

DECEPTION BAY ANZAC DAY SERVICE

Youth Perspective



Good morning, my name is Emily Day and I am honoured to be standing before you today to deliver a youth's perspective on this significant national occasion; ANZAC Day. But this is not just any Anzac day: today, we come together to commemorate the Battle of Gallipoli that occurred on this day, 100 years ago. A commemoration that is necessary, to acknowledge the devastation, sacrifice, and bravery that men and women endured in order to allow us to live in this great nation of privilege and peace today. As a youth, and in preparation for this speech, I had to ask myself – what do I really know about the ANZAC's? And how could I possibly comprehend the sacrifices, devastations of war and bravery that we are told about in school?

To be honest, I was caught off guard. Youth today, including me, have never had to live through times of war. We've never had to ration our food, never had to write letters to loved ones, knowing that they may never receive them, never had to receive goodbye letters from loved ones we'd never see again. And although I thought I knew what ANZAC day was about, it became a great challenge for me to put the first World War into perspective. Just last week, after waking up in my warm bed, eating a filling and healthy breakfast, and checking facebook messages on my phone, I was caught up by the amount of comforts that I take for granted everyday. It made me stop and think: too often we take life and its beauty for granted – ignoring the wars that have been fought and the lives that have been lost in order for me to enjoy this life – and it concerned me, that I may not be the only youth who takes this life for granted without acknowledging, or knowing how it was achieved.

As a youth, knowing that were servicemen that were barely 17 years old who fought in Gallipoli, overwhelms me, I mean that That's my age now! To have the knowledge that young men and women, who were my age, and even younger, had the courage to fight for their country, knowing that they would likely never return home, absolutely amazes me. To give up their home life, schooling opportunities, career options, a first girlfriend or boyfriend, the possibilities of becoming fathers, mothers, aunts or uncles, giving up the ability to socialise with friends at a party on the weekend, the chance to get a licence and drive a car, the chance to travel and explore the world for leisure. I wonder sometimes, could I be that willing or selfless or brave! And I'm sure that I'm not the only youth asks this question.

Soldiers as young as me, were landing on Gallipoli this day over 100 years ago. Many of them never imagining that it would end the way it did. Many of the soldiers had never even experienced combat before. Yet they had been willing to give up the comforts of their beds, their children, their wives and their families in exchange for harsh lands, impossible odds, starvation, malnutrition, and most often times, death – and for this I will always say thank you – and for this, no matter how young we are, we must always say thank you. They sacrificed, just as servicemen and women sacrifice today, for the benefit of us all.

So as a youth living in a country built from the bravery, sacrifice, mateship and the courage of our Anzacs and servicemen and women, I am honoured and humbled to be able to publically acknowledge them. We live in a country of plenty, of freedom, of peace, and of privilege. We live whole, full and complete lives, because they gave up theirs. So I hope all youth join with me in choosing, everyday, to live life to the fullest – being sure to not take anything for granted and appreciating everyday of life, for the sake of those who lost theirs.

So, lets live it for them - Lest we forget the writers who dreamed to write stories of finding love, of having adventures and creating a place where the world was better for everyone. Let us write for them. Lest we forget, the singers who sung to express their sorrows and their joy. Let us sing

for them. Lest we forget, the dancers who danced until they could no more, let us dance for them. Lest we forget, the jokers who told good jokes and whose humour always brightened a dark day, let us laugh and joke for them. Lest we forget, the gardeners, the football players, the fisherman, the dress makers, the engineers, the cane cutters, the piano players. Lest we forget, those who sacrificed what they loved for every man and woman here today. Let us, in their memory choose to live every day for not only ourselves but for them. Lest we forget.