



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

ADJOURNMENT

Anzac Day

SPEECH

Thursday, 19 March 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Thursday, 19 March 2009	Source House
Page 3422	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Robert, Stuart, MP	Question No.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (11.41 am)—I am cognisant that this may well be the last sitting day, short of sitting again tomorrow, prior to the budget of 12 May, and therefore the last sitting day before we as a nation commemorate Anzac Day, the day when so many of our finest men stormed the beaches of Gallipoli at 4 am on 25 April 1915. It is fitting that we speak about Anzac Day and commemorating it, especially in the wake of the ninth Australian warrior slain on the battlefield fighting for freedoms that we take so easily for granted.

Anzac Day, so many years ago, in many ways defined us as a nation. It defined our values; it defined who we are. It certainly portrayed us with strength and authority on the world stage. It defined us as a nation of men, women, boys and girls of courage who understand mateship and who support it—a nation that knows what it is to endure, as Dorothea Mackellar so eloquently reminds us, a land ‘of drought and flooding rains’ and indeed, as Victoria has taught us, of tempests and fires and, as the North has shown us, of dramatic floods. Anzac Day showed us that we as a nation know how to stand up and be counted. I well remember the story of Billy Hughes at the end of World War I working through the various treaties to conclude the war. When the US politely asked him how many soldiers he spoke for, he shot back that he spoke for 60,000 dead and asked the US how many dead they spoke for. Australia knows what it is to serve; we know what it is to contribute. Something like one in 10 families were impacted through the death of loved ones in World War I; so many more were injured.

As we look to the modern commemoration of Anzac Day, I encourage all Australians to take time out of busy lives to stop and reflect, to join a service, to be in a march or even to stand and wave an Australian flag—to be involved when the nation commemorates Anzac Day. I look forward to being at the dawn service with the Oxenford-Coomera RSL at the crack of dawn on the 25th. I look forward to joining the Highway Christian Church for breakfast soon afterwards, taking the salute and speaking at the march put on by the Runaway Bay RSL club, moving to a tribute and wreath laying at the Paradise Point Bowls Club and then moving to a tribute at the Riverside community, all before lunchtime.

Considering our busy schedules, I encourage us all to remember that Anzac Day is a core part of who we are, especially as we have warriors right now, men and women, fighting on foreign battlefields across the world—fighting in wars not of our choosing but fighting for freedom that we intend to stand up for and defend. Take time out on this great day, Anzac Day. Take time to remember those who have fallen, those who have served and those who currently serve. Take time to reflect on the great values that have been forged out of our service and to think of how each of us can continue to contribute to our community.