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On the 25th of April 1915, 16 000 soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps reached the shores of what is now ANZAC Cove; many seeking adventure and the responsibility of serving their country. They were directed to an exposed and disadvantaged position on the Gallipoli peninsula and in the months that followed, our troops bravely fought against an overwhelming army of over 80 000 Turks. On April 25th the following year, Australia stopped to commemorate its lost soldiers with memorial services and marches at home and in London. This day began the tradition that is ANZAC Day, a tradition that would later become more ritualised in our own state of WA. Since its early days, ANZAC Day has expanded from a sorrowful day of loss to the proud and meaningful day of remembrance that we know today.

The very first ANZAC day was officially marked by a Sydney march of returned soldiers and nurses. This was a solemn event as the loss of the 60 000 Australians and 18 000 New Zealanders was still very painful. At the time, barely any Australians had been unaffected by the war, so memorial services were held nation wide. In London, the military conducted a march of over 2000 ANZACs, nicknamed the Knights of Gallipoli and the soldiers training in Egypt held a sports day. As the pain was still very near, and the war was not yet over, early ANZAC ceremonies were often used for army recruiting and war protests while the shocked young nation of Australia struggled to deal with the devastating consequences of war.

ANZAC Day is an event of great importance to WA due to its deep ANZAC history and the fact that WA has played a significant role in ANZAC Day's development. Throughout WA, at places like Kings Park in Perth and Mt Clarence in Albany, crowds in the tens of thousands are drawn to memorial sites to participate in the annual dawn services. It is also believed that the first ever Dawn Service was actually conducted in Albany by Reverend Ernest White on the 25th April 1923. Due to these historical connections, ANZAC Day

is a highly significant event to the state and one that is widely and enthusiastically participated in.

Another reason for the ANZAC Day's significance to our state is the large number of soldiers provided by WA. We provided the highest percentage of our population in the country, and such were the numbers of volunteers that conscription was unnecessary. Western Australian soldiers also comprised the 11th Battalion which played a key role in the Allies' victory on the Western front, along with the 16th Battalion and the 3rd, 10th and 25th Light Horse Brigades. They displayed the courage, determination, mateship and larrikin spirit for which the ANZACs are so revered.

After eleven years of the ANZAC tradition remaining quite static, the day took a leap forward in its development in 1927 when it was named a national public holiday. It was also on this day that the first official dawn service was held at the Sydney Cenotaph. The ceremony consisted of a standing two minutes silence and a bugle which played the Last Post and Reveille which were two army bugle calls. In early dawn services, it was customary for only veterans and military personnel to attend. However, this tradition has expanded to accommodate the thousands of Australians keen to commemorate our lost soldiers.

Throughout the remaining 1920s and '30s, ANZAC Day really began to define itself as our nation's Remembrance Day for our soldiers. In 1942, ANZAC Day was held at the Australian War Memorial and commemorated for all Australian soldiers lost defending our country. By this time, traditions such as games of two up, drinks of coffee and rum and wearing red poppies as a symbol of spilled blood became closely associated with the ANZAC culture.

Today in Australia, ANZAC Day remains a well recognised event in which most Australians participate. Ceremonies have evolved over the years and now incorporate a few additions to those of the past such as the laying of wreaths, singing of the National Anthem as well as speeches, songs and

poems. Australians, young and old, now even travel to various war sites for ANZAC Day ceremonies, reinvigorating the ANZAC spirit.

I believe the most important aspect of ANZAC Day's development is what this generation is finally learning of our soldiers' experience; that no matter what or how desperate the issue, peaceful resolve should always be the only option. The ANZACs are remembered as a group who fought with teamwork, courage and a larrikin spirit and it was not worth their premature deaths, nor those of their allies or enemies. With now greater participation by the younger generation and ever growing numbers in attendance at dawn services, with over 40 000 this year in Perth alone, the ANZAC tradition will continue to strengthen. This will help to ensure that our brave soldiers who gave their lives so selflessly will never be forgotten and that the ANZAC spirit will live on. We will remember them.

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