

**RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH**

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RSL CONDEMNS USE OF ODE FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

The NSW Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia will ask relevant State and local government authorities if new trees to be planted in the Anzac Parade area of Moore Park can be dedicated to honour Australians whose lives were lost in war, including World War I and the recent Afghanistan conflict.

“It is sad that fig trees planted a century ago to commemorate soldiers who left for Gallipoli and the Western Front have had to be removed from Anzac Parade,” said State President Rod White.

“We have been assured that a greater number of trees will be planted to replace those which have been cut down along the eastern suburbs light rail route, and it would be appropriate that those trees be dedicated to the memory of the Anzacs and the defence personnel who followed them.”

Mr White condemned the inappropriate use of Laurence Binyon’s poem “For The Fallen” by activists opposing the removal of trees.

“This poem was written in response to the terrible slaughter of human life in World War One, and has been adopted universally as the Ode of Remembrance,” he said.

“It is disrespectful and wrong for protesters to have used it on banners along Anzac Parade.

“During the past hundred years many war memorials and commemorative plaques in cities, towns, villages and suburbs throughout New South Wales have had to be relocated or replaced due to the demands of development.

“This is another instance, and the RSL will seek to have the original intent of these memorial trees reinstated when new plantings are made in the area.”

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The Returned and Services League of Australia New South Wales Branch (RSL NSW) was formed in 1917 and currently has over 40,000 members in 370 sub-Branches throughout New South Wales. We provide for the well-being, care, compensation and commemoration of serving and ex-serving Defence Force personnel and their dependants and promote Government and Community awareness of the need for a stable and progressive Australia.