

Her Excellency the Governor and Mr Buntzen, Premier Malinauskas, Invited Guests, young people, visitors to Adelaide, our Royal Canadian Air Force allies, Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Adelaide 2023 Remembrance Day Service.

Kurna Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land we meet on today is the traditional land of the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with this country.

We understand that the Kurna old people lived in harmony with this land and its creatures and considered themselves to be part of the land. They are the traditional custodians of the Adelaide region and their cultural and heritage beliefs and practices are still important to the living Kurna people today.

It is my honour to be the Master of Ceremonies this morning. My name is Keith Harrison, Commemorations Manager for RSL South Australia

Address

You are likely to have an understanding of our nation's strong military history, involvement across the world, spanning over a century and many generations.

In this time over 103,000 Australians have been killed, thousands wounded and thousands more and their families affected by their service.

At 11am on November 11th 1918 a ceasefire was declared in the Great War. It was a Great War and not the First World War that we refer to it now. It became the First World War when two decades later the next world war began.

On that first Armistice Day the planet sighed and wept for the loss of millions of its souls.

We look back at those old wars in far off places when the world was not as closely linked as it is now. The wars of our allies. The threats to us and our mates by invading, bullying powers of evil. Australians don't start wars. But we are very good at fighting and defending to end wars.

People talk of the Futility of War. I challenge that statement and say it is not futile. Futile means wasted and pointless. Too many good people have died in the name of freedom for it to have been futile. I ask you instead to recognise that war is tragic, it is sad, it is destructive. But when evil proliferates and negotiations don't resolve matters then there may be an inevitability to war, or else we sanction the suffering of horrendous treatments and massacres.

Irish statesman Edmund Burke said "All it takes for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing." Around us are the names and evidence of the actions of good women and good men who did something. They stood against evil. As we must.

To modernise the quote from John Chapter 15 - There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Think about this, as it has a powerful meaning. It means the loss of a life protecting or defending another person or their rights. There is nothing more final than death.

When I speak with school children about war and sacrifice I equate it to mates and bullies. Bullies are at all levels, from the school yard, to workplaces, on committees and on the world stage as exhibited by leaders of tribes, nations, sects and religions.

Mates look after those who cannot look after themselves well enough. Australia is a good mate to others. We are a fair society with strong beliefs in the power of good and the capability to enact it.

Australians are grateful for service in our name. We remember military service and sacrifice from over 100 years ago and as we commemorate recent service and sacrifices we recognise that today is the history that people will commemorate 100 years from now.

Generations of servicewomen and servicemen, their service and commitment is remembered today. Please also give thought to the women and men serving our nation now, overseas and at home. We are grateful.

Keith Harrison 11/11/2023