

Speech at Anzac Day Reflection 2021

by
Colin Hesse

**Richardson's Lookout - Marrickville Peace Park
Sunday 25th April 2021**

Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order...in short of government. Attributed to Albert Einstein.

We live on a beautiful land, the home of the oldest continuing cultures in history. We do not however live in a land of peace. Since 1788 war has been an ongoing part of this nation's story. Those of us who trace our Australian history from 1788 have benefited greatly from this land, and yet our leaders have yet to arrange a fair peace by treaty with the first Australians. Lest we forget.

In the last two hundred and thirty one years we have reaped great wealth from this land, and our country is wealthy beyond understanding. Yet so many of us are poor, our services declining, the public domain impoverished, and our environment deeply degraded. Lest we forget.

As the Australian Government leaves another war in lockstep with the Government of the United States, just as our Government entered that war without question, we may wonder what our soldiers were fighting for? Those men and women sent to Afghanistan certainly deserve answers, as do the families and friends of those killed, of those maimed in so many ways. So too do the people of Afghanistan deserve answers for those our soldiers killed and maimed, and what the point of that war was. Lest we forget.

We live in a world that is full of possibility still, a world that can have peace that can be a great place, not least here in Australia. So let us remember the past, the good and the bad, and let's come together for that great society that we can build for opportunity, for fairness, for justice and for peace. Let us not stand alone, but listen and work together.