

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Frank Terenzini

Minister for Housing

Minister for Small Business

Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs



SUNDAY July 25, 2010

STATE GOVERNMENT TO RESTORE VANDALISED KOKODA MEMORIAL

Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs Frank Terenzini today announced the Keneally Government will cover all costs of restoring the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord damaged by vandals early yesterday.

Mr Terenzini said he is able to allocate \$10,000 immediately to cover initial costs and his Ministry will then work with the Memorial trust to assess priorities while the total cost of the damage is being assessed.

"No rational person can begin to understand the motive behind this senseless act but the important thing now is to get this very significant Memorial repaired and fully operational.

"Kokoda was arguably Australia's most significant campaign of the Second World War - more Australians died in the seven months of fighting in Papua than in any other campaign.

Mr Terenzini said it beggars belief that anyone aware of that sacrifice could contemplate such an extensive act of vandalism, and then carry it out.

"It's very reassuring that Police now have security vision of a person they're keen to talk to about this crime and it's my hope, and the hope of the veterans community, that the person responsible is brought to justice as soon as possible.

Chairman of the Kokoda Walkway Memorial Rusty Priest said he and everyone associated with the Walkway is grateful for the Government's fast response and its realisation of how this desecration has affected the ex-service community.

"This Memorial is not just a place for peaceful reflection by my generation of ex-service men and women, it's a place of education for the entire community.

"Thousands of school children visit the Memorial every year and take with them a greater understanding of just how close Australia came to losing its sovereignty and free way of life.

"I look forward to working with the Minister to get this Memorial up and running as soon as possible, Mr Priest said.

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