



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

**MELBOURNE LEGACY ANZAC
COMMEMORATION CEREMONY FOR STUDENTS
Friday 23 April 2021**

Mr Tim Richardson MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Schools, representing the Minister for Education

Mr Hugh Robertson, President, Melbourne Legacy

Captain Stephen Bowater OAM, Chair of the Shrine Trustees

Senior officers and members of the Australian Defence Force,

Dr Robert Webster OAM, State President, RSL **and representatives of other Ex-Service Organisations,**

Members of the Consular Corps,

Distinguished guests

Teachers and Students

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us.

On Sunday, we commemorate Anzac Day. It is now 106 years since soldiers from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps – the Anzacs – fought at Gallipoli in Turkey in World War 1.

Anzac Day provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the 400,000 Australians who went to serve in that War, and all those who have served in wars and peace-keeping missions since then.

It must be hard for you to think back to a time more than 100 years ago.

To imagine young people, many not much older than some of you, heading to perils as yet unknown, thousands of miles from home and family – at once proud, curious and frightened, as they set off.

Neither can you be expected to imagine the impact of that war on the children here at home at that time.

With a large number of our much smaller Australian population going off to fight, many children remained here, missing their fathers, brothers and uncles, worrying and anxiously awaiting news about them, and – in many instances – facing the devastating news that they would not return.

Young people of around your ages were called upon to make their own contributions to the war effort too: knitting clothing for the soldiers in the trenches, donating pocket money, volunteering to help on farms or being put to work to fill the financial void left by those who had gone off to fight.

Similarly, in World War II, as Australian men and women were serving in Europe and in the Pacific, Victorian schoolchildren did their bit here at home.

Again they stitched clothing, being told that *'every stitch made... was a stitch nearer to victory.'*

Like everyone, they felt the impact of rationing, of having to do without some day-to-day items that were in short supply.

Such items became luxuries when rationed, and included clothing, tea, sugar, butter, meat and sometimes eggs and milk as well. Even Vegemite was in short supply, with supplies mostly going to our serving soldiers.

World War II brought the fear of war closer to home, with enemy air raids on Darwin. Victorian schoolchildren undertook training in preparation to be evacuated quickly if the need arose. Parents were advised to make evacuation knapsacks for their children, stocked with food and clothing, so they could be prepared for a quick evacuation.

Just as in World War I, throughout World War II – and in war and peace-keeping missions since – kids have felt the challenging effects of their parents and other loved ones leaving to serve.

But they have felt the positive effects as well.

The service and sacrifice of our Australian Defence Force men and women have helped to keep them safe, ensuring that they could grow enjoying a good life in a country, with freedoms and rights to protect them.

These are the legacies that have protected each generation for more than 100 years. Why, just like you, I was able to grow up in a safe and stable country. And why you, and one day your own children, will do the same.

It is why it is so important that each Anzac Day we pause and we reflect with gratitude on our past – and on our currently serving – ADF personnel.

We think in particular of those who sacrificed their lives for us. And we thank Melbourne Legacy for its ongoing work – over many decades – *‘caring for the families of veterans who have lost their lives or lost their health.’*

We know that the work of Legacy has been made the more difficult across the last challenging year, and yet it did not falter in the care it continued to offer.

We thank Legacy too for organising this ceremony.

You are attending it in its 89th year. Across all those years, Melbourne Legacy has helped so many thousands of young Victorians to learn about and appreciate the importance of Anzac Day, and why it is that we must never forget.