

Member	Ella George	Electorate	Lara
Period	1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024		

Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance	
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance	\$13,115.76
Total amount paid to member for expense allowance	\$0.00

Regulation 7 - Motor vehicle allowance	
Total amount paid to member for motor vehicle allowance	\$0.00
Member did not receive the motor vehicle allowance in the previous quarter and member has elected to receive the motor vehicle allowance for this quarter	No

Regulation 9 - Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	
Total amount paid to member for parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	\$0.00
Suburb in which the member's parliamentary accommodation is located	n/a

Regulation 10 - Travel allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Town or city in which accommodation was located	Value of the accommodation
14-May-24	15-May-24	Parliamentary Sitings	\$319.00	Melbourne	\$319.00
28-May-24	30-May-24	Parliamentary Sitings	\$608.64	Melbourne	\$558.00

Total number of nights for travel allowance claims 3
Total amount paid to member for travel allowance \$927.64

Regulation 11 - Commercial transport allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Mode of transport	Value of transport

Total number of nights for commercial transport allowance claims 0
Total amount paid to member for commercial transport allowance \$0.00

Regulation 12 - International travel allowance claims			
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid

Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims 0
Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance \$0.00
See attached travel report for further details

**Victorian Members of Parliament Delegation to Türkiye
International Travel Report
18 – 26 April 2024**

**Ella George MP
State Member for Lara**



Delegates at the Canakkale Martyrs' Memorial

Statement of Objectives

It was an honour to be part of the Victorian Members of Parliament Delegation to Türkiye in April 2024.

The delegation attended the Anzac Day Memorial Services, visited places of cultural significance and engaged with the Turkish Government and Members of Parliament.

The delegation was led by the Hon. Natalie Suleyman MP, State Member for St Albans, and included Tim Bull MP, State Member for Gippsland East; Belinda Wilson MP, State Member for Narre Warren North; Juliana Addison MP, State Member for Wendouree; Emma Kealy MP, State Member for Lowan; Luba Grigorovitch MP, State Member for Kororoit; Pauline Richards MP, State Member for Cranbourne; Matt Fregon MP, State Member for Ashwood; Anthony Cianflone MP, State Member for Pascoe Vale; Cindy McLeish MP, State Member for Eildon; Martin Cameron MP, State Member for Morwell; John Berger MP, State Member for Southern Metropolitan Region and Tim McCurdy MP, State Member for Ovens Valley.



Picture: the Lone Pine Memorial

2024 marks the 109th anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign. It was this campaign in which the Anzac Spirit was forged; the mateship, camaraderie, endurance, courage, sacrifice and respect that Australian diggers were known for.

The Gallipoli campaign began at dawn on 25 April 1915, on a rugged stretch of coast now known as Anzac Cove. From then, until January 8 1916, over 8000 Australian soldiers were killed in action or died from wounds or disease – a terrible loss of life.

It was important for me to honour the service and sacrifice of the many men from the Lara electorate and wider Geelong region who fought and lost their lives on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Their names and their legacy are remembered to this day across many Memorial Boards, some on display at the Lara RSL, and on the Memorial Gates at the Lara Recreation Reserve.

The Lara Memorial Gates are an important war memorial in the Lara electorate. These gates were built following World War One on them are the names of 104 men and women who enlisted from the Lara districts – including 24 who made the ultimate sacrifice. The Memorial was opened on 22 December 1929 by His Excellency The Governor Lord Somers and included a large gathering and a parade of returned soldiers.

The Memorial Gates are next to the Avenue of Honour, planted to commemorate those who served in World War Two.

Since the Gallipoli campaign, Australia and Turkiye have developed a close friendship born from a shared history of terrible loss of life on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Every year, thousands of Australians travel to Gallipoli for Anzac Day and throughout the year to commemorate the Australian soldiers who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Victoria is home to the largest Turkish community in Australia, and the Lara electorate is home to a proud Turkish community who share their history and culture with the local community through events such as Pako Festa, the annual celebration of multiculturalism in Geelong.

These historic and cultural ties are complemented by important economic ties between Victoria and Turkiye, strengthened in 2024 with Turkish Airlines commencing flights between Melbourne and Istanbul. This allows for an even closer economic and trade relationship, increased tourism between the two nations, and a boost for Victorian jobs at Melbourne Airport.

Summary of meetings and visits

15 April 2024

Travel from Melbourne to Istanbul.

18 April 2024

Stayed in Istanbul 18 – 22 April 2024. Total cost: \$1625.40 AUD

19 April 2024

The Victorian MPs attended a briefing on the delegation itinerary and other matters.

A meeting scheduled with the Consul General of Australia in Istanbul was cancelled.

20 April 2024 – 21 April 2024

The Delegation visited the major cultural and historical sites of Istanbul which included the Dolmabahçe Palace, Sultan Ahmet Mosque, Ayasofya Mosque, Basilica Cistern, Topkapı Palace, the Bosphorus and the Grand Bazaar.

These are places of immense historical and cultural significance for Türkiye, and these visits provided the delegation with a greater insight into Turkish history, including the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Türkiye.

The Delegation met with the chair of the Council of Foreign Economic Relations of the Türkiye-Australia Business Council. Mr Steven Young is an Australian of Turkish heritage based in Istanbul, we spoke about growing business ties between Australia and Türkiye. He noted the opportunities that direct flights between Melbourne and Istanbul presented for business, trade and tourism.



Picture: Delegates with members of the Türkiye-Australia Business Council

22 April 2024

Depart Istanbul, travel to Ankara.

Flights from Istanbul to Ankara and Ankara to Çanakkale

Total cost: ₺3473.58 / \$166.60 AUD for both flights.

Stayed in Ankara 22 April 2024. Total cost: \$132.90 AUD

The Delegation had the honour of visiting the Mausoleum of Ataturk, the final resting place of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, to pay our respects, where Minister Suleyman laid a wreath and signed the Book of Honour on behalf of our Delegation.

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was the commander in charge of Turkish forces during the Gallipoli campaign, and was later the first President of the Republic of Türkiye from 1923 to 1938.

Atatürk famously said:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives...

You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country.

Therefore rest in peace.

There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours...

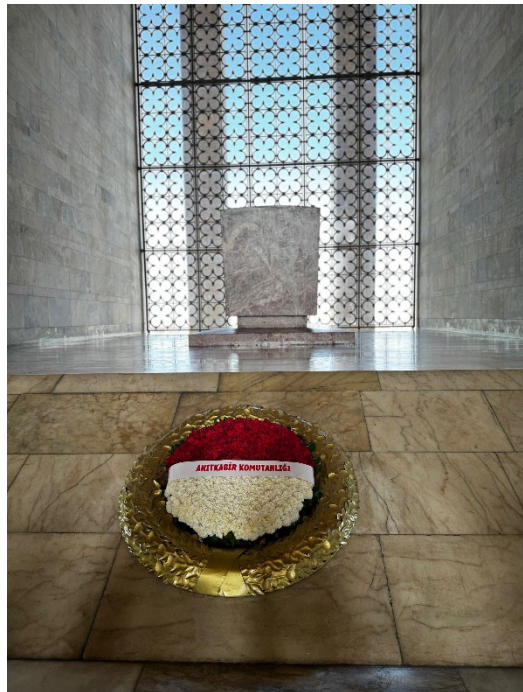
You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears;

Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace.

After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

These words are inscribed into the stone of the Mausoleum, and have become an enduring symbol of the relationship between Türkiye and Australia. They are often recited as part of Anzac Day services in Australia.

We joined with the Australian Ambassador Mr Miles Armitage from the Embassy of Australia in Ankara, and Parliamentarians of the Türkiye Australia friends group from the Turkish Grand Assembly, including the Deputy Minister for Family and Social Services (Veterans), Mr Yavuz Selim Kiran.



Pictures: Mausoleum of Ataturk

23 April 2024

Day in Ankara, travel to Canakkale in the evening.

Stayed in Canakkale 23 – 25 April 2024. Total cost: \$726.24 AUD

Delegation members visited the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). The TGNA has 600 members and is located in Ankara, the capital city of Türkiye.

The Delegation joined a reception hosted by HE Halil Eldemir, the President of the Türkiye-Australia Interparliamentary Friendship Group, Member of Parliament for Bilecik. We were joined by other Parliamentarians who are also part of the Friendship Group.

We had the opportunity to discuss the relationship between Türkiye and Victoria, including the role of Global Victoria and how it can support Turkish businesses. We also discussed economic and cultural opportunities and reflected on the success of the Turkish community in Victoria.

We discussed the shared history between our two countries, forged on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and the importance of Anzac Day Services to both nations. Victorian MPs acknowledged the generosity of the Turkish Government for their ongoing maintenance of the war memorials and area of the Gallipoli Peninsula, which allows for thousands of Australians to visit each year and remember the fallen.

Our visit coincided with the Anniversary of Foundation of the TGNA and we attended the TGNA General Assembly Special Session that marked this occasion. Additionally, it was National Sovereignty and Children's Day in Türkiye – a very significant day in Türkiye that celebrates democracy and the importance of young people.

Delegates had a guided tour of the TGNA and met with HE Bekir Bozdağ, the Deputy Speaker of TGNA.

Delegates departed for Canakkale in the evening.



Pictures above:

Meeting with Members of Parliament of the Grand Assembly, including Halil Eldemir, Sureyya Ones Derici, Ismail Faruk Aksu, Dr. Muzeyyen Sevkin, Onder Aksakal.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly.

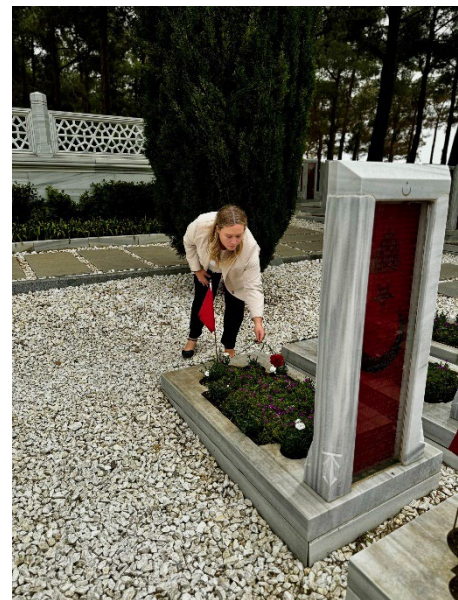
Delegates outside the TGNA.

24 April 2024

Over 24 and 25 April, the Delegation attended a number of services to commemorate the service and sacrifice of soldiers who fought and died on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The Delegation attended the Ceremony for the 109th Anniversary of the Land Wars of Çanakkale, where the Director of the Gallipoli Historic Site, Ismail Kasdemir, delivered a moving speech. Mr Kasdemir particularly spoke about the common ground that Gallipoli now represents as a sacred meeting place to reflect and commemorate.

This Ceremony was held at the Canakkale Martyrs' Memorial and Delegates had the opportunity to lay a carnation at the cemetery there, and pay our respects to Turkish soldiers who lost their lives.



*Pictures above:
Victorian MPs at the Canakkale Martyrs' Memorial.
Laying a carnation at the cemetery.*



The cemetery at the Canakkale Martyrs' Memorial.

The Delegation also attended the services of the armed forces of France and United Kingdom.

The British Memorial at Cape Helles was officially unveiled in 1924, so 2024 marked its centenary. The Helles Memorial is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission War Memorial and is the main Commonwealth battle memorial for the Gallipoli campaign.

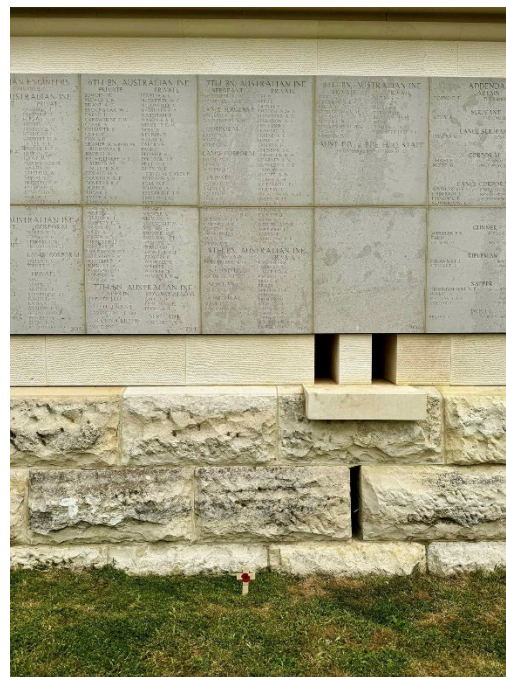
Along with soldiers from the United Kingdom, Ireland and India, it commemorates some Australian and New Zealand soldiers who lost their lives on the Gallipoli Peninsula. With over 20,000 names inscribed on this memorial, it is a sobering reminder of the cost of war.

At the Helles Memorial, I walked around the base of the memorial to find the name of John Bates. John lived in Little River and went to Lara State School and the Gordon Technical College.

He was killed in action 8 May 1915. Witnesses say they saw him shot when they were about 150 yards from the firing line. They thought he was buried in a gully on the way back to the beach. He was 23.

His name is inscribed on the Lara Memorial Gates, at the Lara Recreation Reserve.

Along with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, I laid a cross of remembrance beneath John's name.



Pictures above: Delegates at the British Memorial at Cape Helles with Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, and a cross of remembrance beneath John Bates' name.

25 April 2024

The Delegation joined thousands of Australians and New Zealanders at the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Anzac Cove.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles gave a moving speech on behalf of the Australian Government, reflecting on the spirit of the Anzacs. Minister Suleyman laid a wreath on behalf of the Delegation and the Victorian Government.

Before the sun rose, the cliffs behind Anzac Cove were lit up – giving the Delegation the first glimpse of the impossible task that Australian and New Zealand soldiers faced when landing at Anzac Cove.

At dawn, participants held a minute of silence to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Having attended many Dawn Services in Victoria, including at the Lara RSL, it was an honour of a lifetime to attend this service at Gallipoli.



Picture: the Dawn Service at Anzac Cove

Following the Dawn Service, we paid our respects at the Lone Pine Monument, commemorating the 3,268 Australians and 456 New Zealanders who died in the campaign and have no known grave, and the 960 Australians and 252 New Zealanders who were buried at sea.

This was a significant service with many Delegation members visiting the graves of soldiers from their electorates honoured at Lone Pine. I was honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of the Lara electorate along with other Victorian Members of Parliament.

The Australian Service was followed by service for New Zealand at Chunuk Bair (Conkbayırı), where Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand Winston Peters reflected on the sacrifice of New Zealand soldiers.

At the New Zealand Service, I was honoured to present a commemorative plaque on behalf of The Lara RSL Sub Branch to İsmail Kaşdemir, the Chairman of the Turkish Directorate of Gallipoli Historical Site. I thank the Lara RSL and President Marcus McEwen for providing this generous gift.

A number of veterans from Lara fought in the battles at Gallipoli, and sadly some were killed in action or died from their injuries. This plaque commemorates their service and sacrifice for our country.



Pictures: the Lone Pine Monument.

Presenting a commemorative plaque from the Lara RSL to İsmail Kaşdemir, the Chairman of the Turkish Directorate of Gallipoli Historical Site.



In the afternoon, Delegates visited the archaeological site of Troy. Troy, made famous by Homer's epic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odessey*, has 4000 years of history and is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world.

The archaeological site is outdoors and visitors can walk around the site and explore different excavations that have taken place there over the last 140 years. This includes excavations of city walls, gates, temples and homes. Excavations reveal the different stages where Troy was occupied over its 4000 years. Of particular note was the different city walls and fortifications built up and made stronger over the years.

Following a tour of the archaeological site, Delegates visited the Troy Museum. The Troy Museum has a remarkable collection of artefacts found across the archaeological site over its many excavations.

26 April 2024

Travel from Canakkale to Istanbul.
Istanbul to Melbourne (flight)

Concluding remarks

There is no better example of a friendship between two countries that were once enemies than that of Australia and Türkiye.

I am proud that Victoria and Türkiye have long had a strong friendship, born on the battlefields at Gallipoli, which spans cultural, historical, social and economic ties.

With a large Turkish community, Victoria is well placed to develop this relationship even further and take advantage of new opportunities such as direct flights between Melbourne and Istanbul offered by Turkish Airlines and the opportunities for trade and friendship that this vital connection will bring.

The Victorian Government is committed to its friendship with Türkiye, with this commitment demonstrated recently in February 2023 when in response to the earthquakes in south-eastern Türkiye, the Victorian Government donated \$1 million towards the recovery efforts.

It is important that we continue to teach our wartime history to Victorian students and I encourage all students to take part in the Spirit of Anzac Prize, in which students explore the stories and themes of the Anzacs for an opportunity to visit places that are significant to Victoria's wartime history.

I wish to thank the Minister for Veterans, the Hon. Natalie Suleyman MP, for her leadership of this Delegation and her work in strengthening the friendship between Victoria and Türkiye. I thank the other Victorian MPs for their collegiate approach to this important delegation.

Today, and every day, we remember the Australians who fought at Gallipoli and for their service and sacrifice to our country.

Lest We Forget.

Ella George MP
State Member for Lara