



PLANNING YOUR COMMEMORATIVE EVENT

You can remember New Zealand's significant military milestones through your own commemorative service. This guide will help you to put together your programme and plan your event.

SUGGESTED PROGRAMME

This programme contains the elements for a full commemorative service, but you can adapt it to your circumstances; personalising, adding and removing parts to make your service special and suited to your participants. If you need any help, just get in touch with us here at National Office.

WELCOME

This can include:

- ♥ Lowering the flag to half-mast
- ♥ An opening welcome from your group as the host
- ♥ Any special announcements or warnings – **for instance, if you're including a gun salute in your event, it pays to let your audience know**
- ♥ A safety briefing with the fire evacuation plan, and the location of toilets, emergency exits and first aiders

OPENING ANTHEM OR HYMN

Consider using 'God Save the Queen' or the New Zealand National Anthem. For Anzac Day you could also include the Australian National Anthem.

OPENING PRAYER

Your local church may be able to provide an officiating clergy or religious leader to lead this prayer and any other spiritual elements in your service. Often the opening prayer will end with The Lord's Prayer. You can find the words online.

There are many religions in New Zealand and any can be incorporated into your service. Or you can choose to leave religious aspects out altogether - whatever you think will work best for your audience.

STATEMENT OR DEDICATION WHICH TALKS ABOUT THE REASON FOR THE EVENT

For Anzac Day, we recommend you recite **what's** known as the Anzac Dedication.

"At this hour, on this day, Anzac received its baptism of fire and became one of the immortal names in history. We who are gathered here think of the comrades who went out with us to battle but did not return. We feel them still near us in spirit. We wish to be worthy of their great sacrifice. Let us, therefore, once again dedicate ourselves to the service of the ideals for which they died. As the dawn is even now about to pierce the night, so let their memory inspire us to work for the coming of the new light into the dark places of the world."



HYMN

SCRIPTURE READING

GUEST SPEAKER 1

HYMN OR MUSICAL ITEM

GUEST SPEAKER 2



WREATH LAYING

Lay your wreath at an appropriate place in your venue. This can be at a war memorial or plaque if your setting is near one, or you can lay a wreath in a position of importance at your venue.

THE ODE

The Ode, in both te reo Māori and English, is also a well-known, moving part of commemorative services. [You can find the words to the Ode in this DIY kit.](#)

THE LAST POST

While The Last Post plays, the flag is lowered to shoulder height. The Last Post is especially stirring when played live by a Bugler, but you can use recorded music too. [Get in touch with your local RSA](#) for help in finding a Bugler, [or download the music.](#)

A MINUTES SILENCE

This can be a full minute of silence, but if you are using a Bugler, they will often count to 20 before starting to play The Rouse.

THE ROUSE

Some know this bugle call as the Reveille. During The Rouse, the flag is quickly raised to full mast and tied off.

CLOSING BENEDICTION OR BLESSING

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank those responsible and invite everyone for refreshments and cheer.

Your event timing will vary according to your content, but you should aim for an event of not more than 30 – 45 minutes if held outside, or one hour if it's a seated event inside.



TASK LIST FOR COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

Make sure you're on task with your planning with this handy task list.
Adapt it for your commemoration.

TASK	WHEN	DONE	WHO BY	NOTES
Advertising				
Invitations: consider inviting Schools and Cadet Units as well as local MPs, Mayor, Councillors and other dignitaries				
Confirm your Padre or Officiating Clergy				
Confirm your guest speakers				
Book a venue – try your local war memorial or hall and don't forget to think about a wet weather alternative if your service is outside				
Create name tags for the official party and allocate seating				
If you have a flag pole, confirm your Flag Orderly to raise and lower the flag (Cadet Unit or local Military), or brief someone for the task				
Organise your refreshments				
Confirm your band or musicians and let them know the music they'll need to play and when				
Organise a piper to play The Lament if you are laying a wreath				
Order wreaths				
Request local choir if needed and discuss what to sing				
Prepare the service sheet and print it out for distribution				
Book a sound system suitable for your venue				
Request road closures or police escorts if needed				
Book some seating				
Provide toilet facilities				
Provide first aid facilities (St John or check your first aid kits)				
Plan a parade if required and appoint a Parade Commander				
Book a Bugler (or get a recording)				
Appoint a Master Of Ceremonies who would welcome everyone and introduce your speakers				

