

Member	Belinda Wilson	Electorate	Narre Warren North
Period	1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024		

Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance	
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance	\$12,079.83
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
Total number of nights for travel allowance claims			0		
Total amount paid to member for travel allowance			\$0.00		

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	
16-Apr-24	27-Apr-24	Flights from Melbourne to Istanbul on electorate business undertaking research , representing the views and interests of constituents, participation in official and community activities to which the member is invited.	\$2,108.66	
16-Apr-24	27-Apr-24	Travel to Turkiye with Victorian MP's ANZAC delegation	\$1,397.92	
Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims			11	
Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance			\$3,506.58	
See attached travel report for further details				

Anzac Delegation 2024

Parliamentary Travel Report - **Belinda Wilson MP, Member for Narre Warren North**

16 April 2024 – 26 April 2024



Attendees:

Natalie Suleyman MP, State Member for St Albans
Tim Bull MP, State Member for Gippsland East
Ella George MP, State Member for Lara
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
Tim McCurdy MP, State Member for Ovens Valley

Statement of Objectives:

In April 2024, I took part in a cross-party Victorian Parliamentary Delegation to Türkiye to attend the Anzac Memorial Services, visit places of cultural significance, and engage with the Turkish Government and Parliament.

This Victorian Parliament's Anzac Delegation is an annual tradition for State Members of Parliament. After a pause on travel due to the pandemic, this tradition has returned in 2024.

Türkiye and Australia share a unique bond – through the shared experience that began on the battlefields of Çanakkale (Gallipoli). This year marks the 109th anniversary since the Gallipoli campaign that forged the spirit of the Anzacs of mateship, camaraderie and mutual respect. Values that now form part of the national identity of Australia, New Zealand and Türkiye.

Since that time, Australia and Türkiye have become close friends and share in commemorations on Anzac Day and throughout the year as thousands of Australians make the pilgrimage to Gallipoli to pay their respects and honour the fallen.

Victoria is home to the largest Turkish community in Australia, with over 40,000 living here in 2024. Melbourne's South-East has a vibrant Turkish community, and as the representative for Narre Warren North I have been delighted to develop a relationship with many community organisations in my electorate and surrounds.

The arrival of Turkish Airlines' inaugural flight to Melbourne in March 2024 and the announcement that they would base their operations out of Melbourne Airport illustrates the growing importance of these cultural and economic ties. This represents a major opportunity for increased international trade and tourism. Providing more competition and cheaper flights for Victorians while also creating hundreds of jobs for my constituents and Victoria.

By fostering these economic and cultural ties between Victoria and Türkiye, we can develop further economic opportunities for both communities.

Summary of meetings and visits:

16th April 2024

Melbourne to Istanbul via Dubai – flight cancelled in Dubai and delayed 48 hours.

18th April 2024

Stayed in Istanbul 18th to 22nd April -Total cost AUS\$1039.06

19 April 2024

Briefing

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.

We 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.



22 April 2024

Depart Istanbul, travel to Ankara (flight)

Stayed in Ankara 22nd to 23rd April – AUS\$125.12

The Delegation had the honour of visiting the Mausoleum of Atatürk (Anıtkabir) to pay our respects, lay a wreath, and sign the Book of Honour. It serves as the resting place of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the founder of the Republic of Türkiye and served as its first President from 1923 until his death in 1938.

During the ANZAC campaign, Atatürk was the commander in charge of Turkish forces.

After the Gallipoli campaign, 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.*

The Delegation paused to view the words inscribed into the stone of the Mausoleum and reflect on the significance of this statement which has become an enduring symbol of the relationship between Türkiye and 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.

23 April 2024

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. Other Parliamentarians also joined this reception.

We had the opportunity to discuss the relationship between Türkiye and Victoria. We also spoke about Global Victoria and how Turkish migrants living in Victoria have benefited from the support of Global Victoria to import and export goods. There are many examples of successful Turkish migrants in business within the north-east metro Melbourne region. We discussed the economic and cultural opportunities between Türkiye for businesses of all sizes. We also discussed the history of the Victorian Parliament's Anzac Delegation and how this shared historical event has strengthened ties between Australia and Türkiye. We thanked the Turkish Government for their continued support in maintaining war memorials, allowing Australians to honour our country's veterans each year, reflecting on the significant cooperation between the Australian and Turkish Governments to enable travel and commemoration on Anzac Day and throughout the year.

We also attended the TGNA General Assembly Special Session for the Anniversary of Foundation of the TGNA and a guided tour of the TGNA. This coincides with National Sovereignty and Children's Day in Türkiye – a very significant day in Türkiye that celebrates democracy and the importance of young people.

Finally, we met with HE Bekir Bozdağ, the Deputy Speaker of TGNA.

We then departed Ankara to Çanakkale (domestic flight).



Stay in Canakkale 23rd April to 26th April - AUS\$605.83

24 April 2024 Turkish Service

The Delegation attended the Ceremony for the 109th Anniversary of the Land Wars of Çanakkale, where the President 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.

We then travelled to the French Monument for a moving service followed by the British Monument and service.



25 April 2024

Dawn Service

The Delegation attended the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Anzac Cove.

The Dawn Service is an important time for reflection on the service and sacrifice of our state's veterans. Hon Natalie Suleyman, Minister for Veterans, laid a wreath on behalf of the Delegation and the Victorian Government.

The Delegation joined over 1500 travellers from Australia and New Zealand joined Turkish and other dignitaries at the former World War I battlefields at Gallipoli for a solemn service at dawn. As the sun rose, participants held a minute of silence to reflect on the sacrifices of tens of thousands of soldiers from the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps, who landed at the beaches at Gallipoli, in north-west Türkiye. Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles gave a moving speech, reflecting on the spirit of the Anzacs who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of their nation and the lives lost on both sides of the conflict. We met with the Deputy Prime Minister.

It is so important that Australians continue to make the journey to Gallipoli, to pay their respects to our ANZACs, and remember our significant wartime history and we should continue to support Australians join this service in the future.



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.



26 April 2024

Travel day, fly home

Concluding remarks:

Victoria and Türkiye have long had strong cultural, historical, social and economic ties which can be strengthened even further between our communities and governments.

Victoria is home to largest Turkish community in Australia and many successful Turkish migrants. Opportunities can continue to grow in this area with further investment, trade and tourism.

This delegation was enhanced by the opportunity to understand modern day Türkiye and strengthen the relationship with business, consular and parliamentary colleagues, further deepening ties. A close personal relationship with the local community is enhanced by my understanding of cosmopolitan Turkey and its place straddling Europe and the Middle East. Additionally, the significant Turkish community in Victoria reflects “the Johnnies and the Mehmetts” that Atatürk reflected in his famous speech.

The visit to Türkiye as part of the Victorian Parliament’s cross party delegation was an opportunity to represent the Narre Warren North community at sombre commemoration services held across several days around ANZAC Day.

It is important that we continue to remember and honour the ANZACs and reflect on our wartime history. There are many occasions across the year for Victorians to honour our past and presently serving veterans both at home and overseas, and I would encourage all Victorians to take part in these moving and important services.