



10 February 2015

Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Tony Abbott

I write on behalf of Australian Quakers to seek your support for recognition of Frontier Wars in the holding of Anzac ceremonies around Australia, and in the records and displays of the Australian War Memorial.

In April 2014 a group of peaceful marchers (including First Nations people) from all parts of Australia attempted to join the ANZAC March in Canberra to mark the human tragedy of war in Australia between settlers and traditional custodians. They were prevented from continuing by a line of police, acting on the orders of the RSL organisers. We believe this was a failure to acknowledge the importance of frontier wars in Australia's history.

We are grateful that this issue has been raised by a number of historians, and First Nations Peoples representatives, who have questioned the assumption that Anzac Day is exclusively for remembrance of engagement in wars beyond our shores. From our understanding of Australia's past, we are in no doubt that there were acts of war against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – acts involving military and police forces. There is increasing awareness of the need to acknowledge what happened if we are to build a respectful society.

In our view it is timely for the Australian Government, as a contribution to national reconciliation, to recognise the reality of frontier wars, and to encourage the Returned and Services League and the Australian War Memorial to take steps to make that recognition clear in their ceremonies and archives.

In peace

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Robertson".

Julian Robertson
Presiding Clerk

Copies to: Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten; Leader of Australian Greens Christine Milne; RSL National President Ken Doolan; Australian War Memorial Director Brendan Nelson.

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