

Speech

ADDRESS BY

HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE QUENTIN BRYCE AC CVO

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

ON THE OCCASION OF

ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION ADDRESS

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My fellow Australians

We gather this morning, in quietness and community, to remember our dead. To mourn their passing. To honour their deeds. To breathe their spirit.

The thousands who perished at Gallipoli, many thousands more on the Western Front. The hundred thousand whose names are kept in this shrine. The one and a half million who have served this nation.

We come to pay our respects and give our thanks. To reflect deeply and fully on what their offering means. To make a place for them in our hearts.

We picture the stillness, the eerie silence of boats on the water, hovering in those tense hours before the sun rose.

We can only imagine the force that drove them up the beach into assault and gunfire; the tenacity that held them all that day and for eight long months, ceding nothing; giving everything.

We contemplate their courage: how it moved them to broach that dawn and face its outpouring; steadfast, unflinching, brave.

We try to grasp their loss: what it meant to their mates and comrades; what it meant to those left at home. Mothers and aunts; brothers, fathers, little ones. Grandchildren they would never meet. Lives they would never get to build.

In place of these lives, there are quiet graves, and fields where poppies grow. From Hamel and Villers-Bretonneux, to Valetta, Tobruk and Dar es Salaam, we find our countrymen at rest, reminding us how far our nation's spirit has travelled, how much we have given.

On our own soil, each capital city and every country town has its memorial and its marker of that loss. From this magnificent edifice, to regional war cemeteries, to the simplest plaque or park bench, our landscape is inscribed with the story of our sacrifice.

It is indelibly recorded in our history and identity. We have a sacred trust to remain accountable to its legacy.

Part of how we fulfill that is with our attention in moments like this one. In our regard for those who march, and for those currently serving: peacekeepers, rebuilders, defenders and protectors in Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor, the Solomons, Egypt, the Sudan. In our esteem for a hero like Trooper Mark Donaldson VC, our tribute to his supreme valour.

Yet we also keep faith with Anzac through the everyday.

In our own finding and testing of courage.

In our building of lives, homes and communities.

In our willingness to persevere through misfortune and adversity; to remain hopeful in the dry gullies.

In our capacity to reach out and deep when floodwaters rise and bushfires ravage.

In our remembrance of each other.

These too are thanks for what was laid down on our behalf.

"They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old." Yet in our growing we allow them to flourish.

In our days and years, their memory finds an ample place.

"At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them."