

Mr John Bradshaw; Mr Bill McNee; Mr Mark McGowan; Acting Speaker; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Bob Kucera;
Mr Paul Andrews; Mr John D'Orazio; Mr Jeremy Edwards

ANZAC DAY AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Second Reading

Resumed from 6 May.

MR J.L. BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [11.11 am]: I rise to support this legislation and to talk about the Anzac Day commemoration event held each year in Australia. It is probably the most important event in Australia, bearing in mind what occurred when those soldiers and navy personnel - I am not sure whether Australia had an air force in 1916, I guess there was some semblance of one - went overseas to fight for democracy. It was probably the coming together of Australia as a nation for the first time, even though the Commonwealth was established in 1901. The event that really brought Australia together as a nation was sending Australians off to fight in the First World War. It was a fairly atrocious event that was probably badly managed, considering the number of people who were killed and the way in which troops were sent ashore at Anzac Cove. However, it is something of which we are proud in the sense that those brave men and women went out there and fought.

In the past few years the Anzac Day service has certainly gained huge attendances. It is amazing how many people go to the dawn service at Kings Parks. I have never been because I attend the dawn services in my electorate, but something like 30 000 now go to the Anzac Day dawn service, which is many more than the numbers attending 10 or 20 years ago. This year I attended the Brunswick Junction and Harvey services. The numbers in attendance there were quite outstanding, and the services were held with much pomp and ceremony and were well handled.

The interesting thing that occurred this year was the refurbishment of the war memorials in Brunswick and Binningup. Again, that highlights the interest being shown in remembering and commemorating the events in which we took part many years ago. I pay tribute to the people at Binningup who were involved with the refurbishment of that war memorial. Jack O'Connor, who was a Yarloop resident and now lives at Binningup, was the instigator of the project. A heap of other people were brought in, for instance, Ray Rowley - a retired bricklayer - Jim Hills and Jim Buist. They got together, collected the various materials required and worked on the memorial in a voluntary capacity. A little ceremony was held there a few weeks after Anzac Day. However, it was a great ceremony in which I was happy to participate.

Similarly, at Brunswick, volunteers got the stone and the various materials required to upgrade that war memorial, and it is now something of which the people from the Brunswick area can be proud. At the Brunswick ceremony I was also fortunate enough to present the photo and commentary on an ex-member of Parliament from that area, Edward Holman, who had been the member for Forrest from 1939-47. I was not aware that we had a state seat of Forrest until I was asked to present the photo to one of the Returned and Services League groups in my electorate. I made some inquiries and found that the seat of Forrest ran along the hills from Jarrahdale to Donnybrook. It did not take in places like Pinjarra, Waroona and Harvey but it did take in Brunswick and Donnybrook. Back in the 1940s and 1950s, all the timber mill towns were based in the hills, at places such as Dwellingup and Jarrahdale. Communities existed in those areas and, therefore, a bigger population, which has now diminished to a large extent because the timber mills have disappeared. At that ceremony I presented the photo with wording on it about Edward Holman who was, in fact, May Holman's brother. It was interesting to note that that seat had also been held by May and Edward Holman's father, John. On the retirement of John Holman, May Holman took over. Unfortunately, after one election she was killed in a car accident near Waterloo, and her brother then took over as the member for Forrest. It was an interesting scenario that I certainly was not aware of until I was given this photo to present at the ceremony at Brunswick.

I am concerned about another issue raised in the second reading speech, which I do not have in front of me because I have lent it to someone else. In his speech, the Premier talked about the proposal of government to make it compulsory for schools to participate in Anzac Day services. I was invited by two of the schools in my electorate this year, the Brunswick Junction Primary School and the Harvey Primary School, to be the speaker at their Anzac Day services. Many of the schools are already running Anzac Day services. However, our troops fought for freedom, so it is anathema to make it compulsory in the legislation for schools or anybody to do anything in Australia.

Mr M. McGowan: It is not in the legislation.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I did not say it is in the legislation. I said it is in the Government's proposed agenda. If the member reads the second reading speech, he will see that it says something to that effect. I do not have the speech in front of me, but it says that the government agenda is to make it compulsory for schools.

Mr M. McGowan: We have brought it in.

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Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: How?

Mr M. McGowan: We have issued a directive to state schools. The directive was sent from the Director General of the Department of Education and Training and from the Premier to state schools.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: When was that?

Mr M. McGowan: A few months ago.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: For this year or for future years?

Mr M. McGowan: For this year and onwards.

Mr J.L. BRADSHAW: I think it is a bit sad to do that. In that sense, I do not support it. If the directive has gone out, then it has gone out. However, I found that schools were taking part in Anzac Day services. Brunswick Junction Primary School and Harvey Primary School have conducted Anzac Day services for a long time. Obviously, I do not get invited to all of them so I am not quite sure what the other schools do. I am sure it happens in most schools. It also depends to a large extent on the will of the principal of a school whether Anzac Day services take place. If the will is not there, it will be a second-rate affair. Just because a person is directed to do something does not mean that it will be carried out with great pomp and ceremony and will receive the attention it deserves. If things are made compulsory, it does not necessarily make them good. It can have the opposite effect of what Anzac Day is supposed to be about, which is to remember why people left Australia to fight in the world wars. If it is not done with the right feelings and motivation, and if people are forced to hold them, I wonder whether the ceremonies will be worthwhile. I do not support what the Government has done. I was not aware that a directive had gone to all schools. I think it is a sad state of affairs. With those few words, I support the legislation.

MR W.J. McNEE (Moore) [11.21 am]: I take pleasure in supporting the proposals contained in this Bill. The Bill is a credit to the Government.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: Although I very much enjoy the speeches of the member for Moore, I believe he has spoken already on this Bill in the second reading debate. I remember that because he made a very good speech about his memories of men going to war in 1939 when he was a young man. I do not wish to deny him a second chance to speak but I believe the standing orders need to be enforced.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.A. Radisich): They will be enforced. I am sorry for the member for Moore, but we must move on.

Debate Resumed

MR A.D. MARSHALL (Dawesville) [11.22 am]: In speaking to the Anzac Day Amendment Bill 2004 and the proposed changes that I wholeheartedly agree with, I thought it important that I record in *Hansard* a little of the history. Although most members know the history, we are aware that *Hansard* goes to schools in Western Australia and someone may one day wish to research Anzac Day. Anzac Day, 25 April, is probably Australia's most important national occasion. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. Anzac stands for Australian and New Zealand army corps. The soldiers in those forces quickly became known as Anzacs. The pride they soon took in that name endures to this day. It sometimes makes people wonder why the day is so special to Australians. Research shows that when war broke out in 1914, Australia had been a Commonwealth for only 14 years. The new national Government was eager to establish its reputation among the nations of the world. In 1915 Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the allied expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli Peninsula in order to open the way to the Black Sea for the allied navies. The plan was to capture Constantinople, now known as Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, which was an ally of Germany. The forces landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, and met fierce resistance from the Turkish defenders. What had been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate. The campaign dragged on for eight months. At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated after both sides had suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. More than 8 000 Australian soldiers were killed. News of the landings at Gallipoli made a profound impact on Australians at home, and 25 April quickly became the day on which Australians remember the sacrifice of those who died in war. The idea that some form of blood sacrifice was a necessary rite of passage or initiation ceremony for the birth of a nation was common in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. In attempting the daunting task of storming the Gallipoli Peninsula, the Anzacs took part in an event that it was felt would help shape the new Australia.

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The date of 25 April was officially named Anzac Day in 1916. On that day it was marked by a wide variety of ceremonies and services in Australia. A march by more than 2 000 Australian and New Zealand troops took place through London, and a sports day was held in the Australian camp in Egypt. A London newspaper dubbed the Anzacs "The Knights of Gallipoli". Marches were held across Australia in 1916. Wounded soldiers from Gallipoli attended the march in Sydney in convoys of cars, and were attended by nurses. For the remaining years of the war Anzac Day was used as an occasion for patriotic rallies and recruiting campaigns. Parades of serving members of the Australian Imperial Forces were held in most cities. During the 1920s Anzac Day became established as a national day of commemoration of the 60 000 Australians who died during the First World War. The first year in which all the States observed some of the public holidays together was 1927. By the mid 1930s all the rituals we now associate with the day, such as the dawn vigils, marches, memorial services, reunions and sly two-up games were firmly established as part of the Anzac Day culture. With the coming of the Second World War, Anzac Day became the day on which to commemorate the lives of Australians lost in that war as well. In subsequent years the meaning of the day has become further broadened to include Australians killed in other military operations. Anzac Day was first commemorated at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in 1942. Due to government orders preventing large groups of people gathering in case of a Japanese air attack, it was a small affair and was neither a march nor a memorial service. Anzac Day has been commemorated annually at the Australian War Memorial ever since.

What does this all mean to us today? Australians recognise 25 April as an occasion of national commemoration. Commemorative services across the nation are held at dawn, the time of the original landing. Later in the day ex-service men and women meet and join in marches through the major cities and many smaller centres. Commemorative ceremonies are held at war memorials across the country. It is a day on which Australians reflect on the many different meanings of war. I am pleased to say that Anzac Day is continuing to broaden, as younger people remember why people fought to give us this nation, which we feel to be free. I visited the war memorial in Canberra for the first time only six months ago. I was moved. People forget how many people did not return after fighting for their country. I wish to reflect on something. When I was asked to speak on this Bill I thought of what, as an elder statesman, I could tell younger people of what happened during the war. The member for Rockingham has served as an officer in the Royal Australian Navy. He has probably heard stories from older colleagues. I think I must have been about 10 years of age when a neighbour, Ian West, who lived across the road, was about 20 years old. Before he left Australia he gave me his air force wings. The street held a party for him; it was marvellous. As I grew older, we moved house. At 19, which was close to the age he was when he left Australia, I travelled overseas. However, he never came back; as a Lancaster pilot, he was lost in service and his plane disappeared. Mrs West was very upset. I remember going to Runnymede and taking a colour slide of his grave. I thought nothing more about it, until my mother wrote and said Mrs West was moved. This does not seem to mean anything to young people, but when I got older, I went to the War Memorial in Canberra and looked at all the names. Under "W" I found the name Ian West, the guy who used to kick the football across the fence to us when we were little kids. I wondered about him, and I wondered about the wings. In shifting, my little box of treasures disappeared. It had a lock and contained stamps I had inherited from my uncle and the Japanese occupation money the soldiers would give us at the wharf when they returned from the war. The Japanese had printed this money for when they took over Australia. It was of no value, but it was money, and as kids we used to go and meet the troops and they would give us this money. They were so pleased to see young Australians that they would give us this money, and we thought it was Christmas. However, all these things, and the wings, are gone, and I regret it. I really miss those things. Those are the kinds of things of which everyone has a memory. Somewhere along the way, war touches us.

The Anzac service is important, and this legislation is important because life does not stay the same; everything changes. That is why we are here as legislators. What we thought was marvellous legislation 15 years ago is being revised right now. This is an important piece of legislation, and the guts of it is contained in the final paragraph of the second reading speech, which reads -

The Bill also makes a number of other changes to the Anzac Day Act to correct the use of the word "Anzac" to the acronym "ANZAC" and consequentially amends a number of other Acts to make this correction. The Bill also transfers management of this Act from the Treasurer to the Premier's portfolio. It also makes some consequential amendments following the changes made last year to remove the legislative prohibition on race meetings being held on Anzac Day if it falls on a Sunday.

That is the generalisation of the changes. People pay their respects by going to services, flying a flag at half-mast and things like that. However, the race meeting, which is an important part of the Australian way of life, can now take place in the afternoon.

This year in Mandurah, the Peel Thunder Football Club past players held a huge garage sale. They had been putting it together for 12 months. Not thinking about what commemorative dates might occur, they set the date

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for the sale on 25 April, at the Mandurah Forum in the morning, when the Anzac service was to take place. People come from everywhere to Mandurah for the commemorative services. It makes me proud of the people. The club rang me and asked what to do. I said I did not actually know the laws, but I would not do it. I told them to put it off until two or three o'clock in the afternoon. Everyone would understand if it was cancelled. Those are the kinds of things that have to be absorbed around Anzac Day. In the old days, everything was cancelled. There was no sport and no race meetings. In country areas, the two-up game comes out, and people go back to the days when they belonged as true Australians, when people fought for us to be young and free, and to have a bit of a dash. They would break the law a little bit; challenge the law, rather than break it. Get the two pennies out and away we go! That can still happen now, under this legislation.

I am pleased that attendances at all our Anzac parades are growing, in particular at Mandurah, where we are experiencing record crowds. I am proud to see the servicemen and women with their medals. I know that there are people in this House who hold medals. The Minister for Tourism has a military medal for service to the police, and on special commemorative days, Orders of Australia are given out. People get their medals and wear them. I for one have never liked to wear a medal. I feel I might be showing off, or something like that. However, that is immaturity. As we get older, we look back and realise that those medals were not given out lightly; they were given out of respect for what people had done. Medals for fighting for a country are earned. I look with great pride on - if I may use the term - all the old-timers lining up with their medals. I line up with them, along with the member for Mandurah and the mayor of Mandurah, as so-called leaders of the community, and I am envious. When I first got into politics in 1993, I was invited to a meeting of Pinjarra branch of the Returned and Service League. I giggled to myself, because they were living in the early 1940s. All through the meeting there was the sound of beer cans being flipped open. They would drink through the meetings, and they were all smoking. In those days, smoking was a way of taking the tension off, and everyone smoked, as can be seen from all the old films. The RSL members were all smoking and I was thinking that this meeting resembled a den of iniquity. The next thing, I was asked to join the branch. I said that I was not entitled to join. I was too young for the Second World War, and too old for Korea and Vietnam. One man asked if I had done national service, and when I said I had, he asked my number and said I could join. I paid my \$15, and - this is another example of how people mature - said I would support the branch, but I could never wear the badge, nor march with the branch, because I had not earned it. The members of the branch had earned that privilege. I still do not wear the badge. I do not deserve to belong to the Returned and Service League, having never served.

National service was important to the youth of that era. It turned kids into men, and were we ready to go and fight for our nation! I was a marksman, and as soon as a man became a marksman, he got 10 pounds a year, but he went to war as soon as one broke out. My mother would not sign the paper, and I was lousy on her for that. I wanted to go to war. As I got older, however, I realised that people get killed in wars. When I was young, it was a challenge and a dare, and I thought nothing could happen to me, but as I got older I realised that sometimes things can happen to even the luckiest people, and they do not come back. My mother was right; she had the experience. I was raring to go, but I missed it. As an athlete, when I thought I would do something historic, I always regretted that, but I joined the RSL, and I am proud to march with the RSL, and of all the personnel who are there with their medals. It is an important day for all of us to remember.

In closing, I say that Anzac Day is something special. This morning I met with my grandchildren. At 7.15 am I kicked a football with one of them in the rain and the puddles. At 7.45 I went up to the other two and read books to them. When I thought about this piece of legislation, it went through my mind how lucky we are in Australia that we have all those young people who fought at Gallipoli. The movies about that first fight show the young people coming from all the back blocks of Australia on horseback. That was the dare. Nothing would happen to them, but they would fight for Australia, to keep us free. Every war has been in that vein. In closing, I say that we must not forget Anzac Day, and I fully support the fact that we can slightly amend the legislation so that Anzac Day is observed with great sincerity and that for the rest of the afternoon people can go to the races and be larrikins or daredevils on a day of celebration, like the troops of those days.

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Tourism) [11.39 am]: I will take only a few moments. I was not born an Australian, but it is clear that this is my adopted country that I love dearly. I will quote the words of another migrant -

Then in 1915 my country said: Son,
It's time to stop rambling, there's work to be done
So they gave me a tin hat and they gave me a gun
And they sent me away to the war

Those are the words of songwriter Eric Bogle, who grew up in Scotland at the other end of the Celtic world from the one I knew as a child when I grew up in Wales. It is amazing how that magnificent group of men we call the

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Anzacs touched the entire world in 1915 when they went off for that great adventure. One of the most moving times of my life was when I stood in the dark on Mt Clarence in Albany a few years ago, wearing the medals that the member for Dawesville talked about so proudly, and saw the sun coming up. I realised that, for many of those young men who left for the First World War from Albany, it was their last sight of Australia before they sailed off on that great adventure. I will bring things forward a number of years to the 1940s when my mother Nora was stationed with the Australian 10 Squadron at Pembroke Dock in Wales. She grew to know well many of the proud Australians with whom she fought and who flew from that base. In fact, one of them almost would have been responsible for me had he not been killed when his catalina was shot down over the Bristol Channel; my mother was engaged to this Australian man at the time. She subsequently met my father at that same squadron, who was also fighting with the Australians. This is how the fingers of Anzac go out across the world and touch everybody.

The experience of fighting with Australians firmly fixed in the minds of many people why Australia is such a tremendous country. I was fortunate to be brought here as a teenager. Like Eric Bogle, the person who wrote the song *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* from which I quoted, I have grown to realise how important the Anzac tradition is to us. That is why I am so determined to support this legislation, which I think we all support. At the end of the day, we must enshrine the memory of the people who went off on that great adventure.

My mother and father fought in the Second World War. I suppose one could say I was a result of the war, as a baby boomer. I was supposed to go into the first call for Vietnam and my marble was supposed to come out. However, it did not, because I was just outside the age group. The first group was called in the January, just after I had turned 20. Many of my friends did go. Again, I see how proudly they march, not to celebrate war - we never celebrate war - but to remember those young people who gave so much.

I do not think I have missed a dawn service since I first came to Australia. My parents marched in their first Anzac parade when we came to Australia as migrants when I was a teenager. I do not think I missed the dawn service that I had always attended until I got into Parliament. Since then I have been to the dawn service at either Nollamara or Osborne Park and march proudly with those people. I take part in the gunfire breakfast at Osborne Park with Fred Birnie, Ted O'Sullivan and people like them. Fred Birnie was a prisoner of war in Europe during the Second World War. He proudly cooks the sausages on Anzac Day morning and then goes into town and marches with his mates in the parade. I go from Osborne Park to the Mt Lawley parade and from there to the Mr Hawthorn parade, which started only three years ago through the efforts of a previous member of Parliament, the Mayor of Vincent, Nick Catania. They have a fine memorial service.

The thing that brings Anzac Day home to me is when I go to the last ceremony that is performed in Australia; that is, the lowering of the flag at the Anzac Cottage in Mt Hawthorn. That joins both ends of the spectrum. That was the first war memorial to be put up in Australia. It was built in a day in 1917 for one of the members of the 11th Battalion who was badly injured in the Gallipoli landings. When he was brought back to Australia, the people of Mt Hawthorn wanted to do something very special for him. They built a cottage for him, where his family grew up over the years. The cottage fell into disrepair a couple of years ago. Through the efforts of the WA branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, led by New Zealander Peter Ramsay, the cottage was renovated and brought back to its original glory, again, not to celebrate war but to make sure that the memory of the people who fought is enshrined. That is the most touching part of the day for me and I never miss it. As the flag goes down, one realises that the people who went on the great adventure in 1915 and my mates who fought in Vietnam are joined by the common bond of being people who treasure the very thing we are able to do here today; that is, to discuss in freedom the democracy for which Australia stands.

This legislation enshrines the memory of all those people - from the people who went on the great adventure to those who are proudly representing this country at the moment in other parts of the world, whether it be Iraq, East Timor or simply as an Australian representing democracy. That is the important part about this. So many young men went to war so that we could do as we are doing today, which essentially is to practice the principles of democracy and freedom for which so many of them died. I commend this legislation to the House.

MR P.W. ANDREWS (Southern River) [11.45 am]: One of the great privileges of being a member of Parliament is to represent one's community on Anzac Day at the dawn service. I attend the dawn service at the invitation of the Gosnells RSL. Standing at the service near the river, usually in the bitter cold, puts things into perspective. What goes through my mind on Anzac Day, among many other things, is that little comparison can be made between the problems we have in our day-to-day lives and the sacrifices made by the men and women who have served Australia during wartime.

One of the reasons we celebrate Anzac Day is to commemorate our service people, but it is also to remind us where we came from as a nation. The cliché that Australian nationalism was forged out of World War I has become an accepted part of history. The reality is that there was a strong sense of nationalism in Australia in the

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1880s and 1890s. However, it was during World War I that many people from around Australia met people from other States; it was indeed the prime time for our nation. That is one of the reasons I find it very difficult to accept that 26 January is Australia's national day. For me, that day has never really been our national day. In my heart, Anzac Day is our national day. The date of 26 January represents something that happened in the eastern States, whereas Anzac Day encompasses the history of the whole nation. Even though we celebrate Australia Day on 26 January, for me Anzac Day is our national day and probably always will be.

Back in the 1970s when the Whitlam Government embarked on a policy of multiculturalism, one of the stark criticisms made of that policy by the RSL was that Anzac Day would be lost in the future because the many people who were coming to Australia from overseas would not appreciate it. The RSL said that those people would have different backgrounds and would not have a relationship with Anzac Day, and it would therefore disappear from the public's consciousness. The reality is that the opposite has happened. The crowds are so large at Kings Park that it is very hard to get close to the memorial. That is why the suburban ceremonies are becoming stronger. The crowds at the Anzac Day ceremonies are made up of people from all sorts of ethnic groups. There are a number of reasons for that. One is that, over generations, people from different cultures and backgrounds have married, intermarried and so on. If we were to take a soldier from World War I - an Anzac - and trace his family history, we might find among his 200 or so descendants many who also had multicultural backgrounds. In fact, multiculturalism has strengthened the Anzac conscience. The schools in my electorate do a fantastic job commemorating Anzac Day. Their ceremonies are very well rehearsed. The kids really get into the spirit of Anzac Day, and it is done in the right way with what we used to call pomp and circumstance, but with very genuine feeling. One of the schools in my electorate, Ranford Primary School, has an excellent principal by the name of Bronwyn Tester and excellent staff. It is a great school. Each year it runs a very good Anzac Day service, but unfortunately because of other commitments I did not get there last Anzac Day. Many newly developing suburbs - Mandurah is a classic example, or my seat or that of the member for Wanneroo - do not have war memorials, because memorials tend to be located where people enlisted or signed up. This is a very important point. For example, I was at Kirup at one time, a very small town with not too many people, and it has a war memorial from the First World War with far too many names on it. In the sprawling suburbs of the metropolitan area there are no war memorials, because obviously they are new suburbs. It is an excellent idea that part of the budget for the building of schools in these new suburbs should include the allocation of funds for perhaps building a commemorative garden - not necessarily a war memorial - that could be used for Anzac Day services, for example. That should become part of the planning for new schools. In addition, the schools could invite members of the local community to attend the school service and be part of the spirit of Anzac Day, celebrated through the kids, because the commemorative garden would take the place of a war memorial. I think the idea is worth considering and I will pursue it with the minister. Ranford Primary School in my electorate, including Canning Vale, would be a great place to locate a memorial of some sort. It would be up to the school and the school community, but they could invite the whole community along to celebrate. I think that idea is worthwhile considering in the planning process.

I now refer to the compulsory nature of Anzac Day ceremonies in state schools. I consider Anzac Day to be part of the cultural studies that schools should conduct in the same way that social studies, maths and other subjects are compulsory. It is important to have the Anzac Day ceremony or some sort of recognition in the school, and it should form a normally accepted part of the curriculum - more than social studies. Unless we make it part of the school curriculum, it could well disappear from schools, which would be a tragedy. However, I draw this distinction: to make an individual person attend an Anzac Day ceremony against his or her individual will would be absolutely wrong. I remember the days of national service. I listened to what my friend the member for Dawesville had to say. I was on the other side; I would never have supported national service, probably for the very reasons that the member outlined. We must make a distinction between making these commemorations a compulsory part of the curriculum and making them compulsory for an individual person. With those few words, I will sit down.

MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura) [11.54 am]: I support this legislation. Not only does this legislation fix some of the anomalies about the use of the word or acronym "Anzac" and explain what it means, but also it recognises that normal activities totally supported by diggers are allowed to occur on this Anzac Day celebration or, more importantly, commemoration. It gives us a chance to reiterate what Anzac Day is all about. During the 24 years I have been involved in public life as a councillor, mayor and now politician, this has been one of the very special days of the year on my calendar. It is one of those days when the community comes out spontaneously to recognise the contributions made by members of our community for the protection of the freedoms that we in Australia take for granted. It has been fantastic over those 24 years to see the increase in the number of people who support this commemoration on Anzac Day. The members for Bassendean and Maylands and I go to the Bayswater War Memorial almost every year. I do not think I have missed a visit in 24 years. People in the community come out spontaneously to make sure that they remember those people who are no longer with us

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and who made the supreme sacrifice. We have all heard stories of hardships caused by war. In my own family my uncle died of starvation in a German prisoner-of-war camp. On the other hand, my dad was in a prisoner-of-war camp in England. Different members of my family were prisoners on both sides of the fence. My dad talked at great length about the sacrifices that were made in war, and he always said that he would not wish war on a dog and everything should be done to avoid war. Unfortunately, wars do happen. Anzac Day is not about celebrating war, it is about recognising those people who made extreme sacrifices to ensure that we can enjoy the freedom we have in this great country. The greatest benefit for me as a local politician has been going to schools and seeing the community commemorating Anzac Day.

I would like to bring to the House my experience of going to the Ballajura Community College, where there are students from more than 50 different nationalities. I was there two years ago listening to a young Bosnian girl from Serbia. She was talking about how her family was shot in front of her, how she came to this country, and how she is now enmeshed in our community and understands that we need to make sure that we do not take things for granted and that we protect the freedom we enjoy in Australia. What was more gratifying for me was that more than 2 500 young students were celebrating the Anzac Day commemoration. The feeling was absolutely extraordinary. I take on the words of the member for Southern River when he said that schools form a very important part of the commemoration of Anzac Day. That was reinforced to me when I was at the Ballajura Community College. All those students understood why they were there, why everyone was paying their respects to those people who had made those sacrifices and why the nation took time out to make sure that people never forget. From that came the realisation that we need war memorials and the like in our communities. In new suburbs, such as Ballajura, there is no place where people can gather as a community. As I said, I go to the Bayswater memorial. Following one of my visits to the Ballajura Community College, I put it to the principal, the RSL president and local councillors who were there that we, as a community, should look at building a war memorial in Ballajura. The support I got was astonishing: everybody to a man thought it was a great idea and that we should do it. Currently we are in the process of trying to make that happen. I believe that demonstrates the fact that communities need leadership in this matter. We should provide that leadership as local members of the community and local politicians. I endorse the suggestion by the member for Southern River that some formal process be established so that the education system can be a role model and catalyst for these types of community initiatives to be undertaken. The Principal of Ballajura Community College, Dr Steffan Silcox, gave absolute support - I acknowledge the member for Girrawheen's view - for the concept of building some sort of commemorative memorial at Ballajura Community College, and I thank him for that. It is fantastic that the councillors and the community of Ballajura support that.

That also brought home to me the fact that the community does understand the importance of Anzac Day. We do not need to force it on the community. It is not like Foundation Day. As much as Foundation Day is wonderful, many people do not understand what it is really all about. However, people know what Anzac Day means. They understand its significance. They recognise that Anzac Day is a day when the community can take time out and forget about politics and our personal beliefs and likes and dislikes and remember those people who made the supreme sacrifice, and those other people who made enormous sacrifices, so that we can stand here in freedom and say nice things about each other - or throw mud at each other. We are part of a great society in which people from many different backgrounds live in peace and harmony. That is a great example to the rest of the world. We owe great thanks to all those people who made those sacrifices so that we can enjoy our freedoms.

I strongly support the Bill, because it corrects some anomalies that have existed in the past, and, more importantly, it emphasises the importance of supporting the community spirit and direction that is being shown for the celebration of Anzac Day without us as politicians and law makers trying to impose that on the community. The community understands and supports what Anzac Day is all about. It is great that we as a Parliament, in supporting this legislation, can give recognition to all those people who made the supreme sacrifice so that we can live in this country as free citizens.

MR J.P.D. EDWARDS (Greenough) [12.03 pm]: I too support the Anzac Day Amendment Bill. I will follow on from the comments of the member for Ballajura by telling a story about something that has occurred in my electorate of Greenough. The Greenough flats, which are about 22 kilometres south of Geraldton, are a growing residential area with some very historic buildings. About three years ago, three or four people put their heads together and decided to hold a dawn Anzac Day service at the old Pioneer Museum. That dawn service, which I was privileged to attend along with about 10 other people, was followed by a breakfast at a local bed and breakfast establishment that is also a historic building. Last year, 25 people attended the dawn service, and this year there were between 40 and 50 people. The attendance at that dawn service grew by word of mouth. That reflects the increasing support that people are now giving to Anzac Day ceremonies. It is encouraging also that so many young people are now attending Anzac Day ceremonies.

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We need to also reflect on why and how Anzac Day came into being. Anzac Day is, of course, a commemoration of the landings at Gallipoli in 1915-16 and the devastating toll that took on the Australian and New Zealand troops who took part, and let us not forget also the British troops. The Minister for Tourism said that he comes from another country. I obviously also come from another country. However, I am very proud to call myself an Australian, having migrated to this country some 38 years ago. I remember as a child in the United Kingdom being taken to services with the British Legion on 11 November to celebrate Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day evokes similar feelings to those of Anzac Day. However, to me, Anzac Day reflects a lot more than does Remembrance Day in the United Kingdom, because it reflects the Australian character. The Anzacs forged part of the Australian character. The Anzacs have become a part of our history as a nation, and Anzac Day gives us the opportunity to reflect on the pressures that were put on those soldiers, sailors and airmen at that time. I will share with members some information on the Anzacs that I have obtained; namely, that it is important to remember that -

While political leaders argued, the Australian and New Zealand soldiers died in battle, from sniper fire and shelling, and those that lived suffered from a range of ailments due to their dreadful living conditions - typhus, lice, gangrene, lack of fresh water, poor quality food, and poor sanitary conditions all took their toll.

Anzac Day brings together people from all sides of the political divide. Former Prime Minister Hon Paul Keating made this comment at the entombment of the unknown soldier at the Australian War Memorial in 1993 -

That is surely at the heart of the Anzac story, the Australian legend which emerged from the war. It is legend not of sweeping military victory so much as triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. It is a legend of free and independent spirits whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship and the demands of necessity.

That reinforces what I said at the start of my speech about how the Anzacs forged the character that forms part of the Australian psyche.

One interesting facet of Anzac and the whole period of Gallipoli and the First World War is that I think that was the last war - I am sure the member for Rockingham, who is somewhat of a military historian, will correct me if I am wrong - in which Australian troops were commanded by British officers. I think that was also probably a turning point in Australian history, because it meant that we grew up and became part of the world.

Mr M. McGowan: I do not think it was quite the last time, but it was certainly shortly thereafter.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: It was at about that time. I guess the Anzac tradition has followed us through the years with the Second World War, and also Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and other skirmishes around the world. I support the Bill.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr M. McGowan (Parliamentary Secretary).

[Continued on page 3921.]