

Australia

## #LightUpTheDawn: Australians encouraged to mark Anzac Day from home and check in on a mate



With coronavirus restrictions preventing gatherings at traditional dawn services this year, Australians are being encouraged to honour the fallen outside their homes and invoke the Anzac spirit of mateship.

UPDATED 24/04/2020  
BY LUCY MURRAY

SHARE

For many of those who have served in the armed forces, Anzac Day is a chance to catch up with former comrades, share stories, and check in on how each other is doing.

Afghanistan veteran Douglas Egan, 31, usually starts the day by attending a dawn service, followed by a big breakfast with his mates.

"Traditionally Anzac Day is very social, you get to see friends and family you wouldn't normally see throughout the year," he told SBS News.

"A lot of catching up, things that we did and things that we saw while serving together ... so it is going to be a bit of challenge this year."



Douglas Egan served with the Royal Australian Air Force and will catch up with his comrades over the phone.  
Source: Supplied

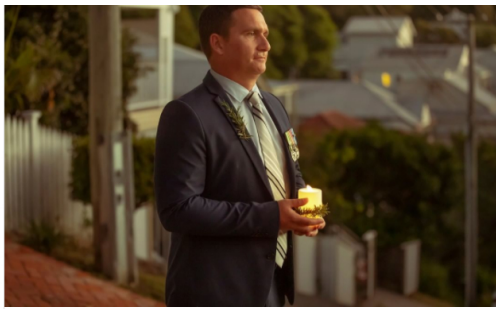
Mr Egan served with the Royal Australian Air Force as an airfield defence guard for seven years and is now president of the Springfield RSL in Queensland.

But as he cannot see his former comrades in person this year due to the coronavirus restrictions, he plans to catch up with them over the phone.

"Just being there for someone can make all the difference," he said.

**rsnsw**  
1,676 followers [View Profile](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



[View More on Instagram](#)



49 likes  
rslnsw

One way you can mark ANZAC Day this year is to reach out to a veteran who might be alone. Calling for a chat, offering to get their groceries, or planning something for the future are all ways of staying connected during this difficult period of isolation. Go to the link in our profile to see the latest news, including this story, and find out more about how we can stay connected through these challenging times.

#ANZACspirit #lightupthedawn

Add a comment...

Mateship is one of the core values recognised in the soldiers who fought at Gallipoli and in every conflict since, and it's that value the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) is encouraging people to reflect on this Anzac Day, by reaching out to a mate who may be feeling alone during the lockdown.

"Loneliness is a problem with our veterans," NSW RSL acting president Ray James said.

"All we can do is ring them up by phone and talk to them, and talk to them as long as you need to because this is a lonely time. They will be missing their mates they normally meet up with."



NSW RSL acting president Ray James wants to encourage others to look out for veterans on Anzac Day. Source: SBS News

Mr James said it was important not to doubt the older generations' ability to use technology, and remember some may just need a hand setting it up.

"I was talking to a couple of guys in their 80s who I know well and I served with, they got together the other day and had a scotch on Skype, as if they were in the pub together," he said.

"We have got that technology, I encourage people to help their loved ones who are veterans and not across that, to help them in that space."

### Driveway and balcony tributes encouraged

The RSL is encouraging Australians to help "light up the dawn" from 6am on Saturday by tuning into an Anzac Day service from their driveway or balcony, where possible.

"This will be a very different year for us this year, but I see it being a very symbolic year," RSL Queensland president Tony Ferris said.

[READ MORE](#)

Europe to mark 'quiet, solitary' Anzac Day amid coronavirus pandemic



"I think this will encapsulate every Australian and get every Australian involved in an Anzac Day dawn service, which is something we probably haven't seen for a long time."

for a very long time.

The Oatley RSL in southern Sydney has been handing out candles for those in the community to light during their at-home dawn service.



The Oatley RSL is handing out free candles for Anzac Day services.  
Source: Facebook/Oatley RSL

Many of the street-side services will also include unique renditions of The Last Post, a traditional bugle call in the military, with amateur musicians swapping the sheet music online.

But it is not limited to buglers, with the website [Music for Mateship](#) providing The Last Post for those who play the tuba, saxophone and flute, among others.



Nine-year-old Lilly O'Connell from Brisbane is one of those performing this Anzac Day. She has taught herself to play The Last Post on trombone.

"It wasn't actually that hard, but it was a bit tricky as I am used to going fast when I am playing music, but you have to go nice and slow," she said.



The O'Connell girls will be honouring their late great uncle Len McDonald on Saturday.  
Source: Supplied/Australian War Memorial

"They (the neighbours) applaud her every time she is practicing, which is nice," her mother Meika O'Connell said.

This year Lilly will be remembering her great uncle Len McDonald, who fought

in World War II.

The retired corporal died last year aged 99.

Australia's national dawn service will be live-streamed on SBS News's website, app and Facebook page from 5.30am on Saturday.

READ MORE

The story of the Australian veterans who built the Great Ocean Road



People in Australia must stay at least 1.5 metres away from others and gatherings are limited to two people unless you are with your family or household.

If you believe you may have contracted the virus, call your doctor (don't visit) or contact the national Coronavirus Health Information Hotline on 1800 020 080. If you are struggling to breathe or experiencing a medical emergency, call 000.

SBS is committed to informing Australia's diverse communities about the latest COVID-19 developments. News and information is available in 63 languages at [sbs.com.au/coronavirus](https://sbs.com.au/coronavirus).

Topics: [Australia](#)

## Top Stories

37 MINS AGO | AUSTRALIA

Calls for Australia to stand its ground over fake photo scandal as tensions with Beijing intensify

3 MINS AGO | AUSTRALIA

WA confirms it will reopen borders as NSW eases raft of coronavirus restrictions

4 HOURS AGO | NORTH AMERICA

Wisconsin and Arizona certify Joe Biden's win as Donald Trump continues to make baseless fraud...

7 HOURS AGO | NORTH AMERICA

Moderna seeks emergency approval of its COVID-19 vaccine after final results show it's 94.5 pe...

18 MINS AGO

Ethiopian PM declares victory as Tigrayan leader says war is not finished

5 HOURS AGO | WORLD

Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest has surged to a 12-year high under Jair Bolsonaro

1 HOUR AGO | NORTH AMERICA

Donald Trump's controversial coronavirus adviser Scott Atlas has resigned

8 HOURS AGO | NORTH AMERICA

Joe Biden confirms historic nomination of Janet Yellen as US treasury secretary

7 HOURS AGO | MIDDLE EAST

Iran says nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was killed by a 'remote-controlled machine gun'

[VIEW MORE >](#)

## Stay up to date with SBS NEWS

App [Subscribe](#) Follow Listen Watch

### News to your inbox

Sign up now for the latest news from Australia and around the world direct to your inbox.

Your Email Address

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

By subscribing, you agree to SBS's [terms of service](#) and [privacy policy](#) including receiving email updates from SBS. This form is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.

EXPLORE SBS

[SBS Home](#)

[SBS On Demand](#)

[Guide](#)

[Radio](#)

[NITV](#)

[News](#)

[The World Game](#)

[Cycling](#)

[Sport](#)

[Movies](#)

[Food](#)

[Voices](#)

[Pride](#)

CONTACT SBS

[1800 500 727 \(toll free\)](#)

[Email Us](#)

[Locked Bag 028, Crows Nest NSW 1585](#)

FOLLOW SBS

