



MEDIA RELEASE

THE HON DAN TEHAN MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR CYBER SECURITY
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE CENTENARY OF ANZAC

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The Australian Poppy Garden opens in Passchendaele

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Dan Tehan today inaugurated the Australian Poppy Garden in Zonnebeke, Belgium, as part of the Passchendaele Memorial Garden project.

Nine nations who fought in the Battle of Passchendaele (1917) were invited to establish a unique memorial within a series of poppy gardens at the Memorial Mesuem Passchendaele 1917, as a lasting legacy of the battle's centenary.

The Australian garden features a centrepiece artwork reflecting the helmets worn by soldiers surrounded by a symbolic mix of native Australian trees and shrubs, as well as an Australian outback waterfall.

The project was delivered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs on behalf of the Australian Government who engaged Indigenous-owned company Balarinji to develop the chosen design through to final installation by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Mr Tehan said the project represented all those who served on the Western Front during the First World War and encapsulated the spirit of commemoration and hope for peace amongst nations.

"The garden is a fitting tribute to the Australians who fought and died at the Battle of Passchendaele and on the Western Front," Mr Tehan said.

"Almost 300,000 Australians served on the Western Front, where 45,000 lost their lives and more than one-third of those have no known grave. Those young Australians who never returned home are still a part of us, and now our native plants will be a part of Europe to honour their service and sacrifice.

"Our presence in the poppy garden will enhance an understanding and appreciation of Australia's service and sacrifice in World War I.

"The garden will be included as part of the Australian Remembrance Trail that highlights sites of significance to the Australian experience of the Western Front during the First World War."

Media enquiries:

Minister Tehan's Office: Byron Vale 0428 262 894
DVA Media: Dale Starr 0428 805 578

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 45 46). VVCS is a service founded by Vietnam veterans.