



WE DESERVE PEACE BUT WE MUST BEWARE WARNS FORMER G-G

In his address to the 2026 ANZAC Service at the Walkway former Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove issued a warning that Australia is today exposed to new dangers, and we must act to protect the nation.

Almost 500 people gathered for the service which this year carried a theme of honouring the men and horses of the Australian Light Horse in WWI.

Sir Peter, who retired as Chief of the Defence Force in 2005 before being appointed to his vice-regal role in 2014, described ANZAC Day as the most important non-religious commemorative day in our national calendar.

"It quietly demands that we pause and reflect on its importance, on what we have stood for, on what has been our national burden in times of conflict," he said. "In thousands of places around Australia we are invited to remember them."

"However, at this time and perhaps at other times during the year, we need to be reminded that in that war then called the Great War, so many thousands of our men experienced the overwhelming carnage of industrialised war for the first time."

"For thousands who sailed from the harbour close to us here there was no

blessed return; they lay in far flung foreign fields.

"Australia is today exposed in ways that those we venerate today would never have imagined. Their shades would say, we would all say, that we are a peaceful people, we crave peace for ourselves and others, we believe we deserve peace. Yet the shades of those who've gone before us remind us that this is for naught if we do not protect this precious gift, the wide brown land of Australia."

"We must beware," Sir Peter declared.

After KTMW Chair Jennifer Collins welcomed everyone to the service, Michael Megna, Canada Bay Mayor and a KTMW board member, read the prologue while David Harris MP, NSW Minister for Veterans, delivered the scripture reading. Music was provided as usual by the Corrective Services Band while the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir sang "We Will Remember Them."

A highlight was the screening of archival footage recording the training and deployment to the Middle East of the Australian Light Horse. It was especially poignant to honour the 130,000 horses which went with them, never to return.





GOVERNMENT FUNDING CONFIRMED

On 19 June Veterans 'Affairs Minister Matt Keogh MP confirmed a Federal election promise granting the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway \$744,000 over four years 2026-2029.

"The Walkway is a living link to the Kokoda Track and Papua New Guinea campaign that can now be enjoyed for years to come thanks to this investment from the Albanese Government," said Mr Keogh.

The MP for Reid, Sally Sitou, said the KTMW is one of the most important places of remembrance in our community.

"I'm proud the Government is helping secure its future" she said.

"This funding will help preserve a treasured local landmark, support its ongoing operations, and ensure future generations can continue to learn the stories of those who served."

KTMW Chair Jennifer Collins AM welcomed the announcement,

thanking the Minister and Ms Sitou for their commitment.

The announcement came as a number of significant upgrades to the Walkway have been completed or are under way. These include:

- The **audio commentaries and detailed information** for each of our memorial stations have been translated into Mandarin. A QR code will be provided so the increasing number of non-English speaking visitors can hear or read the stories behind each of the stations. We thank the NSW Branch of the RSL for providing the budget for this from its Veteran Support Fund.
- The **pond alongside the Memorial Centrepiece** has been refurbished. This project was funded by a Federal Government "Stronger Communities Grant" backed by MP for Reid Sally Sitou with assistance by RSL NSW VSF. Thanks to Ms Sitou and RSL NSW for their support.



- The first steps have been taken in a special project aimed at a stunning presentation on Kokoda Day. **Photos of the men killed on the Kokoda Track** are being reproduced and cutouts of the images will be mounted around each of the memorial stations, commemorating the engagements in which each man was killed. In these samples, on the left is Private Oswald Wood NX9291, 2/2nd Battalion, killed on 20 October 1942 near Eora Creek, and on the right is Private Allan Toyer NX71519, 2/3rd Battalion, killed on 6 November 1942 at Oivi-Gorari.

KTMW WINS HERITAGE AWARD

In a ceremony on 18 June the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway was announced as the winner of the inaugural City of Canada Bay Heritage Award.

The award recognises excellence in heritage conservation, restoration, adaptive re-use, research and youth engagement. It emphasises heritage integrity and community contribution, engagement and impact.

KTMW chair Jennifer Collins and Walkway guide Steve Preece both made the final list of nominees for the Volunteer of the Year award.



MINISTER TO ADDRESS VP DAY SERVICE



The NSW Minister for Veterans, the Hon. David Harris MP, will be the guest speaker at our VP Day service on Saturday 15 August, commencing at 2.00 pm.

Mr Harris is a former primary school principal who was elected as the Member for Wyong in 2007, serving until the March 2011 election. He then regained that seat in 2015.

Following the 2023 election Mr Harris was appointed as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research and the Minister for the Central Coast.





FREE EVENTS TO MARK OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Saturday 1 August

Orchid & Flower Exhibit

Celebrate the beauty of orchids and floral design at this special one-day exhibit, presented in partnership with the Five Dock RSL Orchid Society and the Royal Horticultural Society of NSW. The Ralph Honner Education Centre and deck will come alive with striking orchid and bromeliad displays, complemented by a floral installation created by the RHS.

Visitors are invited to relax and enjoy one of three complimentary tea, coffee and cake sessions in our newly refurbished BBQ facility. Places are limited and bookings for the complimentary refreshments are essential via Eventbrite.

A program of informative talks from the Orchid Society, the RHS and KTMW volunteer guides will add depth and interest throughout the day.



Saturday 12 September & Sunday 13 September

Commemorative Art Show

Discover a vibrant showcase of creative talent in this special exhibition presented in collaboration with the Drummoyne Art Society. A marquee in Rhodes Park, close to the Memorial Centrepiece, will display a diverse collection of artworks in a relaxed outdoor setting.

Visitors can also enjoy a free BBQ lunch, proudly supported by Five Dock Rotary.

Short talks presented by KTMW volunteers along the Walkway will offer fascinating insights into the etchings of the Memorial Centrepiece and the significance of individual stations in the Kokoda Campaign. Art demonstrations and workshops are also being explored, with further details to be announced.

Saturday 31 October • 4.30pm–10.00pm

Movie Night at KTMW

Concluding the series, Movie Night at KTMW will feature a public screening of the 2006 film Kokoda in Rhodes Park, offering a memorable evening of film, history and community.

Activities ahead of the screening:

Featured speaker Robyn Kienzle will share insights from her book Architect of Kokoda, telling the story of Bert Kienzle through a deeply personal and historical lens.

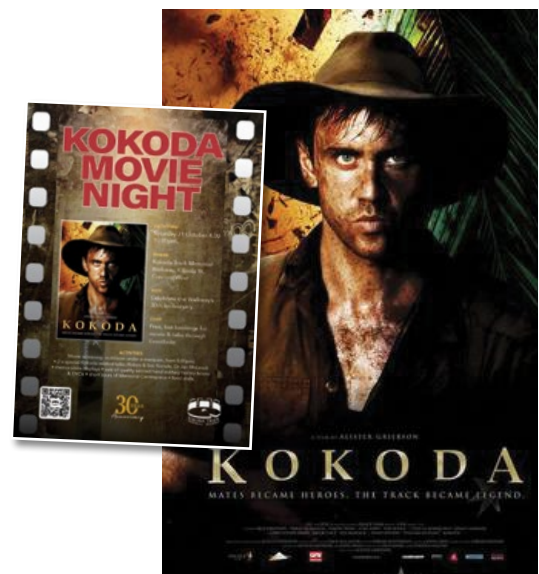
Dr Jan McLeod, author of

Shadows on the Track and All the Broken Soldiers, will also present a talk on her Kokoda-related writing and research.

Tickets for the film screening and guest talks will be available via Eventbrite.

The Education Centre will also feature Kokoda-related memorabilia displays from Soc and Robyn Kienzle and Jan McLeod, adding another rich dimension to the evening.

Before the screening begins, guests can enjoy dinner from one of our market food stalls.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Richard Sutton has been one of our volunteers since May 2023, guiding visitors and standing in as a presenter in the Education Centre.

"A friend of mine was laying a wreath at the 2023 Anzac Day commemoration and asked me along," he says. "I picked up the

KTMW brochure and followed up on the volunteer request."

Do you have a connection to the Kokoda Campaign?

I lived and worked in PNG between 1981 and 1985 and walked the Track in 1983.

What is your favourite part about volunteering?

Being part of a very good team of people, all very knowledgeable and dedicated in the roles they hold.

What advice would you give to someone considering volunteering at the Walkway?

I think it is important that the Kokoda Campaign, as well as the wider New Guinea Campaign, continue to be taught as a vital part of our nation's history. Being involved as a volunteer ensures that the "story" remains alive.

Do you have any other hobbies or passions?

Cycling - when the weather permits! I have an administrative role with the Bankstown Athletics Club as treasurer and director, and I potter about in the garden with mixed success!

MILITARY HISTORY DISCUSSIONS

Our "Beyond the Battlefield" talks will continue with meetings scheduled for 10.30 am on Saturday mornings during August, October and November.

On 8 August Dr Jan McLeod will discuss casualties and controversies in the Aitape – Wewak campaign 1944 – 45.



In late 1944, 6 Division AIF relieved troops of the American 6th Army in the Aitape – Wewak area of northern New Guinea. They were initially tasked with a limited operation to clear the remaining Japanese troops from this sector, but the campaign continued until the end of the war. With more than 1500 Australians killed, wounded or missing in battle and almost 20,000 suffering from illness and disease, some questioned the necessity of Aitape – Wewak. Why did so many young Australian soldiers pay such a high price at this late stage of the Pacific War?

On 10 October Andrew Johnston will talk about the legacy of the 1943



Wodonga train disaster. This devastating collision between a troop-laden bus heading to Albury for a night of revelry on 8 May 1943 and the Victorian Railways locomotive travelling blindly in reverse across a notorious level crossing, claimed the lives of service personnel and the civilian bus driver and left lasting emotional scars on the victims' families and communities. He will detail events leading to the disaster, including wartime operational challenges, human errors, and infrastructure limitations.



SCHOOL VISITS VERY POPULAR

Hardly a week goes by during school terms without at least one group of pupils coming to the Walkway.

Here we see Year 6 students from Banksmeadow Public School who were sponsored on their visit by the Botany RSL sub-Branch. Our guides helped to educate and inspire the children through a hands-on experience, learning about the courage, sacrifice and service of those who fought on the Kokoda Track.

