

## **RSL WA**

### **2020 ANZAC Day Commemorative Service (Pre-recorded broadcast)**

#### **Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia**

**Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

I acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation from whose traditional lands we are broadcasting and I pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Today, in the most difficult of circumstances, we have all been performing a sacred trust. All over the State our fellow citizens have been out at dawn finding something meaningful to do to indicate their gratitude to our service men and women, past and present. That sacred trust was the obligation our people undertook after World War I, that we would never forget the sacrifice and struggle of our services. Their names, and the many in subsequent battles, are before us always.

This year marks at least two big anniversaries in our table of commemoration. It is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Spanish flu epidemic which was so punishing of our men at the end of World War I, and so sapping of the society that organised recovery and reconstruction after the war. From the middle of 1918, among the AIF in France, there were 22,000 cases of whom 1,238 died. As it swept into Australia, two million Australians were afflicted – 15,000 of whom died. Tragedy in a community by then toughened and resilient from the impact of war.

It is also the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. This is where our tradition of mateship and the masculine reputation of our troops broadened and deepened into a massive demonstration of national resilience and resistance. Once again, our reputation on the battlefield – in fields near and afar – was enhanced and embellished.

In World War I we understand that survival in a post-war world of our democratic environment required the victory of Empire and allied forces. In World War II we contemplated an existential threat. And initially we contemplated it largely alone. Our service personnel had been in the field for two years when that occurred. Now we demonstrated true national resilience. We were the most mobilised society on earth and that included the fascist dictatorships and our soviet ally. Men were conscripted, single women were civilly conscripted, married women were expected to devise a contribution, our Aboriginal folk contributed massively to our northern bastion and more broadly. Not only did we fight, but we fed and supplied our allies, critical for the logistics of MacArthur's South West Pacific Command. We were in the field at the beginning and ours in Borneo was the last amphibious landing. Women at the highly skilled end of war production for equal wages. The ANZAC legend and mateship lost gender specificity and became the hallmark of our whole community and our national resilience.

Now we are challenged again as a community. As we look at our front line we see some familiar faces and uniforms. Our services are out there providing organisation, logistics, and health services. But there are additions to our front line. The men and women in all aspects of our health services

saving lives, beating off the COVID-19 pandemic. Joined by our ambulance services and emergency services bringing us rapidly to aid. They are the police supervising difficult laws and protections to stem the virus' advance. They all put their lives and health on the line as they deal day-in, day-out with the illness. They are our teachers who held and still hold responsibility along with the child care workers for our children. Though in many areas more separate now, still trying to keep their vital education system going. Then those in retail and supply who provide us with us essential goods and services. The NGOs who work on all fronts from the health sharp-end to the base of community comfort and intelligence. The further out from Perth the more vital they are.

Finally, because they get no credit, we thank the leaders of our Government, State and Federal, and their associated Parliaments. They are the decision makers and blessedly in this country reflect soberly and humbly on the excellent expert advice they are given.

We all owe the RSL for the opportunity once again to demonstrate our gratitude to our heroes new and old.

To end, I reiterate Her Majesty's words and suggest where she says Britons we add Australians;

*"I hope in the years to come everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge. And those who come after us will say the Britons of this generation were as strong as any. That the attributes of self-discipline, of quiet good humoured resolve and of fellow feeling still characterise this country. The pride in who we are is not part of our past. It defines our present and our future."*

Lest we forget.

[Click here to watch the Governor's video message to all Western Australians to mark ANZAC Day](#)