the 100 year commemorations.
  - o If so, why?
  - o If not, why not?

Remember I told you there was a Commission set up to consider how to commemorate these anniversaries, and that it was asking for suggestions from the community. If we [INDICATE GROUP] were the Commission, how would we choose which suggestions to go with? KEEP PARTICIPANTS THINKING NOT ABOUT SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS, BUT ABOUT HOW THEY WOULD CHOOSE BETWEEN SUGGESTIONS

- What would be most important to consider?
- What else would be important?
- Are there things to avoid?

AFTER BRIEF CONVERSATION, GET GROUP TO WRITE ON STICKY NOTES THE CRITERIA AND ARRANGE FROM MOST TO LEAST IMPORTANT

REVIEW CRITERIA: Looking at these things, is there anything that is different to what we would have said if we'd made this list at the start of the discussion, rather than after talking about this for a while?

Communications [10 mins]

For the last part of the conversation, let's talk about how you would want to find out about what was going to happen to commemorate the Centenary of service.

- To start with, is there any information we would want to find out about Australian military history after what we have talked about today?
- What type of information would you wish to receive about these commemorations?
- How would you prefer to receive that information?
- Who would you like to hear this information from?

### **SECTION C: CONCLUSION (MANDATORY QMS REQUIREMENTS)**

- If people want to make suggestions about commemorations, then they should use the submission process available through the Commission – [www.anzaccentenary.gov.au](http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au) or contact Department of Veterans' Affairs (1800 555 254).