

RSLWA

Opening of ANZAC House

Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia

Thursday, 12 November 2020

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

It is an honour for me to be here today as Patron of RSLWA, to join in the official opening of ANZAC House Veteran Central. As I do so I contemplate the long and winding road that brought us here. The women's, community and soldiers associations that preceded, some crossing over with the RSL. Their many distinguished but never adequate gathering points. And now this, which does the organisation and its membership proud.

We share the same spiritual site now, with Government House just over the road ready to welcome you all into the gardens during our regular lunchtime openings in the week and to hopefully provide you with relaxing garden views from the upper levels here.

This extraordinary facility is the first of its kind in Western Australia and will be central to effective service delivery to veterans and their families. In a sense those who join and lead the RSL continue to serve the nation. Building confidence among our would be serving personnel that they and their families will be supported where needed, is both during and after service, important for recruitment and confidence in battle. An important component of our national resilience.

There are 25, 000 veterans in WA. In practical terms their needs and challenges must be met by us all where we can, for that is our contribution.

One need only think of the life of Australian Defence Force Personnel to understand the value of the Veteran Central model. Arguably one of the most challenging things for our ADF veterans after concluding their service, is adjusting to civilian life.

From the time they sign up to the Australian Navy, Army or Air Force, they are "immersed into a highly ordered, extremely structured lifestyle that is streamlined for efficiency".

At the end of their military careers, this order and structure has become so familiar to ADF personnel that civilian life appears chaotic. The ANZAC House Veteran Central model serves as a one-stop-shop for all medical and wellness needs, ensuring that the needs of veterans and their families are met.

Through the Veteran Central model, ANZAC House will cater to four crucial pillars of service delivery. These are:

Health and Wellbeing

A military career can be incredibly challenging on the body and mind. ANZAC House Veteran Central will have facilities to help cater for the physical and mental health of veterans and their families.

Advocacy and Welfare

The complexities of claims processes within the Department of Veteran Affairs can be stressful. Welfare and advocacy services will be available to veterans and their families at ANZAC House

Veteran Central, providing them with invaluable assistance and guidance throughout the DVA claims process and other supports available to them.

Transition

I understand that ANZAC House Veteran Central will also be home to the ANZAC Club, ensuring that ex-service men and women are able to stay socially engaged and connected, within a community that understands them.

Consequently, the families of ex-service men and women will also find within ANZAC House that they are able to connect with individuals who have an intimate understanding of the challenges they may face in supporting their loved ones.

Employment

Finding and securing employment can be challenging for many men and women leaving the Australian Defence Force. I am informed that ANZAC House Veteran Central will have facilities which can assist with this process, providing both training and support services where required.

The opening of ANZAC House is a signal to those of us prepared to make a career of the profession of arms. We make today a statement that you are valued and honoured.

As a community, we have inherited the freedoms forged by our forebears. And as a community we need to continually strive to support those who have supported us for so long.

We will honour you by supporting the RSL in doing things better together with other veteran organisations, as well as government and community-based service providers, to:

- ensure the care of families who bear the burden of a loved ones supreme sacrifice or wounds mental and physical.
- ensure a worthwhile social and economic life for our servicing personnel after service.

I applaud RSLWA for championing the cause of ex-servicemen and women and constructing ANZAC House Veteran Central. I have no doubt that it will provide invaluable assistance to veterans and their families for generations to come.

It is now my great pleasure to declare ANZAC House Veteran Central officially open!