RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA (TASMANIA BRANCH)
SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION TO MARK THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOBART CENOTAPH
ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOBART CENOTAPH, SATURDAY 13 DECEMBER 2025

Good afternoon, everyone. I am honoured to join you all for this commemoration of the 100th anniversary of our Hobart Cenotaph.

May I begin by acknowledging the many veterans of conflicts to which Australia has committed forces and those who have served in our Australian Defence Force through the years. We remember, too, the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have worn the uniform of our nation.

For a century, this Cenotaph has been at the heart of remembrance in Tasmania. Generations of Tasmanians have attended ceremonies and services to pay their respects and to remember those who have served, and those who have paid the ultimate cost of that service.

The site of the Cenotaph was selected for its prominence both to the city and the River Derwent and it is aligned with Macquarie Street, the city's major civic thoroughfare.

On ANZAC Day 1925, work on the foundations began with a solid zinc casket inscribed with the names of our 522 Tasmanians who fell in the Great War. That casket that was cemented into the foundations by then Governor-General and well-known Tasmanian Sir John Gellibrand. As a result, and unusually for a cenotaph, there are no names included on the outside of the monument.[1]

The Cenotaph was unveiled by Governor Sir James O'Grady on Sunday, 13 December 1925. It was reported that some 6,000 people attended. This was the first State war memorial in the Commonwealth. Governor O'Grady said it

[1] https://anzacday.org.au/hobart-war-memorial-cenotaph accessed 21 Nov 25

"was the Tasmanian people's method of expressing their lasting gratitude to those who fought in the Great War".[2]

This Cenotaph was designed by Hobart architects, Hutchinson and Walker, and made from unpolished granite with the stepped plinth made of bluestone. It was built to last. The inscription on the monument has the dates 1914-1919, not the more usual 1914-1918. This most likely reflects the date of the Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended the war. The four faces bear crests of the Royal Australian Airforce, Royal Australian Navy, Australian Military Forces and, since 1991, the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps.[3]

From that first ANZAC Day, the Cenotaph has continually evolved as a place of solemn remembrance. It no longer represents only those who served in the First World War, but also the bravery, dedication and loss of Tasmanians in every conflict and operational deployment since then. Honours have been added for the Second World War, Korea, Malaya, Indonesia, Vietnam, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. The Cenotaph is at the centre of our commemoration of the commitments of our Australian Defence Force today.

As we mark this centenary, may we all reflect on this place. It reminds us that peace is precious and at times must be fought for. We are reminded that service requires courage and sacrifice, and that such service should never be forgotten or taken for granted.

May the Cenotaph continue to stand as a place of remembrance, as a symbol of unity of purpose in our community and as a place where stories, painful but necessary, are told.

Lest we forget.

[2] The Argus (Melbourne) Monday 14 Dec 1925, p20
[3] https://anzacday.org.au/hobart-war-memorial-cenotaph accessed 21 Nov 25