



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

ANZAC DAY 2020

Saturday 25th April, 2020

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which I am standing, and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

As Australians, we understand why the 25th of April is a special day for our nation.

On this day, 105 years ago, just after 4am, the first waves of Australian soldiers fought their way ashore on the Gallipoli Peninsula. By the end of that terrible day, 2000 had been killed or wounded, the first of more than 26,000 Australian casualties of the Gallipoli campaign.

The extraordinary endurance of the ANZACs became an indelible part of our national story.

Each year, we honour the sacrifices made on our behalf - then and since - by all those who have served our country in defence and peace keeping duties.

We gather at the Shrine of Remembrance, or at local memorials in towns and cities across our state, to stand in silence in the darkness before the dawn, sometimes shivering in the chill—sometimes in the rain— amongst friends and amongst strangers.

This year, of course, is different. For the first time in living memory, we are unable to come together for dawn services – or for parades and marches, or for any of the traditions that usually mark this day.

I know this will be a source of sadness for many. As Governor of Victoria, it is my privilege to meet veterans and serving members of the Australian Defence Force, and to hear their remarkable stories. I know that the changed arrangements this year will be difficult for them and for their families, and for others for whom this day has a very personal significance.

Indeed, for all of us, there is an added poignancy to this year's commemorations. We cannot gather together as we usually would, but perhaps we can reflect in a new way on why ANZAC Day still unites us so profoundly.

We can reflect that, although the men who fought at Gallipoli, the nurses who cared for the wounded, and those who toiled at home to support the effort were from a time now distant to us, we are still bound to them.

Bound across the generations, across the diversity of our backgrounds, cultures and religions, and across the challenges of different times.

The qualities those young Australians discovered in themselves at Gallipoli are as precious to us today as they ever were.

Courage in the face of fear. Holding together. Loyalty, and digging in with grit and perseverance, no matter how hard things get.

Recent events have shown that these values endure.

We saw the vital role and the selfless service of the Australian Defence Force in the awful bushfires of last summer.

And now, in the midst of this current public health crisis, we are seeing the ADF step up again - to help in transport and logistics, manufacturing and support for the health workers, police and emergency services who are working so hard to keep us safe.

On this ANZAC Day, amidst the anxiety and uncertainty that we are feeling, I want to thank our service men and women for modelling the same values of resilience, courage and adaptability that those before them showed at Gallipoli and have shown across the decades since.

We can all draw inspiration from their example, as each of us plays our own part in the effort to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus, to care for those affected, and to plan for the brighter times that we know will come.

This year on ANZAC Day, we shall be physically apart. And although we yearn to be together again - to gather at dawn, to collect at memorials and cenotaphs, to march and to cheer those marching, and, for some of us, to see old comrades and to talk fondly of others - we will still be joined.

Joined, whether alone, or with families or housemates.

Joined, whether inside our homes or lighting up the dawn with a candle or a torch.

Whether we stand in silence at farm gates, in our driveways or on our doorsteps, balconies or verandas.

Joined in our shared resolve, on this, as on every 25th of April, to remember what others have given for us.

Although this year we remember differently, it remains as true as ever to say: We will remember them.