



RSLWA

THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA WA BRANCH
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PATRON: THE HONOURABLE KIM BEAZLEY AC, GOVERNOR OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MEDIA STATEMENT

16 March 2020

RSLWA has cancelled the conduct of all ANZAC Day commemorations as a result of Friday's announcement by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, backed by the Commonwealth's Chief Medical Officer and State Premiers.

The Prime Minister and state and territory leaders want all non-essential gatherings of more than 500 people to be suspended from this Monday amid fears about the continued spread of coronavirus.

RSLWA State President Peter Aspinall said that the decision of the Prime Minister and state leaders means that the traditional ANZAC Day 2020 services in the Perth CBD, namely the Kings Park Dawn Service, the Street Parade and the Commemorative Service, will not take place.

The State President and his Board have considered all relevant advice and have made the regrettable decision that it is necessary in the interests of veterans' health and safety to cancel all Anzac Day commemorative services in WA this year.

He said that, while RSLWA commemorations could still be held with gatherings less than 500 attendees, the risk is still too high.

As such, the Board is to advise its 125 Sub-Branches throughout the State that all commemorations on ANZAC Day be cancelled.

"RSLWA has a duty of care to its members and all veterans – many of whom are elderly and the most vulnerable as the coronavirus worsens," Mr. Aspinall said.

"Irrespective of how many veterans turn out, the risk is still too great. This is a very difficult but necessary course of action, especially considering our duty of care and the vulnerability of our older members."

RSLWA has the strong support of the Australian Medical Association (WA) to cancel all commemorations.

"For us, one death of a veteran, a family member or any member of the general public as a result of attending a RSLWA-organized service is one too many," Mr. Aspinall said.

The safety, health and welfare of all veterans and their supporters is paramount and, while cancelling the iconic and traditional ANZAC Day services is sad, health and wellbeing come first.

RSLWA will be looking at others ways of recognition of those who served and those who died but not in the form of public events on ANZAC Day.

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