



RSL Sub-Branch Bunbury

RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

W.A. Branch (Incorporated)

Sub – Branch Bunbury

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The Bunbury RSL Sub Branch wish to reply to recent criticism of our Club in regards to comments made by the ABC and on social media in regards to the performing of the Haka at our Anzac Day Services and of discrimination and racism.

At our 2016 Anzac Morning Service a group interrupted the Service and performed the Haka which was not part of our programme.

In 2017 a request was made to perform the Haka, it was declined during our Services, but was allowed to be performed for our visiting Sailor's outside the RSL after the Services.

In 2018 during our wreath laying ceremony at our Dawn Service a lone Maori individual performed the Haka without our prior knowledge. He then asked to do a shorter version during our later Morning Service but permission was declined, but he performed it once again.

Our RSL Sub Branch acknowledges our New Zealand Allies during both our Services by having the Ode spoken in Maori and English and the New Zealand National Anthem is also sung in both Maori and English.

The Haka has not been part of our Anzac Services programme in the past and at this stage there is no plans to include it in future years.

We feel that the Haka was performed at an inappropriate time during the wreath laying ceremony at our Dawn Service without our prior knowledge and in disrespect to our wishes.

The Bunbury RSL Sub Branch are disappointed and totally reject the accusations levelled at us of being discriminatory and racist, it is a slur on all of us here at the Sub Branch and in particular our President.

Anzac Day Services are held for all Australians and people of many Nationalities and cultures, it is a day when we come together to pay our respects to our fallen, honour our living Veterans and Members of our Defence Forces serving in operations overseas in the service of our Nation, it is not a cultural occasion.

Anzac Day is not about one person, one group, one culture, it is all of us coming together to pay our respects to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their Nation.

It would be sad if in future years Anzac Day is to be hijacked by Political Correctness and self-egos and thus be dictated as to what content we can have in our Services.

A badly wounded soldier who lay dying on the battlefield wrote a verse and gave it to his mate to bring to those of us back home it simply read

Tell them of us
For your tomorrow
We gave our today

That is the spirit in which we Commemorate Anzac Day.

President and Committee
Bunbury RSL Sub Branch
14 May 2018