

ANZAC DAY – City of Canning service on Thursday 25 April 2019

Speech delivered by Oscar McDonald (Year 12) and Emma Pickering (Year 8)

Oscar McDonald

What does ANZAC day mean to our generation? One of the first words that comes to mind is remembrance. But it's difficult to remember something we have never experienced. We could never comprehend what it would be like to, at our age, be willing to leave behind life as we know it and put it all on the line for your friends, family, country – for the faces that you may never meet, three generations down the line, who stand here together to honour the sacrifices that you made. Who stand here to remember... remember the people who committed their lives to our nation. I would be a liar if I told you that I understand what it would have been like... but it is the work of the RSL and the national community on ANZAC day that shines a light on the service of those who have given our nation so much – so that we may grow in understanding and comprehension of the reality of what it means to have served – so that we can continue to remember. The further away that something is in the past, the darker in our minds it becomes. We need to be guided back to those times, so that we can remember the truth about our history – remember how fortunate we are that others made the sacrifice to protect our nation. ANZAC day is that light.

Emma Pickering

Once, my Pop told me that when my Great-Great Grandfather was dying, he asked my Great Grandmother if God would let him into heaven because he killed so many people in the war. He sacrificed his clean conscience to help defend our country, Australia. So many other young men sacrificed more than just this. They sacrificed their lives to us, their spirit to us and went off to war. We don't celebrate fighting, we commemorate the sacrifice of those who fought and those who died. When my teacher asked me why I go to an ANZAC service each year, I honestly didn't have an answer. So, I went and asked my Dad why he takes us each year. He said that he takes me to make sure that their sacrifice is not forgotten and we remember all that they've done for us. I thought about it and came to the conclusion that this is a prime reason for a lot of people.

My generation has never had to think about sacrifices as major as leaving behind your life to go to war because we live in such a privileged life where everything has been premade comfortable and nice. Teenagers these days sit in

comfortable chairs watching screens and don't have to worry about giving their nice things up. The ANZACs who fought for Australia and New Zealand are one of the biggest reasons that life is this way. I've heard stories about young men not much older than me who lied about their ages so that they could go off to war because it was seen as an honour to go to war back then. In the end, ANZAC Day means something different to all of us. Whether it's a personal story, someone you know that you're honouring or even if you have no direct connection to it, ANZAC Day universally is remembrance. Remembrance for the lives, sacrifices, love and adventure of the Australian and New Zealander soldiers.

Oscar McDonald

Legacies only die when people forget them, but considering how powerful ANZAC day remains to our country, our generation included – I don't see that happening anytime soon. As a generation, the significance of ANZAC day remains strong in our minds, and I am sure that we will continue to preserve this legacy through remembrance and reflection, for many more generations to come. To remember this part of our history is incredibly important – and it would be safe to assume that our country as we know it would not exist without the past and ongoing dedication of our service men and women. For many, their sacrifice is immeasurable, and often for our generation, incomprehensible. However, as some may start to turn away from this tradition of remembrance and reflection – we must guide them back, to lead by example and keep the spirit of the ANZACs alive in our hearts – so that they may, amongst each and every one of us, live on for ever.