

"How better to engage the next generation in understanding the meaning of commemoration with a group that has been continuing this tradition for just on 60 years."

Merrillee Chignell, Assistant Director Commemorations,
Department of Veterans' Affairs

"Undoubtedly one of the best school-student produced Remembrance events for ANZAC Day anywhere in Australia - long may it continue!"

Dr Richard E Reid historian (retired, Department of Veterans' Affairs)

"The Combined Schools ANZAC project is a highly valued contribution to the Newcastle community's commemoration of our ANZACs."

Sharon Claydon MP, Federal Member for Newcastle.

"I served in the Australian Army during the Second World War and also the Korean and Vietnam Wars. It gives me great satisfaction as a veteran to know that the spirit and heritage of ANZAC is recognised and remembered each year by the school students of Newcastle at the Combined Schools ANZAC Service. This Service is very important to all veterans in our community."

Clem Kealy AM MID BSV

"Being part of this unique event has been a privilege. It has provided me with wonderful opportunities to lead and make a career. To have contributed to the education of my fellow students by saluting the service of our local veterans is a source of pride to me. I will always cherish this memory."

Matthew Newman, 2013 student committee member

"Participating in the Combined Schools ANZAC Service as a student organiser was an immensely rewarding and educational experience. The project gives students a chance to engage meaningfully and personally with Australia's military history as well as the inspiring veterans in our community. It would be a great loss to the city to lose such a unique and unifying event."

Oliver Ray 2011 student committee member

The ceremony always impressed me as being a very valuable component of the commemoration of ANZAC Remembrance and as a tangible way to involve young people in an understanding of their nation's heritage."

John S Tate (Lord Mayor of Newcastle 1999-2012)

"I have come full circle, from being a primary school student in the 1950's attending the services in Civic Park to now being a long term member of the organising committee. I served as a National Serviceman in the Vietnam War. Each year 1400 students leave the Civic Theatre with newfound knowledge and understanding about how and why we remember. This knowledge is then shared with the wider community."

Phil Winney, President Merewether-Hamilton RSL Sub-branch

Themes and Remembrance

- 2002 Year of the Outback – WWI recruitment, "March of the Wallabies" Walgett to Newcastle in 1916
- 2003 World War II - Siege of Tobruk. (North Africa) – Jack Bertram
- 2004 1942, Newcastle at War – the shelling of Newcastle
- 2005 Voices from Gallipoli, the 90th anniversary of the landings
- 2006 Valuing our Veterans, the Dick Stanley Story – "An Average Australian Airman in WWII"
- 2007 Courage on the Kokoda Track
- 2008 Vietnam - Australia's Longest War
- 2009 Diary of Ernest Pauls : an Australian WWI Light Horse (Beersheba) Trooper from Raymond Terrace
- 2010 WW II Sinking of Australian Hospital Ship "Centaur" – Sister Ellen Savage GM, AANS
- 2011 Echoes from a Forgotten War – Korea
- 2012 Until next ANZAC Day - Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) – SGT. Brian Walsh MM from Merriwa/Denman
- 2013 "You couldn't survive without a mate" – POWs from the Fall of Singapore – Dr Peter Hendry AO
- 2015 "They served" - WWI Australian Army Nurses from the Hunter



Newcastle Combined Schools ANZAC Service



A commemorative and educational service for school students and a leadership programme for high school students

Presented by the Newcastle and Hunter Combined Schools ANZAC Service Incorporated.

Permission to use 'ANZAC' granted by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Permit no. 242

The Newcastle Combined Schools ANZAC Service has been a central feature of Newcastle's commemorations. It was first hosted by the Newcastle District Council of RSL Sub-branches and is now produced by the Newcastle and Hunter Combined Schools ANZAC Service Incorporated. The Service initiated in 1954, has been held every year since, with the exception of 2014.

This year 2015, will be the 60th Service.

The object of the organising committee is to hold an annual Service staged by senior students for their peers. Since 1954 more than 58,700 children have attended.

The Service is unique in Australia. Newcastle is the only centre where the three school communities - public/ private /Catholic, combine each year to commemorate ANZAC Day.



The aims and objectives are:

→ Commemorative

Each year a different theme or story is presented with a local focus. For example, the 2013 theme was the story of the World War Two Fall of Singapore and the Australian POWs who were forced by the Japanese to help build the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway. The experiences of former Australian Army doctor and Newcastle resident Dr Peter Hendry AO were highlighted.

→ Leadership

The Service provides an opportunity for senior students to undertake a leadership role on behalf of their school and the wider community. Students develop a variety of skills – team work, research, development, organisational, meeting and public speaking.

→ Educational

The students are educated about Australia's rich military heritage and the meaning of Remembrance. The message is communicated through speech, drama, song, dance, drill and use of audio visual technology. All ceremonial aspects of an ex-service Remembrance service are explained.

→ Organisational

This important Newcastle event brings schools together to organise the commemoration of the service and sacrifice of Australian Armed Forces and civilian personnel in defence of Australia and its interests; in particular highlighting the contribution of those from the local area who have served.

→ Community

The Service is recognised by the Department of Veterans' Affairs for its quality and uniqueness. It is highly regarded by the ex-service community and the RSL at local, state and national levels. The Service is firmly fixed in the calendars of local schools and ex-service organisations.

Involvement by local high school students has led to:

Students' participation as members of the organising committee has provided them with opportunities for leadership and personal development such as:

- 2013 Premiers ANZAC Memorial Scholarship
- Volunteering in Papua New Guinea
- Walking the Kokoda Track
- Presenting the ANZAC Day address at the Newcastle United Commemoration Service



An ANZAC soldier carrying a wounded comrade at Gallipoli (Australian War Memorial -G00599)

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