

Kristy O'Brien
Winner for Queensland
St Saviour's College

SPEECH

On the 25th of April a new breed of Australia was born, a new side of character revealed, he became known as the Anzac. It was stated 'men passed among Australians for what good they found in themselves'. There is no doubt that the Anzac possessed many desirable elements in his character he was brave, resourceful, egalitarian and had no mortgage on courage. He presented such physique, enterprise, and courage he was held head and shoulders above any other force. They may have been outnumbered, they may have been scared, but they still held together and did our nation proud, setting a standard in which we can only aspire to live up to. We are allowed through the Anzacs the chance for shared contemplation of extraordinary courage remaining even today as values that matter exceptionally to us. We have gained a legend stores of bravery and sacrifice and with it a deeper faith in our abilities, our democracy and an understanding of what it means to be Australian. As descendants, the future generation or even just as Australians we owe every soldier that has ever fought for Australia, the justice and duty to remember their extremely courageous and diligent efforts. The only decent remembrance and just way to pay tribute to such extraordinary battles, is to make what they fought for worthwhile. They sacrificed all for us to be free today, and we need to ensure that we appreciated this and live our lives in the manner in which they did, encompassing the values and elements that they considered important and would wish to remain in today's society. If everybody encompassed the Anzac spirit that has become synonymous as being Australian spirit, we will ensure that they're memory isn't lost, they're efforts not

forgotten and they're sacrifice worthwhile. After undertaking research and speaking to many people directly affected by the Anzac spirit I have come to the conclusion that we do in fact showcase many of the elements of the Anzac spirit. Overall as a nation we showcase elements in times of great triumph celebrating as an Anzac would, in times of turmoil surviving and still looking at the bright side. When needed by others we act as the true mate sacrificing ourselves for them, and never giving up despite the odds held against us. An interesting quote by a soldier at the time states how closely related the 'Digger' image was with merely being an Australian. 'He learns half of the arts of being a soldier by the time he is ten years old, to sleep comfortably in any shelter, to cook meat, or bake flour, to catch a horse, to find his way across country day or night, to ride or at the worst to 'stick on'. Fires, floods and even the concentration on sheep for shearing, or the long journeys in droving bullocks down the great stock routes across 'back Country', offering many conditions similar to those of military expedition. The Australian was half the soldier before the war, indeed throughout the war, and in the hottest fights in Gallipoli and in the bitterest trials of France or Palestine, the Australian soldier differed very little from the Australian who at home rides the station boundaries every week-day and sits of a Sunday round the stockyard fence'. This close comparison of Australian life, today and indeed in the past with the Anzac, is an example of how we don't need to be upon the battle field to live out the daily elements and values found in the Anzac spirit. These elements of immense admiration are in fact born here, and can continue to prosper here, making us worthwhile people and a testament to those soldiers that fought in every war for us. In saying this, we have prospered greatly as a nation, and suffered to, but really all that has changed from the Anzac days is that we've simply renamed the Anzac spirit

as Australian spirit. We have the same extent of challenges except in different forms, the same hardships and still face the harsh Australian terrain and living, and remain true to this character. Perhaps even a more obvious point is that we still indeed are committed to many wars today, though in less glorified ways, but certainly still have the potential to and have showcased these elements of the spirit that we hold so dear. When the opportunity is presented it is not often that an Aussie fails their duty of rising to the challenge and doing their nation and selves proud. The following excerpt from a speech by John Howard, though in reference to Bali Bombings summarizes examples of how elements of the spirit are held strong through turbulent times. ‘ Amid all the ruins, Anzac spirit which epitomizes Australian spirit remained strong, people giving blood, volunteering their services, running back in to save lives, friends not giving up until they’ve found their mates, unbelievable strength.’ We do not necessarily need terror or turmoil however to use the elements of the Anzac spirit, with such a confused and often corrupt world, it is reassuring to know that our nation’s character is often affiliated as being a strong, forever loyal, brave, resourceful and having an indescribable assiduous and earnest nature. We should never doubt our nation or its ability to hold highly these essential characteristics. As our faith in our nation and personality traits are what have all allowed us to get through troubled times and forever will pull us through, despite how doubtful chances may appear. As a nation we have endured great feats, yet come out smiling in the typical Anzac way. We’ve seen the spirit and indeed the elements of the spirit showcased throughout all decades. The Anzac spirit was forged on the shores of Gallipoli, flourished in the fields of Flanders, flaunted in Tobruk and put to the test in Vietnam. Though some wars surrounded with controversy like Vietnam, which was

typically a shunned war, elements of the spirit were certainly present. undeniable factor forgetting for a moment the political circumstances. There were many examples of heroism Victoria Cross recipients John Bacode, Keith Payne, Stewart Simpson, to name a few. There always has been in all of ours wars the molding of mate-ship, bravery, initiative, compliance and perhaps the strongest element in Vietnam the ability to forgive. These elements don't necessarily have to be expressed on the battlefield though, everywhere we are go there are examples of the present Anzac elements. In our friendships, schools, our sporting groups, and our achievements everywhere we posses elements of the Anzac spirit, yet may not even realize it. It burns brightly in everyone of our spirits and hearts and makes us relish in the fact that we are apart of great breed. We share this special bond with New Zealand and still this close friendship that was forged remains even today. Though we remain competitive in a very Australian way we will always hold dear that closeness. We cannot forget and never will fresh in our memories is the sacrifice and the trauma but along side is the good. The wonderful pride that we have now obtained, and the Anzac character, that we have encompassed as being now proclaiming it Australian spirit. We can feel the patriotic, proud rush of being apart of such a great and triumphant race. There are to many values that the Anzac's lived out and We cannot to fully achieve what they did but meanwhile we can certainly try. They will forever be in our eyes the epitome of a hero. Industrious, dedicated, compassionate, daring and unseeingly fearless. We may not be able to them entirely but the fact that we can try and pay tribute to them in our everyday living is certainly a challenge. Lets endeavor to do the soldiers resting on foreign ground of whom we may never know the

only thing suiting and that is to make them proud of the people today, for those that fought so many years ago.