



Mark Speakman

Leader of the Opposition

Robyn Preston

Shadow Minister for Veterans

Alister Henskens

Shadow Attorney General

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JAIL OR \$22K FINE FOR DISRESPECTING OUR DIGGERS

As the sun rose across New South Wales yesterday, thousands gathered in silence to honour our fallen. From suburban cenotaphs to country town memorials, all across NSW our communities paid tribute to the courage and sacrifice of those who served.

When Parliament resumes, the Opposition will introduce the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2025 — a clear and respectful step to ensure that those who deface or disgrace war memorials face real consequences.

This is the second attempt to pass legislation that imposes stronger penalties for offences against war memorials. In 2024, the Opposition put forward a similar Bill which was blocked when Labor sided with the Greens and some Independents — a move veterans and families across NSW found deeply disappointing.

Leader of the Opposition Mark Speakman said every NSW war memorial tells a story of sacrifice, service and mateship.

“Our memorials aren’t just monuments — they’re a promise. A promise to remember. A promise to respect. When someone vandalises these memorials, they’re desecrating the memory of every person whose name is etched in stone. We owe it to our veterans to ensure these cowards pay the price,” Mr Speakman said

- Right now, the maximum summary fine (without an expensive trial, typically before a jury) for damaging a war memorial is just \$4,400
- Offensive or indecent behaviour near a memorial attracts just a maximum \$2,200 penalty
- Courts can allow offenders to do community service instead of paying the prescribed penalties

Under the Opposition’s Bill:

- The maximum summary penalty for damaging a war memorial will increase to \$22,000 - or two - years imprisonment, or both
- The maximum penalty for offensive or indecent conduct near a memorial will also rise to \$22,000
- Offenders will be required to pay for repairs, unless there are special circumstances, so that custodians like local councils, RSL sub-branches and not-for-profit organisations don’t have to foot the bill
- The option for a community service penalty will be removed

Shadow Minister for Veterans Robyn Preston said you don't honour our Diggers with dawn services and then turn a blind eye when their memorials are defaced.

"This is about respect, not compromise. Plain and simple. If you desecrate a war memorial, you should be appropriately punished with a heavy fine and even go to jail. No excuses. No community service. Pay the price," Ms Preston said.

Shadow Attorney General Alister Henskens said war memorials aren't just concrete and bronze.

"They are sacred places — built by communities, cared for by volunteers and cherished by generations. If someone desecrates them, they should be held accountable," Mr Henskens said.

MEDIA: Clem Hall | 0412 002 536