



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Friday, 29 May 2009

RECONCILIATION WEEK HONOURS INDIGENOUS VETERANS

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, will today address an Indigenous Veterans' Commemoration Ceremony in Sydney as part of National Reconciliation Week, to recognise the important role Indigenous veterans have played in Australia's wartime history.

Mr Griffin said Indigenous veterans have a proud history of serving our nation in all wars and conflicts since the Boer War, and continue to do so today.

"Indigenous men and women have served with great distinction in every conflict Australia has been involved in since Federation," Mr Griffin said.

"In 2009 many Indigenous men and women serve in the Australian Defence Force, continuing the traditions of previous generations of Indigenous veterans.

"The Australian Government is committed to honouring the important contribution Indigenous men and women have made in the defence of our nation and today's ceremony is an opportunity to recognise their dedication and courage."

Ceremonies honouring Indigenous servicemen and women will be held in capital cities during National Reconciliation Week, 27 May to 3 June.

Minister Griffin encouraged Indigenous veterans, their families and the wider community to take part in services being held in Adelaide, Melbourne and Brisbane. A Perth service was held on 27 May.

The ceremonies have been coordinated by ex-service organisations and local Government and with support from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Australian War Memorial are currently working together to establish a database of Indigenous veterans.

Minister Griffin thanked those who had already provided their details and encouraged anyone wishing to be included on the database to contact the Department's Indigenous Liaison Officer on 1300 551 918.

Sydney's ceremony will begin at 11am today at the Pool of Reflection, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park. An Adelaide service will also be held today at 10:00 am at the National State War Memorial, North Terrace. Details of other services are as follows:

Melbourne – 11:00am, 31 May 2009 at the Shrine of Remembrance, St Kilda Road.

Brisbane – 11:00 am, 2 June 2009 at the ANZAC Square Cenotaph, Brisbane City.

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