



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**MOTIONS**

**Centenary of Anzac**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 14 May 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Thursday, 14 May 2015  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Hayes, Chris, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr HAYES** (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (16:38): I join with the other members of the House in supporting this motion about a very significant time, a very poignant time in our history, as we come together to acknowledge what occurred 100 years ago and to have some regard of how the reflection of that has played into who we are today and shaped our view as to where we go for the future.

Like all members of this place, I joined with hundreds of thousands of people across Australian in attending various Anzac Day commemorations to honour those who have served this country. I attended commemoration functions at the Cabra-Vale Diggers Club, the Canley Heights RSL, the Mounties club in Mount Pritchard and the Triglav club. On each of these occasions, many of these people—who, in my community, have come from all over the world, it being the most multicultural community in the country—came together to look at what occurred, not to celebrate war but to commemorate the efforts that were made on our behalf to achieve peace.

You know the scene well. We saw a sea of wreaths that were laid as Australia paused to remember those who served our country and to honour those who did make the ultimate sacrifice in the protection of our nation. Their extraordinary efforts, their courage and their endurance have been displayed by our service men and women throughout the history of this country. But this particular Anzac Day we focused on the centenary of the landing on Gallipoli. Much flows from that in terms of the great Australian story that we often refer to as the Anzac spirit.

Although 100 years have passed, the events of the First World War and particularly the efforts of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps—the Anzacs—have helped forge our identity and have certainly helped to define us in respect of our national character. In the spirit of the Anzac and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of landing at Gallipoli, the Commonwealth government chose to make grants available for communities to help them not only to honour but also to reflect on these events. In my community they decided they did not need another monument and they did not need a commemorative plaque. What they wanted was to do something in relation to young people. We chose to use the entirety of the Commonwealth grant to engage with both primary and secondary schools across my electorate. They came together to work for over 12 months on an exhibition—artworks, literature, film and artistic performances—to depict their unique understanding of this important chapter in Australia's history. This project was initiated in 2013 by empowering my local Anzac Centenary committee, comprising representatives of local clubs, schools and ex-servicemen's associations. They worked tirelessly over that 18-month period to plan and coordinate this project with the schools community, with teachers and students alike, and also engaged pretty fully with local members of our community.

This project was an opportunity for young Australians to learn more about the significance of this time in our history and to appreciate the freedom that we enjoy today, that being the legacy of those that have sacrificed much on our behalf. Thirty schools in my electorate participated, with more than 20,000 students coming together to participate in this project to design the creative works that built the knowledge and understanding of their contribution to those who fought for peace.

The poignant theme of this centenary program adopted in my electorate was 'not taking peace for granted' and, in doing so, honouring our Anzac tradition. The schools ran their own competitions in the areas of visual arts, performing arts, print and multimedia, and the winning works were showcased last month at Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. There was a very big reception with a couple of thousand people. The work was extraordinary. It depicted the visions not simply of war but also of the achievements that occurred as a consequence of Australia being prepared to stand up and fight for peace. It was very interesting seeing this reflected through the eyes of young people—young people from very multicultural communities. One thing that flowed from it was that they all saw themselves as Australian and they all saw themselves as imbued with the Anzac spirit.

I would like to congratulate all those who were involved in this project, as it has allowed many in my local community to imagine the events as they unfolded in Gallipoli a century ago. The young people worked tirelessly to bring this Anzac Centenary project together, but it would not have occurred without the extraordinary effort

of the Anzac Centenary committee. I will take a moment to acknowledge the members of the committee. Beth Goodwin, who is the Principal of Cabramatta High School, played an integral role in coordinating the project, as did Michael Foulkes and Megan Orahem from Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. Others include George Taylor, Jim Thompson and John Dillon, who are all board members of the Cabra-Vale Diggers Club; Barry Brooks from the Fairfield RSL sub-branch; John Baron from the City of Liverpool RSL; Reg Bonney from the National Servicemen's Association; Taffy Pritchard from Canley Heights RSL; Bill Lottey from St Johns Park Bowling Club; and Geoff Lewsam, chair of the committee and also a director of the St Johns Park Bowling Club. They all gave very freely of their time over 18 months to plan, coordinate and deliver this project.

The successful coordination and planning of the project would also not have occurred without the most diligent work of a young staff member of mine, Renata Cekic, who has dedicated an enormous amount of time and effort to the committee. Renata is a young woman who was a refugee out of the Bosnian conflict. She came to this country, completed her education here and now is doing extraordinary work in our local community.

I also thank the local students in my electorate who, through their artistic endeavours, also played a vital role in making sure the Anzac Centenary was honoured in a most fitting way. I thank all of them for their contributions.

History teaches us great lessons, not just about the past but also about ourselves and our place in the world. It is important that we ensure the Anzac legacy continues to be handed down through the generations in order to preserve the Anzac tradition and to allow us to appreciate how it has influenced modern Australia.

The Anzac Centenary project in my electorate has definitely ignited a passion in many to learn more, and it has engendered a renewed respect for those to whom we owe so much.