

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [5.16 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the exemplary Anzac centenary of Gallipoli commemoration program that The Hills community benefited from, thanks to the tireless efforts of The Hills Centenary of Anzac Committee and, in particular, its Chairman, Colonel Don Tait, OAM. In the first official report on the landings at Gallipoli to reach Australia, writer Charles W. Bean described the bravery of the Anzacs, who swiftly and defiantly traversed the steep terrain of the peninsula. For the covering force seizing the ridges around the landing he said:

Each ridge was higher than the last, and each party that reached the top went over it with wild cheers.

For those of us today who benefit from their sacrifice, the challenge is different. There is always the risk that as time passes we will leave the memory and appreciation of their service behind. Each milestone we reach—50, 75, 100 or 200 years—represents a greater challenge, a higher ridge, to which we must carry the memory of their bravery and the loss that is our tragedy. I am proud to say that The Hills community went over this historical 100-year ridge with many cheers for our service men and women, as well as mourning for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country.

Leading The Hills community through these commemorations as Chairman of the Hills Centenary of Anzac Committee was Colonel Don Tait, OAM, Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch president. I thank Colonel Tait in particular for his organisational skills, with the support of Major General Warren Glenny, AO, President of the Castle Hill RSL. The Hills community is greatly appreciative of their service in every capacity. The entire Hills Centenary of Anzac Committee deserves mention, including Bill Dokter, Councillor Jeff Lowe, Bev Jordan, Bill Strutton, Bryan Mullan, Dave Wood, Craig Colbert, David Cronan, Gareth McCray, David Hand, Melanie Morson, George Cartledge, Grahame Handley, Dr Jim Taggart, Mike Yeo, Keith Rowntree, Tony Eades, Steve Brown, Councillor Michelle Byrne, and my parliamentary colleagues the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, MP, Mr Ray Williams, MP, as well as our Federal colleague Mr Alex Hawke, MP.

More than 20 events were planned in The Hills for the week leading up to the Dawn Service on Anzac Day. His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, launched The Hills Centenary of Anzac Week celebrations on Saturday 18 April at Bella Vista farm. The family day at the farm treated Hills residents to displays of armoured vehicles, light horse and brass bands. At a service held on 19 April at the Centenary of Anzac Reserve at Castle Hill, flags—each with a single name of a World War I digger from the Hills—were solemnly placed in the earth by local school students. The Anzac address was graciously delivered by Major General Paul Symon, AO.

The Hills community enjoyed many other great events. Students also benefited from a visit to the Nambus, which features an extensive collection of Vietnam War memorabilia. Writing prize winners enjoyed a civic lunch organised by students and the Castle Hill RSL provided a Centenary of Anzac Gallipoli Display curated by the Powerhouse Museum. Rain was the only hindrance to a Centenary of Anzac Golf Day at Muirfield Golf Club, which raised money for Legacy NSW, and a synchronised pyrotechnics display accompanied by a recital of Tchaikovsky's famous *1812 Overture* to be performed by the Castle Hill RSL Youth Orchestra is now planned for later in the year.

Among his many other contributions, Colonel Tait directed the stage show *Gallipoli Letters*. The show featured Hills residents in lead roles and was narrated by Hills resident and 2CH broadcaster Gareth McCray, OAM. On the eve of Anzac Day, veterans from The Hills shire attended Anzac services at schools across the area. There is no denying that the full narrative of the Anzac legacy is often understated in our schools and, while Gallipoli is certainly the most well-known aspect of the Anzac story, the efforts of Australian soldiers on the Western Front, be it in Villers-Bretonneux, Ypres or Passchendaele, played just as significant a role in shaping our national values and spirit.

Equipping our youth with the whole Anzac narrative will enable them to pass on those values to younger people. In turn, this ensures that our next generation will be able to meet the next commemorative challenge—the next temporal "ridge" that keeps getting higher—with dignity and pride in the Anzacs and all they represent. All these events organised by the Hills Centenary of Anzac Committee cannot be praised highly enough for meeting this challenge. I commend the Hills Centenary of Anzac Committee to the Parliament.