



Speech by

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Hansard Wednesday, 10 May 2006

ANZAC DAY

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.09 pm): Anzac Day commemoration services to mark the 91st anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli and commemorating those who have served our nation in times of war and conflict since, attracted very large crowds in Surfers Paradise. Both the dawn parade and service on the beachfront and the civic service at 12.30 in Cavill Park attracted big crowds. Amongst the large crowds was a high proportion of children. Such a healthy turnout, which included so many Gold Coast youth, shows us all that the significance of the Anzac story is not being lost on young Queenslanders.

Those present at the dawn service were addressed by the Reverend Geoff Smith. His poignant address asked the question: what is it about Anzac that speaks so strongly to us, despite the fact that we are living in an increasingly individualistic and selfish society? The reverend suggested that maybe it is because the spirit of Anzac is opposite to much of the spirit of our age. Maybe deep down Anzac awakens in us an awareness, perhaps a longing for something different. Instead of selfishness, Anzac speaks of selflessness. Instead of striving for our own profit above everything else, Anzac speaks of walking away from a job and career in order to serve something bigger and more important.

Instead of focusing on the individual, Anzac speaks of working together. Instead of our isolated and protected existence behind high fences, in gated estates and tall apartment buildings, Anzac speaks of deep relationships and a strong sense of camaraderie and community. Reverend Smith went on to say that the Anzac spirit of sacrifice, of camaraderie, of putting others before ourselves is deep down what we know is missing in our society right now, and so we yearn for it and see it and celebrate it in Anzac. I cannot help wondering whether, as well as remembering those Australians who have served this country, we would better honour those who gave their lives if we recognised what our society is so badly missing and tried by our actions to make Anzac about not just 25 April but every day of the year. That spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of others, the spirit of working together for the good of the community, the spirit of striving together is what ultimately is really important and truly lasts.

I always feel a strong sense of pride in my country when I attend Anzac Day commemorations. These words from the Reverend Smith stirred those emotions even further. I commend the entire committee of the Surfers Paradise RSL including president Arch MacDonald, Edward Caraghan and Ted Turner. I was privileged to lay wreaths at the dawn and civic services in Surfers Paradise. The organising bodies, including the RSL, should be very proud of the smooth running and solemnity of the services.

I would also like to extend these sentiments to the Australian American Association, Gold Coast division for the commemoration service it conducted on 6 May for the 64th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. The event was held in Cavill Memorial Park. The Battle of the Coral Sea involved a combined Australian and American air and naval force that joined battle with the Japanese, who were trying to mount an invasion were they successful in taking Port Moresby. Hundreds of coalition troops lost their lives in the four-day battle. It is unusual that the opposing ships never made contact. The battle was conducted from the air.