

For the kind attention of
Major General Greg Melick
RSL National President
and State Presidents

6 November 2020

Dear Mr Melick,

We attach an article by Mr Luke Slattery that was published in *The Australian* titled "**Let's be honest — Turkey is no friend of ours**" with the subtitle "**The Anzac Day pilgrims are just aiding this tyrant's anti-West hostility.**"

The tyrant referred to is Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who is engaged in bombing and ethnic cleansing freedom-seeking Kurds in Syria, Iraq and Turkey, threatening Greece and Cyprus over contested maritime resources, and aggressively becoming involved in armed conflicts in Libya and Azerbaijan/Armenia, in the last two conflicts, employing Syrian Islamist mercenaries as foot soldiers.

Tragically, Turkey, a member of NATO and ally of Australia, is the world's biggest jailer of journalists, and continues to dismiss, arrest and imprison university lecturers and elected members of parliament, mayors and other officials in local government, most of whom are Kurdish. We believe that any direct or indirect assistance by Australians which helps prop up Erdogan's repressive regime is an affront to the ANZAC spirit and the ideals for which so many Australian men lost their lives.

We therefore urge you to consult the RSL membership and seriously consider Mr Slattery's suggestion to move ANZAC commemoration gatherings away from Gallipoli. There are many places that could replace the annual pilgrimage and commemoration at Gallipoli, including the sites of great battles in France, Mr Slattery's suggestion Lemnos island in Greece, and Beersheba in Israel.

We also attach Kurdish Lobby Australia's statement written to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Sevres. It describes how Turkey has always been problematic when it comes to the ideals for which our ANZACs fought and died.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Gina Lennox BSc PhD
Co-chair

Eziz Bawermend BSc MBA
Co-chair

Kurdish Lobby Australia

M 0402 964 627 T (02) 8987-4530

www.KurdishLobbyAustralia.com



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