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Bahçeşehir University Istanbul 27 April 2008

At a joint Turkish-Australian workshop delegates today voted today to protect and preserve in situ the historic Australian submarine AE2.

This small 800 ton submarine created a diversion for the ANZAC troops landing at Gallipoli 25 APRIL 1915 by penetrating the heavily mined strongly defended and treacherous currents of the Dardanelle Straits.

5 days later on 30 April, after being severely damaged in a battle with the Turkish torpedo boat Sultanhisar, AE2 was scuttled by her crew. All her 32 crew were rescued and became POWs, however AE2's feat opened the way for the first successful submarine campaign in history.

This campaign cut the Turkish supply lines across the Sea of Marmara, preventing the rapid build up of Turkish forces so that they were unable to achieve sufficient strength to drive the ANZACS into the sea.

The workshop convened by the Turkish Institute of Nautical Archaeology (TINA) and the Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA) was opened by the Australian Minister for Defence the Honorable Joel Fitzgibbon in front of an audience of 81 delegates and 40 members of the media and students.

The workshop considered the results of a dived survey Maritime Archaeological Assessment (MAA) by the TINA and the AE2 Commemorative Foundation on the submarine last September.

The MAA proved the submarine hull to be in sound condition preserved in a relatively benign environment where corrosion was inhibited by the prevailing conditions.

After 2 days of comprehensive debate the workshop resolved to recommend to both Turkish and Australian governments that the submarine should be protected and preserved where she rests and the stories of both the AE2 and Sultanhisar be told to the people of Turkey and Australia.

The submarine should be protected by 2 buoys, underwater shield, an anti intruder surveillance system and sacrificial anodes against corrosion. An archaeological assessment of the interior of the submarine should also be conducted.

These measures would protect and preserve one of the last remaining significant relic of the Gallipoli Campaign, which is important to the national heritage of both countries.

The centenary, 2015 should be used to commemorate the naval action associated with the Gallipoli campaign, in particular the encounter between AE2 and the Sultanhisar.

It is the sincere hope of TINA and SIA that, AE2 will set sail on a voyage of cooperation and friendship between Turkey and Australia.