



A heckler interrupts the service. 192708



Anzac Day marchers. 192708



Dandenong RSL president John Wells. 192708
Pictures: ROB CAREW



The heckler is handcuffed on the ground and later taken away from the area. 192708

Anzac force

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A massive turnout at Dandenong's Anzac Day service was regarded as one of the biggest in recent times.

The service at the Pillars of Freedom on 25 April was briefly interjected by a heckler who was jeered by the crowd and subdued by police.

Dandenong RSL president John Wells noted that people had a right to disagree and protest in a democracy but an Anzac Day service was not the right time and place for it.

The services were regarded as like a funeral, the memorial as a tombstone, Mr Wells said.

"This puts it beyond political considerations."

Mr Wells said he was surprised by the strong attendance. The day was now a part of the calendar for a diversity of communities.

"What was heartening was we're getting a lot of people from a non-Anglo Saxon background."

"Some of it is about their inclusion in soci-

ety and embedding themselves in our culture."

The Anzac message also resonates in many countries, Mr Wells said.

"People had to courage to come here and make a fresh start.

"Many of them suffered the same thing as Australians suffered in the big wars.

"The underlying principles of Anzac Day speak to all people, not just Australians."

Greater Dandenong Roz Blades, as a regular attendee, said the crowd was bigger than any she'd witnessed for Anzac Days in Dandenong.

Memorials at Noble Park and Springvale had also been "packed".

"Importantly it was the large numbers of youth, the young people who were there - respecting and honouring those who gave us everything.

"They were there with their families, remembering their granddad, their uncle, their brother.

"You couldn't move with all the people at Dandenong RSL afterwards - there were all ages, all nationalities."