

Department Executive Services

Author Initials: AT

REPORT

I would like to bring to Council's attention the 25 September passing of Godfrey Eugene "Rusty" Priest AM. Rusty was an amazing man and an incredibly loyal and patriotic Australian. Our country and community has lost a wonderful man.

A WWII veteran, Rusty had a distinguished military career spanning 22 years. He was the recipient of meritorious service, long service and good conduct medals and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1997.

As President of the New South Wales Returned Serviceman's League (NSW RSL) from 1993 to 2002, Rusty was determined to make the RSL relevant for new generations of Australians. He is widely credited for rebuilding community pride and awareness in Anzac Day commemorations and was instrumental in the creation of our Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway and education centre in Concord and renaming the Glebe Island Bridge to Anzac Bridge.

Rusty was the recipient of the Arts and Culture Citizen of the Year award at our Citizens of the Year awards back in January and I had planned a Civic Reception to honour him, originally scheduled for June but rescheduled to take place in October due to Rusty requiring emergency surgery. It is a shame we didn't get to undertake this significant event and I propose that Council undertake a posthumous commemoration for Rusty.

A State Funeral has been planned by the Premier's office. The State Funeral will take place at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney on Wednesday, 2 October at 11am. A Military component will follow the State Funeral at the Memorial in Hyde Park.

At the request of Rusty's family, a final farewell service will be held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Pathway on Thursday, 3 October at 2pm. This will be an opportunity for Rusty's friends and colleagues to pay their final respects.

I ask Council to join me in sending heartfelt condolences and thoughts to Rusty's family, in particular his children, Tim and Carole-Anne and his brother, Gerald.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Council note and acknowledge the passing of Godfrey Eugene "Rusty" Priest AM.
2. THAT Council undertake a posthumous commemoration for Rusty.