

2009 Anzac Day Speech at the City of Cockburn representing the Premier

Anzac Day Speech

by
Peter Abetz MLA representing the
Premier at the City of Cockburn
ANZAC
DAY Parade 25/04/2009

Distinguished
Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls,

Today
is a very special day in the hearts and lives of our nation. Today we give thanks to our defence forces,
past and present.

Today
we honour all those who made the ultimate sacrifice in times of war for our
beloved Australia.

Today
we honour those who, although they survived the wars they fought in, still carried
the scars, both physically and mentally with them to their graves.

Today
we honour those who today, still carry the physical and mental scars of their
service for our nation.

I
am sure that if those who landed on the shores of Gallipoli on 25th
April 1915, and who were killed, along
with those who experienced the anguish of seeing their mates killed by Turkish
bullets, along with those who were
themselves wounded, could see you gathered here today, they would be
smiling, and most appreciative. Indeed I
am confident that every returned soldier from all theatres of war where our
nation has been involved in, would be delighted to see you here today, knowing that their suffering and sacrifice is
remembered and appreciated.

I can remember in the late 1960s and early 70s that Anzac Day marches and parades were declining in attendance. Many Australians saw Anzac Day as something for returned soldiers to remember their mates. I remember in the late 1970s and early 80s reading articles in newspapers claiming that Anzac Day was an anachronism, and would soon be a thing of the past. But praise God they have been proven wrong!

I believe that the revived interest in Anzac Day stems from a growing realisation within our community, that the freedoms and values that we hold dear, and had assumed to be normal, are in fact far from normal for millions of people in the world. With the rise of terrorism and the arrival of cultures in our country which find our values of freedom, equality and tolerance foreign, many Australians have come to a fresh realisation that our Australian values and freedoms, which have been largely shaped by our Judeo Christian heritage, are something that we not only enjoy, but that ought to be celebrated, and that we need to be constantly on our guard that no one takes those values and freedoms away from us.

With that renewed realisation, has come a refreshing awareness in the community that if it had not been for the people who served in our Armed services, we would not be enjoying those values and freedoms. Hence there is an increased enthusiasm for celebrating ANZAC Day as a way of honouring those who gave so much that we might have this freedom and enjoy the Australian way of life.

For those of us who have never served at the battle front, it is hard to imagine what our ANZACs have endured in the various theatres of war. But these brave Australians, have proven themselves worthy of our gratitude and honour. Their incredible capacity to improvise, to joke about their deprivations, their courage and mateship have not only become legendary, but have also shaped our national character, and in many ways laid the foundation of our nation.

Let us ever be grateful for the sacrifices made by the men and women of our armed services.

As long as the sun rises over this great land Australia, may every passing generation celebrate ANZAC Day.

Lest we forget.

