

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP
Minister for Veterans
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Youth



Thursday, 15 August 2024

SPIRIT OF ANZAC PRIZE STUDENT WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Allan Labor Government has awarded the Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize to 12 secondary school students from across Victoria.

Minister for Veterans Natalie Suleyman announced the prize recipients and presented the winning students with their certificates at a presentation ceremony at Parliament House today.

The prize winners will embark on a 10-day international study tour in September visiting historical sites and participating in a unique educational program that connects them to the service and sacrifice of veterans.

The students and three teacher chaperones will travel to Türkiye, visiting significant historical sites in Istanbul and Çanakkale learning about the courageous actions of those who fought and died during the Gallipoli campaign.

The winners submitted outstanding entries exploring the significance of Victoria's Shrine of Remembrance or a local community war memorial in honouring Australians who have served in war and peacekeeping.

The group comes from across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, ranging from years 9 to 12 and includes First Nations students and students from diverse multicultural communities and backgrounds.

Year 10 Hampton Park Secondary College student Mahdia Qasimi was inspired to submit her project on her own unique personal encounter with war after the Australian Defence Force helped her family leave Afghanistan.

Mahdia submitted a video presentation interviewing her grandmother and created her own war memorial, highlighting the absence of memorials and recognition for women experiencing war.

Other successful recipients include Year 11 Nossal High School student Kylinda Zhan who wrote an evocative short story from the perspective of a First Nations veteran working on the Great Ocean Road, demonstrating a deep understanding of Australia's war history.

The Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize is an annual competition open to Victorian school students enrolled in years 9 to 12 with more than 500 students having been awarded the Prize since it began in 2005.

The 2024 Prize recipients will depart on their study tour during the September school holidays.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Veterans Natalie Suleyman

"The Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize is an incredible opportunity for Victorian students to explore Australia's wartime and peacekeeping history and reflect on the precious freedoms we have today that we owe to the sacrifices of our veterans."

"We are pleased to support the annual Prize and winning students who will soon embark on an unforgettable journey to locations in Türkiye that hold special significance in Australia's wartime history."

"I want to thank each and every student who submitted projects paying tribute to the Shrine of Remembrance or other war memorials and showed their dedication to recognising the service and sacrifice of our veterans."

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