



**AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION
SOUTH AFRICA**

ANZAC Day Dawn Service, 25 April 2013, Diamond Hill

**Address by HE Mr Graeme Wilson
Australia's High Commissioner**

On the 25th of April 1915, about 16,000 young Australians and New Zealanders landed on the beaches of Gallipoli. As they waded ashore, none of them could have imagined the legacy they would create in the hearts and minds of those two nations.

The ANZACs, as they were called, struggled valiantly, but ultimately in vain, to capture and defend the heights around the cove. By the end of that first day, 2,000 ANZACs were dead or badly wounded. Over the ensuing weeks and months, Gallipoli was to become the graveyard for over 8,000 Australians and 2,700 New Zealanders.

Militarily, the Gallipoli campaign was a failure but from the terrible hardships of the campaign emerged the triumph of human spirit and sacrifice. What also emerged was a distinctly ANZAC identity – one that recognised the importance of sticking by your friends, of never giving up and of overcoming great adversity. The courage, endurance and mateship displayed by the ANZACs at Gallipoli remains a source of pride to every

Australian and New Zealander. It was there on the Gallipoli peninsula that the ANZAC legend was born – a defining moment in shaping the national identity of our two countries.

So each year we pay tribute to those Australians and New Zealanders who fought at Gallipoli. We also honour the other nations who made sacrifices during that fateful campaign – the British, Canadian, French and Indian troops. We honour too the thousands of brave young Turkish men who perished in defence of their homeland. It is remarkable, and a source of pride, that countries which discovered each other so violently have become such good friends.

But ANZAC Day reaches well beyond Gallipoli and embraces the memory of all the men and women who have served the Australian and New Zealand nations – in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

The ethos that developed in the trenches of Gallipoli has survived and inspired those who have worn the Australian and New Zealand uniforms and served with distinction in so many campaigns – in Europe, the Pacific, Africa and the Middle East, Korea, Vietnam, and in United Nations and regional deployments. ANZAC Day is a time for all Australians and New Zealanders to reflect on almost 100 years of service and sacrifice, and to honour those who are currently serving.

As we gather together at this particular site, it is worth remembering that it was here in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War, around the turn of the 20th century that Australians fought together for the first time as a Federation rather than as

separate colonies. As some of you may be aware, there is a plaque on this site which reads: “Buried here are soldiers from Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia who all fought and died in the Battle of Diamond Hill on the 11th and 12th of June 1900”. It goes on to describe the battle and the decisive role played by Australian soldiers, noting that this was the first time units from all the States of Australia had served together. The plaque concludes with the words: “Pause to remember those who died here for the ideals that they strove to uphold.”

Australians and New Zealanders have continued to serve in Africa in more recent times – in places such as Rwanda, Namibia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sierra Leone and South Sudan – to help bring peace and security. Australia is currently serving on the United Nations Security Council where much of the agenda deals with Africa. Australia and New Zealand are also helping with peacekeeping efforts in other parts of the world.

I had the honour of heading a 600-strong peacekeeping mission in the Solomon Islands from 2009-2011. I saw at first hand the commitment, dedication and teamwork of all the men and women from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region who served in the mission – whether as soldiers, police or civilian advisers - to help restore law and order and give hope to a country that less than a decade earlier had stared down the abyss of state collapse. My Deputy in the mission was a New Zealander and, as always, Australia and New Zealand worked hand in hand, including in the face of some daunting challenges.

The ANZAC spirit remains a real and powerful force. I experienced it on the ground in Solomon Islands. We have seen it time and again in the way Australians and New Zealanders have responded to horrific natural disasters – earthquakes, cyclones, floods, fires and drought. And on every occasion we have seen that friendly hand reach out across the Tasman to help someone in their hour of need.

We come together in times of crisis because we want to live the values that we hold dear to our hearts – friendship, compassion, equality, self-sacrifice, courage and loyalty. Those values, which are shared by all the countries represented here today, were inspired by the legacy of Gallipoli and countless other battles fought in the name of freedom and independence.

The servicemen and women of New Zealand and Australia continue to honour the ANZAC spirit and to do their nations proud by meeting those values every day.

So, as we gather here today at dawn, along with many thousands of others around the world, let us remember the debt we owe to those who came before us. Let us honour their sacrifice and legacy. But let us also remember the values they fought for – values we must never lose sight of as they are the key to long-term peace and prosperity.

Lest we forget.