

ANZAC Day Speech 2013 ICB

Wednesday 24 April

David Forde

Thank you for the Invitation to join today's Commemoration Service to mark the 98th Anniversary of the landing at Anzac Cove.

On behalf of the members of Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch, I sincerely thank you all for your participation in this Service.

Attending school service's such as yours this morning - reinforces the importance of the occasion.

I would go so far as saying - without wanting to be controversial - that perhaps ANZAC Day is the most important day in the Australian calendar as it is a day that is inclusive of all our people including our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

On this anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli, we commemorate the event with a special sadness because for the first time, the men who made that fateful landing on the 25th of April 1915 are all but gone.

What they did was to offer their very existence when they were told that their country needed them. I say their country, but in many cases, they were doing so for a country that was not theirs by birth or even citizenship, for many of them had been born overseas and were Australian by immigration.

It is easy for us to take for granted all of the privileges and freedoms we enjoy in Australia – privileges and freedoms that many in other parts of the world can only dream of - not least the freedom to practice ones religion and political beliefs and to live free of occupation and oppression.

Each and every freedom that we enjoy has been paid for at a great cost. A cost that no amount of money can ever repay. We must always value and protect this freedom to the best of our ability.

And today we not only remember those who served and died at Gallipoli - but also over 102,000 Australian soldiers, sailors, airmen and servicewomen - many who remain where they died, on every continent and in every ocean of the world.

Indeed we should remember all those that died or suffered as a result of conflict, not just the men and women in uniform, but the countless more – men, women and children - the civilian victims who also died and who continue to die each and every day.

Each one was a real person just like you and me. They laughed, shared joys with their family and friends - had hopes and dreams; they also knew loneliness - fear and sadness.

Those Australians who lost their lives - lived their lives in deeds not years; in sacrifice - not heartbeats - and in service - not the turned pages of a calendar.

These men and women have given each one of us wonderful gifts on which to build the future. They are the gifts of courage, perseverance, compassion, mateship and most of all - of service.

Never forget the Service and Sacrifice of these Australians and what they have done seeking to make the world a better place – often sent into combat under the directions of others.

However, while war and conflict may at times be unavoidable – it should be an absolute last resort and should never ever be celebrated such is the terrible humanitarian toll that goes with it.

ANZAC Day is not about celebration, it is about commemoration.

To the Students who participated in today's service - congratulations. You are a credit to your school, your families, the community and yourselves.

On behalf of the Sunnybank RSL I want to sincerely thank you for this very special tribute