

Should we 'tone down' anzac day?

War



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Should we 'Tone Down' ANZAC Day to be considerate of ethnic minorities in Australia? Of course not. But a substantial amount of Anglo-Australians believe that we should. This makes absolutely no sense at all. Why would anyone be offended by ANZAC day, we are remembering the brave men and women who have fought and died for this country, as well as the ones that continue to fight for our country overseas. I don't see how anyone may be offended by that, except for maybe the Turkish or the Germans but even they should enjoy ANZAC day because it is a celebration of who the ANZAC soldiers were, not who they fought.

It's not like the ANZAC's were Nazi's, they didn't commit genocide or crimes against humanity, they protected a country full of innocent people, they are heroes and heroes deserve to be remembered at least once a year. They believe that we should consider how the 'minorities' would feel. The key word there is minorities. Does it seem fair that an entire nation or at least the majority of a nation must give up a tradition of almost a century for the consideration of a small percentage of the population? This is Australia, Australians built this country whether they were white Australians or not doesn't matter.

Celebrating the ANZAC spirit is not only respect for our fallen soldiers, but respect for our country and everyone who enjoys the prosperity of modern day Australia should honour that. ANZAC day is celebrated not only in Australia, but at many locations all over the world. Of course it is not celebrated in these countries in the same capacity as it is in Australia and New Zealand but is remembered none the less. Some of these countries include Turkey, Germany, France and China. These countries had no soldiers

in the Australian and New Zealand Army Core; they are remembering the values the ANZACS represented.

Every year for I don't know how long people who care have set up two weeks before ANZAC day and begun to sell ANZAC day badges, these people volunteer their time and effort because they respect what this special day means. A few weeks ago just before ANZAC day 'Metlink' - the company that runs metropolitan trains and buses in Melbourne and surrounding areas - told these people they could only sell the ANZAC day badges at the train and bus stations on one day rather than for the entire two weeks that had been the tradition for many years.

Obviously many people were extremely offended, including the many volunteers, commuters and the general population. Luckily, after public outcry the metropolitan train company withdrew the restrictions on the sale of ANZAC day badges. But the fact that it was even suggested is a gross example of how even some white Australians have lost sight of what ANZAC day and the ANZAC spirit represents. Almost every second Australian had a grandparent who fought in the First World War. And most people have some sort of relation to an ANZAC soldier.

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd once said " The Gallipoli campaign is part of our national consciousness, it's part of our national psyche, it's part of our national identity. " I think this statement just about sums it up. The ANZAC spirit is a part of every one in this country, whether they were born here or not, because it is a part of the country. The last Australian ANZAC and last person in the world to have fought on the beaches at Gallipoli, Alec Campbell, died on the eve of March 16, 2002.

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With him died the last living memory of the courage, strength and valor that was displayed on the battlefield all those years ago. Alec Campbell died in peace knowing that the ANZAC spirit and the memory of his fallen comrades would never be forgotten. But was he comforted by a false hope? Has the essence of the ANZAC spirit been lost somewhere in the translation of time? The fact that people are suggesting that we 'tone down' ANZAC day or discontinue the celebration completely, leads to the conclusion that maybe it has. So what is the ANZAC spirit?

Above all the ANZAC spirit means loyalty and respect to your comrades, families and friends. The ANZAC spirit means courage, strength and resourcefulness. Are these not values that every race and religion should celebrate? Perhaps the problem lies not within the meaning of ANZAC day and how that affects the ethnic population, but in the education that is given regarding ANZAC day. Perhaps if we tried harder to involve new Australians in the ANZAC day celebrations, they may begin to better understand what ANZAC day really represents for our country and for them.