

The Dedication of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will be a Highlight of the 70th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping

On the 14th September 2017, the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial, will be officially opened on its site on Anzac Parade, Canberra in a combined dedication and commemorative service at which the Principal Guest will be His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. This service will mark the completion of a decade long project to construct this national peacekeeping memorial and will be the highlight of a wide range of activities and events being undertaken during Australian Peacekeeping Week which runs from 11-16 September 2017 to commemorate Australia's involvement in international peace operations for the last 70 years.

Australia has a proud record of service in international peacekeeping missions and peace operations commanded by the United Nations and regional arrangements. Australia deployed the first civilian and military observers to the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Indonesia in September 1947. In the seventy years since, Australian governments have deployed a wide range of contingents all around the world, comprising both armed and unarmed military, police and civilian experts, as part of over 60 international peacekeeping missions. Some 80,000 Australians have deployed on these missions during which a number have died, and a considerable number have been wounded or suffered trauma.

In 2004 a group of Australian peacekeeping veterans and organisations who believed it was important that a national memorial should be built which would appropriately acknowledge and commemorate this contribution of Australian Peacekeeping - past, present and future came together to initiate the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project (APMP). Established as a volunteer not for profit organisation, the project has been coordinated by an APMP Committee comprised mainly of Peacekeeping veterans and representatives from a wide range of national organizations. This has included appointed representatives of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the Federal and State Police forces, the Returned and Services League (RSL), the United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA), the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association (APPVA) and the United Nations and Overseas Police Association of Australia (UNOPAA).

In November 2007, the Canberra National Memorials Committee approved the allocation of a national memorial site on Anzac Parade for an Australian Peacekeeping Memorial. Subsequently in 2007 and 2008, the APMP Committee, with support from the National Capital Authority (NCA), conducted a national two-stage design competition resulting in the selection of a winning concept design which was announced by the then Minister of Veterans Affairs at Parliament House on 19th December 2008. From that concept design, the winning architect, now Bennet and Trimble, worked with the Committee and a range of engineers and consultants to produce the final, fully detailed design and documentation package to achieve works approval by the National Capital Authority.



The approved design, shown above, features two large monoliths that depict the warring parties separated by a glowing passage of golden light that represents the peacekeepers. This passage leads to a commemorative courtyard featuring messages about the service of Australia's military, civilian and police peacekeepers and then through to a commemorative beam that lists all the missions in which Australians have served. As new peacekeeping missions are launched by Australia, their details will be added to the commemorative beam that has been designed with space to include future missions. Flags, symbols and explanatory plaques within the design explain and identify the contributors and characteristics of Australian peacekeeping - past, present and future.

Over the life of the project, the Committee has been working to raise the funds necessary to construct the memorial. This fundraising for the Memorial has been the biggest challenge. After an initial grant from DVA to commence the project, the APMP Committee approached a wide range of Australian and international companies for financial support with some success. A few companies plus a wide range of veteran organisations and individuals provided sufficient finding to keep the project alive. This allowed the appointment of a construction contractor, prototype testing of the design and purchase of some long lead-time materials to continue. During this period the APMP conducted an annual Commemorative Service on the Memorial site on to mark Australian Peacekeeping Day on the 14th September. These were well attended by the Government and Shadow Ministers, Patrons, supporting organisations and peacekeepers.

Now, thanks to recent Federal Government grants and other donations, construction of the Memorial has commenced and all is proceeding well for substantial completion prior to dedication on 14th September this year, the 70th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping.



Construction site June 2017

Activities to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping

Planning is well underway for a wide range of events and activities to occur in Canberra during the period Australian Peacekeeping Week, from 11-16 September 2017, to

commemorate the 70th anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping. These will buttress the main event of the week, which will be the dedication of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial at a commemorative service to mark 70 years of Australian Peacekeeping on Thursday 14th September.



Details of the dedication and commemorative service are still being finalized but it is expected to be a morning event attended not only by the Governor-General but also high representatives and Ambassadors of nations where Australian peacekeepers have been active, as well as senior representatives and Ministers of the Federal Government, senior Australian military and police commanders, Patrons, donors and a wide range of peacekeeping serving and retired veterans and their supporters. The Dedication and Commemorative Service will be followed by a reception for peacekeepers located nearby and then the daily “Last Post Ceremony” at the Australian War Memorial dedicated to a fallen Australian peacekeeper.

Throughout this week commemorating Australian peacekeeping, the Australian War Memorial will have Peacekeeping banners hanging from the ramparts and will arrange tours and other special peacekeeping events to supplement their normal Peacekeeping display.

A number of associated supporter activities are also planned for this week including a national conference and seminar on peacekeeping to be run by the United Nations Association of Australia at the Australian War memorial on 15/16 September, the national conference and AGM of the APPVA on 11/12 September and the annual police “Wall to Wall Ride” on 16 September. Other peacekeeping associations may conduct gatherings during this period. In all, it will be a memorable week for anyone associated with Australian peacekeeping and operations.

In the future, the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will become a focal point for national parades and remembrance ceremonies in recognition of Australian peacekeeping on appropriate occasions such as UN International Day of Peacekeepers (29th May), Australian Peacekeepers’ and Peacemakers’ Day (14th September), and United Nations Day (24th October). Importantly it will be a place for peacekeepers and their families to visit, remember and reflect and the Memorial will always be available for individual and group commemoration and reflection.

Tim Ford
Chairman@peacekeepingmemorial.org.au