

Additional Comments and partial dissent

The Gallipoli Peninsula and ANZAC Cove are indisputably places of major significance to Australians and the Senate has acted responsibly in trying to ensure public examination of the facts about recent activities there and any possible damage to the area.

The Australian Government has been eager to exploit public relations opportunities by associating itself with protecting and promoting the ANZAC legend and traditions, all of which are given physical reinforcement at Gallipoli. There is little doubt, however, that this has not been backed up by a genuine commitment to do everything possible to ensure the heritage values of this irreplaceable area are properly protected.

I support Committee recommendations 1-5 and 8-9 of this report.

However, whilst I can see some merit in the idea of some type of military commemorations committee as outlined in recommendations 6 and 7, the weight of evidence provided to this specific inquiry was not sufficient to convince me to support these two recommendations at this time. I believe the idea would benefit from further examination and consultation among ex-Service Organisations and the wider veterans community before proceeding with it.

I am supportive of the specific content and general thrust of most of the findings outlined in the Committee's main report. However, based on the evidence that I am aware was presented to this Inquiry, I do not wish to be as definitive in my assessment as to whether bone fragments were unearthed as a consequence of the roadworks, or of the extent of the heritage damage and loss of significant sites. This is in part due to the very fact which the Committee has identified in Chapter 4 of the report – the inadequate research, survey work and cataloguing of the military heritage of the area conducted prior to the roadworks commencing.

Given how regularly Australian Governments have extolled the importance of Gallipoli over so many years, it is of great surprise and alarm to me to have discovered that there are such significant gaps in the heritage assessments of the area. I particularly want to emphasise the need to ensure the marine areas - as well the land areas - of the battlefield are fully researched and assessed.

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