

What to do *(and not do)* at an Anzac Day dawn service



The Dawn Service has been part of Anzac Day commemorations across New Zealand since 1939. The service, which traditionally begins with a military parade, is a formal way to honour New Zealanders killed in combat, as well as servicemen and women both returned and still serving.

Attendance at dawn services has grown hugely in recent years, but if you've never been to one it can be a bit daunting (even if you find it easy to get up pre-dawn on a public holiday).

Don't worry, we're here for you. We asked an RSA spokesperson Rachel Riley as many curly questions about the dawn service as we could on your behalf – and she bravely answered. Here's everything you wanted to know about the Dawn Service but were too embarrassed to ask.

What time do Anzac Day services start? If I sleep through the alarm, is it ok to turn up a bit late?

Dawn services usually start around 5.45 – 6am, with civic services kicking off around 10am although it does vary depending on the part of the country you are in. Your local council will have information on the start time and location of the services in your area.

In the finest military tradition, attendees should be at the service five minutes before it starts... but we know that in the real-world alarm clocks fail, kids won't get their coats on, and car parks can be hard to find - so it's ok to turn up a little bit late.

What about if I've been out late the night before? Should I roll through on my way home or is it better to stay away?

If you're able to be quiet and respectful of the service, you're more than welcome to roll through on your way home. But if you're at the loud "I love you man" stage of your night out, it might be better to find another way to commemorate this Anzac Day.

Is it ok to take photos or video?

It's fine to take photos or videos from your position in the crowd – just make sure you're not obscuring the view of those around you.

Is it poor form to do an Instagram or Facebook Live from the service so I can show off to my mates that I was there?

Why not bring your mates along with you? But if you can't get them out of bed, there are no restrictions on doing an Instagram or Facebook Live from the service as long as you are not providing commentary that will disrupt those around you, and that your filming does not obscure anyone's view.

Are there specific times to sit or stand, like in church?

There are parts of the service that require people to be standing. But don't worry, it won't come as a surprise - there are handy prompts given during the service for when this will be needed.

If an Anzac Day service is outside, can I bring my dog?

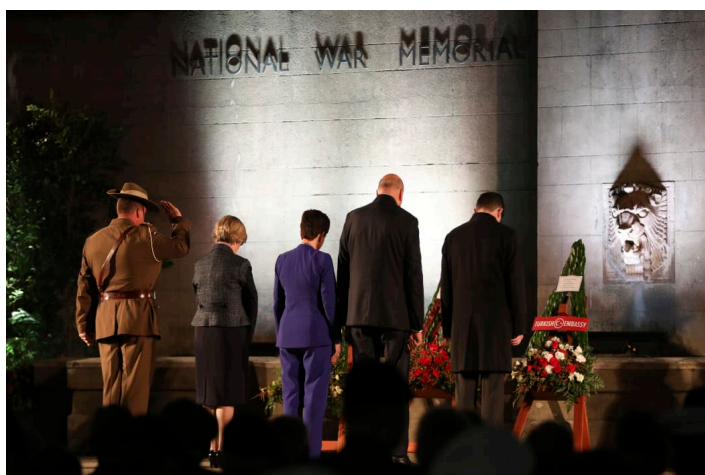
Your (well-behaved) four-legged friend is welcome at any outdoor service provided that the local rules for the location permit it.

What about my kids? They're too young to legally leave at home alone but they're not very good at standing still and being quiet. Will they ruin the atmosphere?

Our tamariki are an important part of Anzac Day Commemorations and are welcome at all services. We love seeing them front and centre in the crowd. But we also know that some children can be loud and wriggly when made to stand still for long periods of time – so if you think your child might need a bit more stimulation, there is often space at the back of services that allows children to run around without disrupting the event.

Can anyone lay a wreath? If I'm bringing one from home do I have to wait for all the dignitaries to lay theirs first, or is it ok to turn up with it any time I like?

Absolutely anyone can lay a wreath at an Anzac Day Service, but there is a protocol around this. As part of the service, local dignitaries and community groups are introduced by name and invited to lay a wreath. Once that has been completed, members of the public will be invited forward for their turn. Normally a line will be



formed to ensure the wreath laying remains orderly, so just follow the instructions of the marshals. When it's your turn to lay the wreath don't just dump and run – lay the wreath gently, take a step back, reflect on the meaning of the day and then move back to your spot in the crowd.

What do I wear? Can I turn up in my PJs and a hoodie (come on, it's early in the morning!) or is that being disrespectful?

An Anzac Day service is a form of military funeral which should provide some guidance on how people are expected to dress. But we'd much rather have people turn up to commemorate in clothes they are comfortable (and warm!) in than stay away because they haven't got the right gear. While we'd prefer a tidy standard of dress, if getting there in your PJs is your only option – we'll still be glad to see you.

Is it ok to wear a hat if it's cold, or should I take it off as a sign of respect?

Hats are A-OK. Beanies are encouraged if it's cold, but we'd ask that there are no offensive slogans on any headwear worn to the services.

Speaking of what to wear, I've got my great-grandad's medals. Can I wear them? If so, where do I wear them, on the left or on the right?

Wearing a family member's medals is a wonderful way to remember them and commemorate their service. Medals earned by family members should be worn on the right-hand side. Only medals that were earned by the person wearing them should be worn on the left-hand side.



What about medals earned by servicemen and women from other countries?

Another person's medals should only be worn if they were either related to you or have an important connection to you or your whānau. Medals can be worn regardless of the country they were earned in. These medals must be worn on the right-hand side.

My grandparents' medals were lost. Is there another way I can show respect?

Just turning up to an Anzac Day service is an excellent way to show respect and honour their

service. Wearing a poppy is another way you can show your support for your own relatives, and all New Zealand's veterans of military service.



Is it ok to take a few Anzac biscuits to eat if I get hungry? Or a coffee?

We get it – it's early in the morning and we all get a bit snacky. As long as your snack and its packaging do not disrupt those around you, you're welcome to have a sneaky Anzac biscuit or a coffee with you.

Can I pop over to my local RSA for a drink after the service, or is that for veterans only? And is it true that veterans drink rum and milk on Anzac Day?

RSAs are open to all on Anzac Day – and offer a great opportunity to meet and talk with the veterans in your community.

Rum and milk? Sounds dreadful! The actual tradition, known as a 'gunfire breakfast' is for a tot of rum in a cup of coffee. The exact origins of the tradition are not known but legend has it that during World War One, rum-laced coffee was served alongside breakfast to give the troops liquid courage to face the coming battles for the day.

I can't make it to the dawn service for a bunch of reasons. Is there another way I can join in and show my respect?

There are many ways to commemorate Anzac Day, if you can't make a Dawn Service many areas also hold a civic service later in the day. You could also visit a local war memorial or cenotaph and lay a poppy while reflecting on the men and women in your community that have served. If you see someone out on Anzac Day wearing medals on their left-hand side, you could have a conversation with them about their experiences. Even just wearing your poppy shows that you are honouring those New Zealanders who have served.