

The Hon. Alan Griffin MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs

House of Representatives

Parliament House

PO Box 6022

Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Griffin

Between July and September 2007 the National Trust of Australia made several representations to the former Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Mr Bruce Billson MP, as well as a meeting with you as the Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs regarding our concerns with the conservation and management of the Anzac battlefield on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey.

In these representations we expressed our main concern over the exposure and lack of management of human bone remains in areas of high tourist and vehicle activity. The National Trust is aware that exposure of human bone throughout the Anzac area is not uncommon. In most cases, particularly in areas of low tourist activity, we have been informed that the management policy has generally been to let nature take its course without any other disturbances. We agree that this is for the present a reasonable course to take.

However, the Trust is concerned about human bone and bone fragments being exposed in areas of high tourist activity, particularly on the edges of busy roadways through the area such as Beach Road (between Shell Green and No2 Outpost), and Ridge Road (between Lone Pine Memorial to the junction of Gun Ridge Road above Baby 700). At our meeting with Mr Billson we presented a paper (*Survey to Detect & Manage Exposed Human Bone in High Tourist Impact Areas of Anzac, Gallipoli Peninsula*) which outlined our concerns and suggested a methodology for mitigation. A copy of this paper is included.

During our representation to Mr Billson we also asked about the current progress of the proposed joint historical and archaeological survey which resulted from the 2005 Senate Inquiry (Australian Senate (Finance and Public Administration Committee, *Inquiry into matters relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula*). We were advised that negotiations with Turkish authorities were in progress and that the joint survey would be starting by the end of 2007.

Could you inform the National Trust on:

1. What consideration and/or action has been taken regarding our survey paper?
2. What is the current situation and progress of the joint historical and archaeological survey?
3. Can you supply the National Trust with the details of the joint survey methodology?
4. If the joint survey has commenced, what recommendations/actions have been made regarding the conservation of human bone in the areas of high tourist activity?

Yours sincerely

The Hon. Pat Comben AM

Chair

Australian Council of National Trusts



The Hon Alan Griffin MP
 Minister for Veterans' Affairs
 Federal Member for Bruce

29/5/08
 cc
 The Hon Patrick Comben
 Chairman
 Australian Council of National Trusts
 PO Box 413
 CAMPBELL ACT 2612

Dear Mr Comben

Thank you for your letter of 23 February 2008 concerning the Anzac area on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I can assure you that the Australian Government continues to support the conservation and management of the Anzac area in the Gallipoli Historical National Park. The Australian Embassy in Ankara continues to convey our support for these measures and I have raised these matters with the Turkish Ambassador to Australia.

While we were hopeful that the proposed joint historical, including archaeological aspects, study of the Anzac area would be underway by now, I appreciate that the issues are sensitive and complex and that there are many parties with an interest in the proposed study.

Thank you for the paper enclosed with your letter. I have noted its recommendations and asked my Department to ensure that it is taken into consideration as part of the study. It is not possible to proceed with the surveys that you suggest independently of the proposed study or without the same support and approvals from Turkish authorities that the study will require. My contact officer is Ms Kerry Blackburn, General Manager Commemorations and War Graves Division, who will keep you informed of any developments.

You also raised the issue of management of human remains found in the area. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission guidelines continue to provide advice on the appropriate manner in which to deal with bone finds. I am advised that where human remains are found they are being managed in accordance with the guidelines.

Thank you for writing to me on this matter. I appreciate the Australian Council of National Trusts' views and suggestions in relation to an area that is part of the national identity of Turkey, Australia and New Zealand.

Yours sincerely


 Alan Griffin

28 MAY 2008