

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (20:05): I begin my private member's statement by acknowledging the past and present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who enlisted and served in the auxiliary services for the Australian Defence Force, and all Australians who have fearlessly dedicated their lives to us in war and in peace. I am always honoured to be presented with the opportunity to address the House on an event that appeals to our common history; a history where all Australians come together in remembrance of the armed conflicts in which our great nation was engaged, and the heroic men and women who honoured our freedom to the ultimate deprivation of their longevity.

In remembrance of this ultimate sacrifice, on Saturday morning I stood with my Federal colleague Scott Morrison and the people of Sydney at the Martin Place Cenotaph. As we remembered the silence that followed the halt of bellowing guns on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month after more than four years of unprecedented carnage and warfare, we paused, we reflected and, with untold thankfulness, we remembered the 62,000 Australians who lost their lives in the "war to end all wars". Indeed, it is different now; however, the "war to end all wars" was not as its appellation promised.

Since the Great War, many men and women of the Australian Defence Force have persisted to persevere and protect our beloved country at a moment's notice, unswervingly and unfalteringly. Greater than 1.5 million Australians have served to shield our nation and preserve our values in armed conflicts and peacekeeping where, sadly, more than 102,000 have made the ultimate sacrifice. For this reason, I extend my deepest gratitude for the sacrifice of all current servicemen and servicewomen posted abroad. We hope they find fortitude and resilience amid the patronage we impart from afar. We pray for their protection as they protect us and, more pertinently, we pray for their immediate and unscathed return.

These men and women, these strangers from the past and present, have bestowed upon us a legacy to look beyond our history of disagreements and embrace a future predicated upon the prosperity of our children in the hope that they will never witness the atrocities of conflict and ultimate sacrifice in any lifetime—in perpetuity. Therefore, their legacy has been extended to every one of us. While no numbers can account for their sacrifice, it is the natural right of every child born in Australia and the souvenir of every migrant whom our country welcomes to see this legacy through. Today, acknowledging what has been lost to us allows us to recognise what has been gained from the loyal, committed and zealous efforts of our fallen and standing protectors. By commemorating our vow to remember, we reaffirm that their ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten, that they are forever with us. Lest we forget.