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Descendants of Indigenous WWI Light Horse soldiers honour their ancestors

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May 4, 2018 by J-Wire Newsdesk

Descendants of Indigenous World War I Light Horse Soldiers and their families and friends have attended an afternoon tea at Government House, Sydney to honour their ancestors.

Back Row: Jennifer Symonds, Belinda Russon, Roy Minnicon, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC, Governor of New South Wales, Angela Stanley, Mrs Linda Hurley, Front/Middle Row: Scarlet Amamoo, Roland Gridiger, Doris Paton, Elsie Amamoo, Jennifer Stanley, Mischa Fisher, Marguerite Rona

Hosted by his Excellency General The Hon. David Hurley AC DSC, Governor of NSW, and Mrs Linda Hurley, the descendants are all participants in the Rona Tranby Trust Australian Light Horse Project.

Supporters included NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the NSW Jewish War Memorial and the Centenary of Anzac Jewish Program.

With grants awarded by the Rona Tranby Trust last year, thirteen descendants are recording the stories of their ancestors, as told by their families and communities.

The awards also supported the descendants' travel to Israel last year to take part in the ANZAC commemoration on 31st October 2017, for the 'Centenary of the Battle of Beersheba and the Allied Sinai-Palestine campaign'.

After a heartfelt Acknowledgment of Country by Pastor Ray Minniecon, the Governor paid his respect to the ancestors of the participants and expressed his gratitude to the soldiers and their families for their contribution and sacrifice.

Governor David Hurley said: "At that time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were neither recognised as Australian citizens, nor included in the census and, 'officially', were not permitted to serve.

The fact that they did serve, despite these factors, lending their skill and horsemanship to this Campaign has been, up to now, a mostly untold and neglected part of our history within our ANZAC commemorations.

Ray Minniecon, Uncle Roy Mundine, Lesli Berger

Fortunately, this is about to change through the initiative and the work of The Rona Tranby Trust”

After the Governor’s speech, Belinda Russon, Chair of the Rona Tranby Trust and CEO of Tranby National Indigenous Adult Education and Training, spoke on behalf of the Trust . Doris Paton, a descendant who travelled from country Victoria, spoke on behalf of the participants of the project.

Doris presented the Governor with a Journal and a beautiful shirt commemorating the Rona Tranby Trust Australian Light Horse Project.

Mrs Linda Hurley, who is a great supporter of community singing , encouraged all those present to sing “You are my Sunshine “ which added a ray of sunshine to the event.

Attending the event were Indigenous Community Elders including the Hon Linda Burney MP, Uncle Harrie Ally, president of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Veterans’s Association, Uncle Roy Mundine, inaugural Elder of the Australian Army, Uncle John Moriarty co-founder and chair of Balarinji.

Also present were members of Thomas Rona’s Family, the trustees of the Rona Tranby Trust – Belinda Russon, Jennifer Symonds and Roland Gridiger and supporters of the project including Lesli Berger and Vic Alhadeff – Vice President and CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Charles Aronson – President of the NSW Jewish War Memorial, Peter Allen- National Co-ordinator of the Centenary of Anzac Jewish Program & individual sponsors Deirdre Bear, Sylvia Leeser, Roland Gridiger and Nick Schoulal

The Rona Tranby Trust was established in 1991, from a bequest in the will of Thomas Rona, and gives awards to support the recording and preservation of Indigenous Australian oral history.

The Rona Tranby Trust Australian Light Horse Project is a unique and exciting project that is making a significant contribution to the historical & cultural record of World War 1 and to Reconciliation in Australia.





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