



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Making 'the One Day of the Year': a Genealogy of Anzac Day to 1918

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BA (Honours I)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at

The University of Queensland in 2015

School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry

Abstract

This thesis examines the early years of Anzac Day, providing an account of its troubled history from 1915 to the 1918 commemorations. It examines Anzac Day in the context of an ongoing desire for a 'national day', the commemorative patterns that were extant at the time, the rhetoric that was in circulation, and the diverse needs and desires of the ruling elites, the bereaved, and an increasingly war-weary and divided populace.

Anzac's emergence can be traced to a commemorative lacuna which had been articulated in Australia since Federation. By April 1916 a discursive and performative script for the commemoration was in place, derived from wartime public patriotic events and organised by loyalist elites who sought to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. Their endeavours were inspired as much by the desire to promote recruiting and to mobilise the home front around the war effort as they were to memorialise the casualties from Gallipoli. The intent was to focus national energies on the war and to contain and manage the public grief that followed the campaign so that it did not compromise Australians' commitment to the struggle.

The evidence shows that, in its formative years, the occasion was freighted with the rhetoric of national birth and married with national swagger and self-congratulation around the military achievements of the Anzacs. As such, it struggled to mix a diverse and febrile set of cultural, political, religious and psychological ingredients into an appropriate formula to render a unifying, meaningful and enduring public commemoration. The emphases of organisers in their planning did not allow for the degree of trauma and loss that Australians were experiencing. During this period of major political, ideological and social division in Australia, Anzac Day failed to justify its putative claim to be a national unifier. Many were alienated from the patriotic clamour and obsequious deference to empire which marked the occasion. They were alienated too by the recriminations and bickerings about conscription and enlistment which were persistent themes in its rhetoric.

The thesis establishes that Anzac Day lost impetus as a genuinely national civic commemoration through 1917 and 1918 as it struggled to meet the demands placed upon it by the mounting stresses of war. Thus it refutes the idea that Anzac Day's claim to be the national day was relatively unproblematic in the years immediately after Gallipoli.

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Publications during candidature

Cryle, Mark. “Natural Enemies’? Anzac and the Left to 1919”, *Labour History*, 67, June 2014, 143-162.

Cryle, Mark “The Urge to War in Federation Era Australia”, *Social Alternatives*, Vol.34, no.1, 2015, 11-14.

Publications included in this thesis

No publications included.

Contributions by others to the thesis

No contributions by others.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

None.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Martin Crotty, for his diligence, critical insights and his expertise in guiding this project to fruition. My associate supervisor, Dr Geoff Ginn, also provided valuable assistance in reading and commenting on drafts. The parameters for the thesis were inspired by a conversation with Humphrey McQueen who also read and commented on early chapter drafts, as did Associate Professor Frank Bongiorno. Dr Raymond Evans provided valuable support and generously brought to the project his insights and knowledge.

This work benefitted greatly from two discussions groups. The first, the 'War Reading Group', was convened by my supervisor, Martin Crotty. Kate Ariotti, Romain Fathi, Susan Kellett, Cyrena Mazlin, Fiona McLeod, Don Smith, Jane Williamson, John Grimes and Martin himself read drafts of chapters and engaged in free-flowing and stimulating discussions around Anzac Day and related topics. I thank them all for their generosity and valuable input. The second discussion group, less formally convened, consisted of my siblings Erica McWilliam, Peter Cryle and Denis Cryle. Over regular coffee gatherings and through phone conversations each gave me invaluable assistance and inspiration to move the work forward. Through their collective academic experience, wisdom and gift for language they were able to direct me to sources, ideas and expressions which fell beyond the range of my own experience. Their insights engaged me and their ongoing love and support continued to energise me for the work.

The staff at the State Library of Queensland, in particular Robyn Hamilton and Simon Farley, were extremely helpful in providing access to relevant material in that collection, as were the staff at the University of Queensland Library.

The project also benefitted from dialogues with friends who showed great interest in the project – in particular John Graham, Bill Beach, Pip Kelly, Ian Jobling and Simon Farley.

My good friends Rebecca Wright and Michelle Hill performed valuable proofreading work and assisted with layout, word processing and the technicalities of submission.

As always I thank my immediate family for their love and support. My wife Paula and my children Joseph, Hannah and Gabe and my daughter-in-law Daisy listened patiently to my musings on Anzac Day and then gently (and sometimes not so gently) suggested the conversation move on to another topic.

This work is funded in part by an ARC research grant for research on the history of Anzac Day.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Hazel, whose passion for learning and for the written word has left such a rich legacy.

Keywords

Anzac Day, First World War, Australian history, war and society, commemorations

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)

ANZSRC code: 210303, Australian History (excl. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History), 80%

ANZSRC code: 210399, Historical Studies not elsewhere classified, 20%

Fields of Research (FoR) Classification

FoR Code: 2103, Historical Studies 100%

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List of Abbreviations used in the thesis

ADCC	Anzac Day Commemoration Committee
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ANA	Australian Natives' Association
BEL	British Empire League
RSA	Returned Soldiers' Association
USL	Universal Service League
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Introduction

Anzac Day is the pre-eminent Australian commemorative occasion. As such, it resonates with most Australians in some form and is inescapable for all. In the words of Graham Seal, “all Australians are required to have a relationship, positive or negative” with “the One Day of the Year”, the day on which the Anzac myth serves to reconsecrate events which occurred on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915.¹ A tragically flawed military episode, Anzac nevertheless represents the creation of a particular mediation of collective memory and an authorised vision of national identity. It is a vision that enjoins Australians to embrace the collective ‘We’ – “Lest we forget”; “We will remember them”. Politicians, the media, teachers and other commentators insist to this day that fundamental national characteristics derive from the attributes displayed in that battle – sacrifice, endurance, courage, ingenuity, good humour, and mateship, and that these attributes remain the bedrock of Australian traditions of service.² An exponential growth in family history research in recent decades has encouraged individuals and families to locate themselves more firmly within this war narrative. When combined with long-term reiterations of Anzac ‘virtues’, this trend has assured that Anzac as a national mythology remains “central to our national imaginings”, as David Carter writes.³ Thus debates around Anzac Day continue to arouse emotional, often passionate, responses among Australians across all social groupings.

Yet despite its centrality, the growing popular observance of the day, the rash of media coverage around the centenary celebration at Gallipoli itself and a profusion of cultural production around World War I, a comprehensive history of Anzac Day as a *commemorative event* remains unwritten. Anzac is, as Joy Damousi has pointed out, a “mythic tale” which has resisted historical analysis and explanation. Indeed, somewhat paradoxically, the highly emotive public discourse around the phenomenon has served as a means to “avoid discussion and circumvent debate”.⁴ Thus, a century after Gallipoli, while we have a plethora of writing about Anzac Day, we have little understanding of the forces which shaped the commemoration in the earliest years of its enactment, the ways it was imagined, refashioned and contested during the war period itself. This thesis seeks to

¹ While the expression was made famous by the Alan Seymour play written in 1958 and first performed in 1961, it derives from a John Sandes poem, “Landing in the Dawn”, originally published in April 1916.

² Australian War Memorial, “Anzac Spirit,” <https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/anzac/spirit/>.

³ David Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity: Issues in Australian Studies* (Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education, 2006), 111.

⁴ Joy Damousi, “Why Do We Get So Emotional About Anzac? ,” in *What's Wrong with Anzac?: The Militarisation of Australian History*, ed. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: New South, 2010), 95.

fill this gap by providing a detailed account of Anzac Day's historical development from 1915 to 1918.

The emergence of the observance is examined within the context of a need for an appropriate 'national day' articulated in the decades prior to the war. By April 1916, a discursive and performative script for the commemoration was in place, derived from wartime public patriotic events organised by loyalist elites who sought to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. Their endeavours were inspired by the desire to promote recruiting and to mobilise the home front around the war effort as much as they were to memorialise the casualties from Gallipoli. The intent was to focus national energies on the war and to contain and manage the public grief that followed the campaign such that it did not compromise Australians' commitment to the struggle. Yet Anzac Day's organisers were yet to find that tone which matched the needs of the populace. The emphases of organisers in their planning did not allow for the degree of trauma and loss that Australians were experiencing, with the bereaved insisting on a public recognition of their grief. Thus, during a period of major political, ideological, and social division in Australia, Anzac Day failed to justify its putative claim to be a national unifier. The occasion, freighted as it was with the rhetoric of national birth married with national swagger and self-congratulation around the military achievements of the Anzacs, struggled to mix a diverse and febrile set of cultural, political, religious and psychological ingredients into an appropriate formula for a unifying, meaningful and enduring public commemoration. Many were alienated from the patriotic clamour and obsequious deference to empire which surrounded the occasion. They were alienated too by the shrill recriminations and bickerings around conscription and enlistment which peppered its rhetoric. As demonstrated in the chapters that follow, Anzac Day lost impetus as a genuinely national civic commemoration through 1917 and 1918, as it struggled to meet the demands placed upon it by the mounting stresses of war.

Since the mid-1960s, much Australian historiography has been dedicated to the issue of the legend of Anzac, its origins and impacts.⁵ Fewer historians, however, have sought to trace the organisational origins of the first Anzac Day commemoration. Indeed, in 2004, Graham Seal postulated that it was "difficult to track any clear path of dates, events and personalities in the impetus towards having Anzac Day established as the central national

⁵ Such work includes K. S. Inglis, "The Anzac Tradition," *Meanjin Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1965); Geoffrey Serle, "The Digger Tradition and Australian Nationalism " *Meanjin Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1965); Noel McLachlan, "Nationalism and the Divisive Digger: Three Comments," *Meanjin Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1968); K. S. Inglis, "The Australians at Gallipoli - 1," *Australian Historical Studies* 14, no. 54 (1970).

observance".⁶ Yet these are not uncharted waters. Reference works typically ascribe to the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee (ADCC) and its Secretary, Canon David Garland, responsibility for originating the commemoration.⁷ Yet Carl Bridge notes that the day's "observation, structure and culture have always drawn their energy and meaning more from below, from the people themselves rather than these being imposed from above by the state authorities".⁸ In 1974 Mary Wilson, building on Ken Inglis's work, published an article on the commemoration in Melbourne in the 1920s without elaborating on the event's wartime origins.⁹ Five years later, Philip Kitley also invoked Inglis in a comparison of the 1916 commemoration in Toowoomba with that of 1977.¹⁰ Subsequently, Wendy Mansfield, an honours student at the University of Queensland, examined the archive of the ADCC in the John Oxley Library, Brisbane and gave an account of the day's origins based on material examined there.¹¹

The parameters of the current debate on the issue were largely set in Richard Ely's 1985 article which again built on Inglis's work, but also applied Paul Fussell's notion of "high diction" in an analysis of patriotic rhetoric around Empire Day and Anzac. While acknowledging the organisational role of the ADCC, Ely nonetheless concludes that the first commemoration was "not so much invented, as almost effortlessly discovered. The first celebrants had little trouble *finding* just what to do and say."¹² In his 1987 study of the Queensland home front, *Loyalty and Disloyalty*, Raymond Evans also discussed the activities of the Queensland committee, suggesting that the commemoration was as much prompted by the evacuation of the peninsula as it was by the landing – in part a bid to overcome the "heartbreaking disappointment" and "shock of withdrawal" that went with defeat.¹³ In 1990 John Robertson gave an outline of the vice-regal wranglings over the

⁶ Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology* (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2004), 106.

⁷ Carl Bridge, "Anzac Day," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed. Peter Dennis, *Oxford Reference Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Alistair Thomson, "Anzac Day," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History* ed. Graeme Davison, John Hirst, and Stuart Macintyre (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2003). Online publications, no pagination.

⁸ Bridge, "Anzac Day."

⁹ Mary Wilson, "The Making of Melbourne's Anzac Day," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 20, no. 2 (1974).

¹⁰ Philip Kitley, "Anzac Day Ritual," *Journal of Australian Studies* 3, no. 4 (1979).

¹¹ Wendy Merryllan Mansfield, "Anzac Day 1915-1937: Its Origins, Its Cultural and Political Mythology, a Queensland Perspective" (University of Queensland, 1979).

¹² Richard Ely, "The First Anzac Day: Invented or Discovered?," *Journal of Australian Studies* 9, no. 17 (1985): 58; Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22.

¹³ Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 38-39.

authorisation of the event but concludes that its genesis was “overwhelmingly spontaneous” and rather took governments by surprise.¹⁴

The debate about the day’s origins gained momentum with the publication of an article by Eric Andrews in 1993, in which he argues that the commemoration had been orchestrated by elites, both in Australia and in Britain. They had done so, claims Andrews, for propaganda purposes, attempting to mask the fact that Gallipoli was a disaster.¹⁵ It is a point he reiterates in his book *The Anzac Illusion*, assessing the event as a “propaganda triumph” capitalising on the “sedulous creation of the Anzac myth in both England and Australia for political and military purposes”.¹⁶ John Moses has objected to this interpretation of Anzac Day’s origins. From 1993 he has assiduously and repeatedly stressed the agency of the Brisbane-based ADCC in general, and in particular the energetic stewardship of Garland, in shaping the character of the commemoration. Garland, Moses claims, was the “architect of Anzac Day”.¹⁷ In a 1993 paper, Moses asserted that “the Anzac Day commemoration is to a considerable degree the result of the persistent efforts of one inspired Anglican priest of the Diocese of Brisbane”.¹⁸ Subsequently, he accused a cluster of Australian historians working on Anzac of “non-professional historical practice” and thus dismissed their work: “These writers are often, though not all, historians of a so-called New Left persuasion who have difficulty understanding the history of the First World War and why Australia and New Zealand were involved in it at all.”¹⁹ It was Andrews in particular whose work he took to task: “He makes no attempt to explore or understand how the Anzac movement was initiated, the motives behind it, the personalities involved and how they propagated and sustained it.”²⁰ Moses renewed the assault in a 2002 paper and most recently in a dual-authored 2013 monograph on Anzac Day.²¹ His chief objection is to what he refers to as “the spontaneity

¹⁴ John Robertson, *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli* (Port Melbourne: Hamlyn, 1990), 245-47.

¹⁵ Eric Andrews, “25 April 1916: First Anzac Day in Australia and Britain ” *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 23(1993): 13-20.

¹⁶ E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations During World War 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 84-88.

¹⁷ John A. Moses and George F. Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration* (Canberra: Barton Books, 2013), 334.

¹⁸ John A. Moses, “Canon David John Garland and the Anzac Tradition,” *St. Mark’s Review* 154(1993): 12.

¹⁹ John A. Moses, “Canon David John Garland (1864-1939) as Architect of Anzac Day,” *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal* 17, no. 2 (May) (1999): 50. Among those mentioned are Bill Gammage, Michael McKernan, Richard Ely, Alistair Thomson, Joan Beaumont, Richard White, Marilyn Lake and Eric Andrews.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

²¹ John A. Moses, “The Struggle for Anzac Day 1916-1930 and the Role of the Brisbane Anzac Day Commemoration Committee,” *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 88, no. 1 (2002): 54; Moses

theory” of Andrews and Ely. Moses argues that public movements do not just “flare up”. The public meeting in Brisbane on 10 January 1916 which resulted in the inauguration of the ADCC was, he says, stage-managed by Garland “from beginning to end”.²²

Doubtless Garland did play a significant role in the production of a version of the observance, but Moses overstates his influence. Moreover, he understates the role of Garland and the rest of the Queensland committee in seeking to mobilise commitment to the war on the home front, choosing instead to focus on the religious dimensions of Anzac Day as a form of grief management. Andrews is more credible when he argues that the organisation of commemorations in Australia during the war was firmly in the hands of loyalist elites who perpetuated a version of the Anzac legend for quite specific political purposes. The evidence for this is irrefutable. Garland and the ADCC were examples of the many elites involved in planning the commemoration nationwide. The commemoration did capitalise on popular sentiment around the Gallipoli landing and the Anzacs’ achievements. Moreover, its organisation was not coordinated nationally, often occurring at a local level. Yet it did not, as Bridge argues, “draw its energy and meaning from below”. The messages delivered from speakers’ podiums, pulpits, classrooms and newspaper columns came clearly from ‘above’. They dovetailed with the interests of ruling elites who sought to pursue the war with the utmost vigour. If by ‘below’, Bridge means the Australian populace, it had little say in the planning of the first commemorations. Increasingly, however, it did influence the enactment of the observance by insisting on a solemn reflective space within and around the patriotic pageantry which characterised wartime commemorations in general.

In contrast with the historiography of the organisational origins of Anzac commemoration, the discourse of Anzac – variously referred to as the Anzac legend or mythology or spirit – has been a fertile field for Australian scholars. As a result, we now have a voluminous historiography examining and emphasising its central place in Australian national identity. Much of that work revolves around the significance of Charles Bean’s writings, especially his volumes in the monumental *Official History*, in shaping that mythology. It remains here to outline the key studies which bear most heavily of the work of this thesis as a genealogy of Anzac observance.

and Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration*, 78-79; 166-67. The book makes it clear that Moses wrote the sections on Australia whereas Davis wrote those on New Zealand.
²² Moses, "The Struggle for Anzac Day 1916-1930 and the Role of the Brisbane Anzac Day Commemoration Committee," 56; Moses and Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration*, 78-79.

For a long time Ken Inglis's work has been at the centre of these debates. In 1965 *Meanjin* published his analysis of the work which stressed Bean's preoccupation with national character and his quest to prove that through an explication of Australia's war-time achievements. He also makes reference to Bean's assertion that in April 1915 "the consciousness of Australian nationhood was born," suggesting that he was one of the first to say it.²³ Subsequently Geoffrey Serle took up the issue of Gallipoli as day of national birth, arguing that the war produced in the nation a "keen sense of Australian patriotism." He also argued that the Anzac legend was "taken over by the conservative classes" in the period between the wars, the "wretched 1920s and the crisis 1930s", going on to note that "Anzac Day speakers normally glorified indiscriminately Australia's achievement of nationhood, imperial ideals and conservative social and 'racial' values."²⁴ Subsequently Humphrey McQueen wrote that: "Racism, democracy, nationalism, imperial loyalty, formed ranks to storm the parapets of Gallipoli".²⁵ The analysis presented in this thesis, in the main, supports these conclusions. Clearly, the Gallipoli landing was constituted as a defining moment in Australian history. Yet the chronology needs to be shifted forward in time. By April 1916, the notion that Gallipoli constituted the "birth" of the nation or its "coming of age" had been regularly voiced. Similarly, a version of the Anzac mythology was perpetuated and effectively harnessed in 1916 commemorations to sustain enthusiasm for the war. Gallipoli was the catalyst for the infusion of a martially-inflected discourse into prevailing notions of national character and identity, iterated at Anzac Day commemorations to promote loyalty and national unity. As such, there was little space available in this rhetoric for the acknowledgement of individual pain and grief.

While personal pain and grief had no place in the rhetoric of Australian nationalism, British heritage was, by contrast, front and centre. Writing in 1976, Gavin Souter stressed that this new-found sense of nationhood was always cast within a mould of British racial and imperial solidarity. Gallipoli was as much a marker of the "Briton reborn", to use Souter's phrase, as it was of the birth of the "Australian".²⁶ Within a few years of Souter's work, W.F. Mandle drew attention to the way in which Gallipoli provided the nation with a particular self-image – one shaped in war. It was, he claimed, a "heady, almost a magic brew for Australians to drain" and it reinforced those feelings of superiority that constituted

²³ Inglis, "The Anzac Tradition."

²⁴ Serle, "The Digger Tradition and Australian Nationalism ": 150.

²⁵ Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism*, Revised ed. (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1986). Originally published 1970

²⁶ Gavin Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia*, Revised ed. (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2000), 134.

a key element in the development of a distinct Australian nationalism.²⁷ Mandle also pointed out that Gallipoli possessed the “grim advantage” of being the sole military campaign in which Australians were involved. It had a “dramatic unity” and took place in a highly confined “theatre” of war. Thus, he reasoned, it was “sensible and seemly” to celebrate Anzac Day.²⁸

The foregrounding of Australians as unified not only by a shared British heritage but also by the drama of Gallipoli enabled the imposition of a more regulatory social and political agenda. In a challenging piece published in 1980, Bill Gammage argues forcefully that social regulation and the power of authority increased during the war as it exposed the insignificance of individuals in the struggle. Sacrifice, honour, loyalty, courage, even egalitarianism – such virtues as were highlighted in Anzac Day rhetoric – all implied the sublimation of individual aspirations to the interests of the collective.²⁹ Thus the image of the Anzac which emerged was the apotheosis of these idealised heroic qualities. It was, as Richard White points out, an image which had begun to be sketched in, prior to the outbreak of war. Yet it was at Gallipoli, White notes, that “the ready-made myth was given a name, a time and a place.” By signalling Gallipoli as moment of national birth, an idealised image of the soldier – what White has called “a narrow and misleading stereotype” – was located at the epicentre of Australian identity.³⁰ The Anzacs became the very “custodians of nationhood”, as White calls them.³¹ Attention has been paid to the consecration of this mythology in Bean’s *Official History*, the first volume of which appeared in 1921, but there are clear signs that elements of the legend were well in place by April 1916. Heroism abroad, then, would militate against autonomy at home.

Yet in its inchoate stage, there were fewer traces of the streak of larrikinism with which the image increasingly became associated. There was no place for disrespect for authority in the national mobilisation around the war effort. Such virtues as individualism and initiative were played down. The “schizophrenic” quality of commemoration which White describes – solemn ritual in the morning and boozy celebrations in the afternoon – was not a characteristic of Anzac commemoration in 1916.³² As Gammage reiterated in a 1982 essay, Anzac in 1916 was already run by “civilian orthodoxy”. Anzac orations were a forum

²⁷ W.F. Mandle, *Going It Alone: Australia's National Identity in the Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), 4, 12-13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

²⁹ Bill Gammage, "Australians and the Great War," *Journal of Australian Studies* 4, no. 6 (1980): 31-35.

³⁰ Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, *The Australian Experience* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 127-30.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

³² *Ibid.*, 136.

for the iteration of “conservative values” such as loyalty and conformity to the state, values which promoted a “middle-class quiescence” to the war aims of the nation.³³

Yet it was not only at home that individualism was stifled, and this fact has had a significant impact on the historical literature to date. Richard Ely paid particular attention to extant analyses of Anzac rhetoric in his 1985 study, drawing on Fussell’s notion of “high diction” and noting the “freight of patriotic value-judgments” which arrived home in soldiers’ letters as well as in other utterances about Gallipoli. Significantly, Ely noted the extent to which this rhetoric “tends to screen out the individuality of the soldier’s particular experiences, perceptions, moral impulses and dilemmas etc.”³⁴ Thus, in writing about the war in general, and Gallipoli in particular, twentieth century authors tended to resort to a set of formal conventions around war writing, rather than relate personal experiences. In 1987, Robin Gerster’s account of Australian war writing acknowledged the “frenetic literary activity” both “immediate and intense” which flourished in the wake of the Gallipoli landing and the manner in which it transformed that terrain into “consecrated ground”.³⁵ John Robertson uses the phrase “Gallipoli industry” to describe the same process.³⁶ Gerster situates this “Anzac” writing within the context of morale-boosting activity on the home front – the stimulation of recruiting and the manufacture of an optimistic image of the conflict designed to inspire national confidence in leaders and the military. The Gallipoli reportage of Bean and others, including Charles Smith and Oliver Hogue was, asserts Gerster, “the taproot of the burgeoning Australian war myth”.³⁷ Moreover, the heroic deeds performed on Gallipoli, were, as Peter Cochrane has pointed out in his work on Simpson and his donkey, only legends “after the tale had left the peninsula and returned in the form of headlines, high diction and feature photographs”.³⁸

Military heroism was, however, just one version of the Gallipoli experience. Alistair Thomson concludes from his oral history work that the reality of the experience of the former diggers he interviewed diverged markedly from this optimistic stereotype. This “selective praise for the Anzacs,” he notes, “too easily became a patriotic celebration of

³³ Bill Gammage, “Anzac,” in *Intruders in the Bush: The Australian Quest for Identity*, ed. John Carroll (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992), 63. Originally published in 1982.

³⁴ Ely, “The First Anzac Day: Invented or Discovered?,” 44.

³⁵ Robin Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1987), 21-25.

³⁶ Robertson, *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli*, 245.

³⁷ Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, 25.

³⁸ Peter Cochrane, *Simpson and the Donkey: The Making of a Legend* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992), 52.

warriors, wars and nation.”³⁹ Elsewhere Thomson notes that the “meanings and forms of this legend have been contested since its inception, and it has many different variations.”⁴⁰ The latter part of that statement is likely true, though outside the parameters of this thesis to prove. There is little evidence, however, of contestation around the version of the legend that accompanied Anzac Day commemorations in 1916. Key stakeholders in that commemoration – politicians, clergymen, the military, educators, journalists, community leaders and spokespersons for patriotic organisations – presented a quite coherent and uniform account of the Anzac experience and its significance to the nation. If there was contestation, it remained private and out of print. As Joan Beaumont notes, “the state appropriated the legend of Anzac for its own purposes of ideological hegemony”. She goes on to point out that it was a legend created to promote “an illusion of national cohesion”.⁴¹ The discursive organisation of this illusion is elaborated in the chapters that follow.

While there exists a very rich historiography on labour and radicalism during the war period, it tends to focus on the dynamics and fissures within the movement, conscription, industrial unrest, local area studies and individual biographies. Within this body of scholarly work, historians have rarely addressed the specific issue of labour and radical responses to Anzac as a *discursive formation*. John Hirst has stated that, in April 1916, Labor leaders were at the centre of Anzac Day celebrations, yet only a year later, “Labor and the heroes of Gallipoli had parted company”.⁴² Neville Kirk, too, has analysed editorials on Anzac Day from the *Worker* and the *Australian Worker* in the 1920s, concluding that respect for the Anzacs was noted and unquestioned and the solemnity of the day observed. He notes that, at the same time, the glorification and elevation of the event were resisted and critiqued and the significance of the Anzac experience in terms of national development was downplayed.⁴³ More recently, Nick Dyrenfurth’s analysis of the labour movement to 1919 has added a focus on the impact of Australian war involvement on labour solidarity and the coherence of its philosophies and policies.⁴⁴ Love similarly

³⁹ Alistair Thomson, "The Anzac Legend: Exploring National Myth and Memory in Australia," in *The Myths We Live By*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (London: Routledge, 1990), 76.

⁴⁰ Alistair Thomson, "A Past You Can Live With: Digger Memories and the Anzac Legend," in *Anzac: Meaning, Memory and Myth*, ed. Alan Seymour and Richard Nile (London: University of London, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1991), 21.

⁴¹ Joan Beaumont, "The Anzac Legend," in *Australia's War, 1914-18*, ed. Joan Beaumont (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 151, 76.

⁴² John Hirst, "Labor and the Great War," in *The Australian Century: Political Struggle in the Building of a Nation*, ed. Robert Manne (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 1999), 56.

⁴³ Neville Kirk, "'Australians for Australia': The Right, the Labor Party and Contested Loyalties to Nation and Empire in Australia, 1917 to the Early 1930s," *Labour History*, no. 91 (2006): 100-01.

⁴⁴ Nick Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and Villains: The Rise and Fall of the Early Australian Labor Party* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011), 182-83.

argues that the war transformed the mood of the labour movement and that by 1918 an ambivalence about nationalism, imperialism and class notable in earlier decades had, by 1918, disappeared.⁴⁵ Shorn of its nationalist campaigners in the split of November 1916 and increasingly “marooned on the wrong side of the loyalty divide”,⁴⁶ labour has been held to have shifted left, sloughing off the radical nationalism of its formative years and increasingly positioning itself as part of an international movement.⁴⁷ Robert Bollard provides evidence for the radicalisation of the Australian working-class from 1916, suggesting that they were increasingly in conflict with the win-the-war imperatives of middle class conservatives. He claims that by 1918 the war was as unpopular as the Vietnam War would become in the 1970s.⁴⁸ In summary, there has emerged in the literature something of a consensus that, by the end of the war, the Anzac legend had been blended with the language of loyalism to promote a new conservative nationalism, stripped of any semblance of its formative radical, labour elements.⁴⁹

In seeking a framework for their analyses of Australian society during World War I, a number of historians have invoked the theories of Antonio Gramsci, in particular the notion of hegemony. In his 1985 article on the role of the Commonwealth Deputy Chief Censor, Kevin Fewster noted that, according to Gramsci, the “dominant class” retained “effective control over the relations and organisations of private life” and that “the maintenance of certain class interests is accepted as the national interest”.⁵⁰ Joan Beaumont also applies Gramsci’s ideas arguing that “through its control of formal state organisations and institutions of private life ... this dominant class is able to gain acceptance of its values as the values of wider society”.⁵¹ While a Gramscian reading of the development of the Anzac Day commemoration may appear enticing, a closer analysis of the cultural, political and social dynamics of Australian society at the time exposes the shortcomings of such a theoretical framework. Gramsci’s is a theory of power, derived from Marx, which relies on

⁴⁵ Peter Love, *Labour and the Money Power: Australian Labour Populism* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984), 73.

⁴⁶ James Curran, *Curtin's Empire*, ed. Tony Moore, Australian Encounters (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 70.

⁴⁷ Dyrenfurth, *Heroes and Villains: The Rise and Fall of the Early Australian Labor Party*, 225.

⁴⁸ Robert Bollard, *In the Shadow of Gallipoli: The Hidden History of Australia in World War I* (Sydney: NewSouth Pub, 2013), 13.

⁴⁹ Terry Irving, "Labour, State and Nation Building in Australia" in *Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity 1870-1939*, ed. Stefan Berger and Angel Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 207; Stuart Macintyre, *1901-1942: The Succeeding Age*, ed. Geoffrey Bolton, 5 vols., *The Oxford History of Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986), 181; Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill: The Australian Labor Party 1891-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 117.

⁵⁰ Kevin Fewster, "The Operation of State Apparatuses in Times of Crisis: Censorship and Conscription, 1916," *War and Society* 3, no. 1 (1985): 38.

⁵¹ Joan Beaumont, "The Politics of a Divided Society," in *Australia's War, 1914-18*, ed. Joan Beaumont (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 40.

a clear binary between a dominant bourgeois class and a subjugated working class. Moreover the “led” consent to the “cultural leadership” of this ruling class which is enacted through a combination of political institutions – government, the judiciary, the army – as well as civil institutions such as schools, churches, clubs and societies as well as the media.⁵² Power is thus exerted through the medium of ideology.

While there are clear signs that an approved narrative of events at Gallipoli and their significance to Australians was produced around Anzac Day commemoration, the analysis provided in this thesis shows that there was no monolithic rendering of the commemoration by anything like a “ruling class”. The ideology was powerful but, as this thesis shows, fell well short of being hegemonic. Indeed politicians, churchmen and soldiers often differed widely in their interpretation of Gallipoli’s significance and the enactment of Anzac Day. Moreover the notion of a clear “ruling class/working class” binary in Australian society is problematic. During the first years of war the Commonwealth and five of the states were governed by Labor and, in Queensland’s case, a Labor Party with a markedly socialist agenda. Indeed Australian class and political lines were sufficiently fluid to allow for the “apostasy” of Labor leaders to the conservative cause during the war. A monolithic rendering of power relations such as Gramsci offers fails to account for these complexities.

This thesis also provides evidence for Jay Winter’s observation that war remembrance is frequently a “small-scale locally rooted action”.⁵³ Indeed the thesis iterates the extent to which governments, in particular the Commonwealth government, failed to “lead” on the issue of Anzac commemoration and rather found itself trying to keep abreast of local initiatives. Winter goes on to assert that it would be “foolish to merge these [local] activities in some state-bounded space of hegemony or domination. What these people did was much smaller and much greater than that”.⁵⁴ Elsewhere Winter notes that, though the “state” is ever-present “it is neither ubiquitous nor omnipotent”.⁵⁵ As with the findings of Winter’s research, the exploration of local renderings of Anzac commemoration during the war years in Australia, exposes the inadequacy of a Gramscian analysis.

⁵² Thomas R Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 353.

⁵³ Jay Winter, "Forms of Kinship and Remembrance in the Aftermath of the Great War," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 59.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵⁵ Winter and Sivan, "Setting the Framework," 30.

Other theoretical frameworks could also be considered. Kerwin Lee Klein has charted the scholarly boom in “memory studies” from the late 1980s noting, in particular, the pivotal influence of the work of Pierre Nora.⁵⁶ Nora coined the phrase *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) – material, functional and symbolic spaces, where, he notes, “memory crystallizes and secretes itself ... the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists”.⁵⁷ Elsewhere Nora notes that events and historical phenomena “over time” are “transformed into *lieux de mémoire*.”⁵⁸ He is quite explicit therefore about the need for time to elapse to allow for some kind of reconfiguration of whatever is being remembered. “A new relationship with the national and collective past,” he calls it.⁵⁹ Herein lies a problem for the application of Nora’s theoretical framework for this thesis. Nora’s theorising may well appeal to a study examining Anzac Day commemoration in later decades. Yet this study engages with a time period where memories have not yet “crystallized” and significant time has not elapsed. There is, as yet, no “new relationship” nor the “break with the past” to which Nora refers.⁶⁰ The form of memory and its substance have yet to separate. The memorialisation of Anzac begins, as this thesis shows, within weeks of the Gallipoli landing. Rather, the thesis focusses its attention on what Nora calls the “*milieux de mémoire* ... the real environments of memory... social and unviolated” which according to him must have sufficiently dissipated for the *lieux de mémoire* to formulate. Unfortunately, for the purposes of this study, Nora mentions this concept of *milieux de mémoire* only in passing.⁶¹ While Winter argues that the parochial nature of Nora’s theories raise doubts about their relevance outside France and Klein dismisses outright what he calls the “mystical transpositions of individual psychological phenomena onto imaginary collectives”, it is the very focus in this thesis on the early, seminal period in Anzac Day’s development which largely precludes the application of Nora’s conceptualising.⁶²

What follows is a fine-grained forensic examination of the Day’s origin’s and iterations in the period to 1918. The thesis does not seek to construct a grand narrative around Anzac Day because there is none. There is no whole fabric. There is no grand plan imposed by hegemonic elites. Instead what we find are shreds and skeins located in local histories.

⁵⁶ Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69(2000): 127.

⁵⁷ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire," *Representations* 26(1989): 7.

⁵⁸ Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France : Les Lieux De Mémoire*, vol. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), viii.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, viii.

⁶⁰ Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire," 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶² Winter and Sivan, "Introduction," 2; Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," 135.

The evidence mitigates against the notion that these pieces come together to form a totalising, universalising continuous narrative. The thesis disrupts the imperative towards Anzac as an upward and forward historical trajectory. Rather such grand notions are dissembled here through description of what is actually taking place at a local level. The thesis is a journey among texts – a rhizomatic one which has no predetermined point of arrival nor departure.

It is the work of Michel Foucault which provides an appropriate theoretical framework to account for the historical evidence that this research uncovers. Foucault's notion of a "genealogy" rejects the smooth, continuous, totalising schemas of development which are frequently assumed or accepted in historiography. It is a form of historical writing which can, according to Foucault: "account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs its empty sameness through the course of history".⁶³ Foucault's is a theory of history which rejects the hegemony of totalising discourses and renders legitimate local memories, texts, events and experiences such that they are not viewed as an aberration from the accepted version of Anzac commemoration, because there is, as at this time, no such thing.

Foucault's theory is thus set against hegemony. It rejects linear development, uniformity and regularity and instead accommodates "messiness", pluralism, contradictions, inconstancy. Where Gramsci theorised power in Marxist terms, exercised as a binary opposition, Foucault argues that the power is exercised from different points, diffused through a range of discursive locales and into the "very grains of individuals".⁶⁴ For Foucault there is no "headquarters" of power. Arguably his greatest contribution was to produce a way of talking about power which was not exclusively Marxist or Gramscian. Foucault's theorising accommodates the "grains" and locales – the same phenomena which provide the raw data for this thesis.

Yet a genealogy is neither ungoverned nor serendipitous. It is not an excuse for shortcuts or unmeticulous methodology. Rather it requires the patient and detailed accumulation and analysis of small incidents, minor shifts, discontinuities and subtle contours – the negotiation of wrong turns and blind alleys. Genealogy accommodates what has been called the "small stories, the marginalised topics and the taken-for-granted practices" in

⁶³ Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 117.

⁶⁴ Asli Daldal, "Power and Ideology in Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci: A Comparative Analysis," *Review of History and Political Science* 2, no. 2 (2014): 160.

history.⁶⁵ It seeks no inner truth or governing principle or an uncovering of what might be “behind the scenes”. This genealogy eschews the notion of some grand historical design and rejects an overriding unitary teleology of Anzac Day.

This project was enabled by the mass digitisation by the National Library of Australia of newspapers from the period. It did not rely, however, only on newspapers which were digitised. In particular the significant labour/trade union press which flourished in Australia at this time was consulted in the quest for evidence of contestation of the prevailing Anzac mythology. Moreover, newspapers such as the *Age*, the *Bulletin*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Truth*, *Sydney Mail* and the *Australasian* were read in hardcopy or microform. Many of these publications have been digitised since research for this project began.

Newspapers inform this work more than any other set of sources. As a source they have sometimes been undervalued by historians, as American Jerry Knudson notes, insisting that “too often in the banquet hall of history, newspapers have been relegated to the corner like country cousins or scullery maids.” He goes on to assert that newspapers are not just guides to what was happening but “to what people thought was happening”.⁶⁶ Thus, as a reflection of what Australians *thought* was occurring abroad and at home, they are particularly germane to the study of the discursive practices that constituted Anzac on the Australian home front.

Moreover, because of the proliferation, and indeed domination of newspapers over any other forms of media at the time, they played a major part in the circulation of discourses about the war and related matters. 1914 was a peak year in Australia for the production of newspapers. Not before or since have there been as many titles in circulation. Capital cities often had four or more daily papers and, by 1919, 133 Australian country towns had more than one local paper.⁶⁷ There is a real advantage here for the historian, in as much as comparative analyses can often be made on the reportage of the one event.

Newspapers also provide an invaluable gauge of public attitudes. Certainly they authorised a particular version of events and sought to persuade readers about that version’s authenticity. Indeed they were subject to such censorship that they were hardly

⁶⁵ Daphne Meadmore, Caroline Hatcher, and Erica McWilliam, "Getting Tense About Genealogy," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 13, no. 5 (2010): 466.

⁶⁶ Jerry Knudson, "Late to the Feast: Newspapers as Historical Sources," *Perspectives* 31, no. 7 (1993): np.

⁶⁷ Rod Kirkpatrick, *Country Conscience: A History of the New South Wales Provincial Press, 1841-1995* (Canberra: Infinite Harvest 2000), 397-98.

empowered to offer an alternative.⁶⁸ Even editors of conservative newspapers, like the *Sydney Morning Herald*, complained that censorship was enacted for political advantage rather than national security.⁶⁹

The discursive carriage of the press was not all one way, however. Newspapers both moulded and were moulded by public opinion. They were spaces in which discourses circulated in quite specific ways. Different sections of these newspapers often provided different perspectives, with editorials typically tending to reinforce authorised opinions about commemoration as did press releases from government bodies and planning committees. Journalists' accounts of regional planning meetings often allow for a more fine-grained forensic analysis of the dynamics of commemoration and the imperatives which drove it at a local level. The reportage on the events themselves, though often self-censoring, yields valuable insights into the tone of the events, especially when cross-comparisons can be made among different sources. In some cases they are as revealing for what they leave out as for what they include. Unlike today, newspapers frequently reported verbatim the sermons preached in churches as well as the speeches given by dignitaries and other guests at civic and school ceremonies. Letters to editors, too, remain a rich source of evidence for contestation around Anzac commemoration. Here citizens expressed their views on a range of issues, engaged in polemics and railed against and berated their fellow Australians on any number of issues.

Research based on the major capital city dailies which has tended to inform much historiographical work in Australia. Yet the push and pull of Anzac commemoration was frequently played out in microcosm in regional centres. Local journalists witnessed these events and reported on them in detail. The regional press is thus a very rich source for this study. The use of these sources also brings its pitfalls. In a period of major social and political division in Australia around the war, the overwhelming majority of newspapers acted as a conservative voice for pro-war loyalism and for conscription.⁷⁰ R.B. Walker records that only two rural daily newspapers in New South Wales editorialised against conscription.⁷¹ This suggests that an analysis of public discourse around a highly political phenomenon like Anzac runs serious risk of being skewed. The reader may assume that

⁶⁸ R.B. Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803-1920* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), 251.

⁶⁹ Gavin Souter, *Company of Heralds: A Century and a Half of Australian Publishing by John Fairfax Limited and Its Predecessors, 1831-1981* (Carlton, Vic.: Scholarly Book Services, 1981), 117.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷¹ *National Advocate* (Bathurst) and *Barrier Daily Truth* (Broken Hill) Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803-1920*, 252.

the opinions expressed in the columns of those papers were universal and uncontested in Australia at the time. Yet there was also an active labour press. Brisbane, Hobart, Adelaide and Broken Hill had dailies throughout this period which, in the main, promoted the interests of the labour movement.⁷² Other states had at least one labour weekly.⁷³ While many of these continued to report on war news and did, as will be shown, also endorse Anzac Day commemorations, some, like the *Worker*, eschewed high blown narratives of Allied victories, stressing instead the condition of the proletariat both at home and overseas to expose the evils of capitalism.⁷⁴ There were, in addition, a number of socialist, syndicalist and other radical publications in circulation, albeit with limited reach.⁷⁵ The digitisation of these 'left wing' sources has been rather more piecemeal so every attempt has been made to review and to incorporate evidence from them where appropriate in this analysis.

While digitised newspapers have been invaluable, the research documented here does not rely exclusively on newspaper evidence. It has also drawn on The State Library of Queensland's archive of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee as well as the papers of Canon David Garland. Garland's hand-written minutes from the Committee's early meetings proved particularly informative. Furthermore, the Australian War Memorial has been a useful source in that it houses Anzac commemorative publications not readily available elsewhere.

This study is bounded, and inevitably limited, by its focus on Anzac Day observances in Australia during a formative period in the war years. While the anniversary of the landing was also commemorated by soldiers in London, and close to the battle front in Egypt, the Middle East and on the Western Front, this study makes no attempt to analyse these events in any detail. Andrews has written about the London commemoration in 1916 but that event is only considered here in terms of its influence on promoting Anzac Day in Australia.⁷⁶ The soldiers' commemorations are worthy of more study because they appear to have been driven by a rather different set of imperatives from those on the home front and to have been enacted in different ways. Given the constraints that pertain to the production of any thesis, space does not permit such an analysis.

⁷² *Daily Standard* (Brisbane), *Daily Post* (Hobart), *Daily Herald* (Adelaide), *Barrier Daily Truth* (Broken Hill).

⁷³ *Australian Worker* (Sydney), *Labor Call* (Melbourne), *Worker* (Brisbane), *Westralian Worker* (Perth); *Socialist* (Melbourne).

⁷⁴ Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales, 1803-1920*, 139.

⁷⁵ *Direct Action* (Industrial Workers of the World, Sydney), *Socialist* (Socialist Party of Victoria), *Ross's Magazine* (Melbourne), *People* (Australian Socialist League, Sydney), the *Woman Voter* (Women's Political Association, Melbourne) and the *International Socialist* (Australasian Socialist Party, Sydney).

⁷⁶ Andrews, "25 April 1916: First Anzac Day in Australia and Britain".

Anzac Day was also commemorated in New Zealand, where the day has evolved differently. While it remains an important memorial day, it is not freighted with the mythology of national foundation that characterises Australian commemoration and nor, for New Zealanders, does it shape notions of national identity in the way that it does across the Tasman. Stephen Clarke argues that the introduction of conscription in New Zealand meant that the day became much less a “celebration of service” than it was in Australia and rather more a “commemoration of sacrifice”.⁷⁷ While making an interesting field for future comparative research, developments in New Zealand were not, for these reasons and because of space limitations, considered for this study.

The first two chapters of this thesis constitute an account of the pre-history of Anzac, analysing national discursive phenomena and events which pre-dated the landing. Chapter One covers the period to the outbreak of war in 1914. It demonstrates that, despite the promotion of Anniversary Day (26 January), Empire Day and Wattle Day, there existed in Australia a lacuna around national commemoration. For varying reasons, none of these events satisfied an increasingly articulated desire for an Australian national day. As a consequence, once 25 April began to be mooted as a ‘genuine’ national day by politicians, governors and newspaper editors in mid-1915, it had no serious rivals amongst the observances already in place in Australia. The chapter also examines public discourses around war and national self-realisation in the decades prior to 1914, showing the prevalence of the idea that Australia’s nationhood would only be proven by the actions of its soldiers and, more particularly, by their sacrifice in the cause of empire. Chapter Two continues the genealogy of the commemoration by examining the period from August 1914 until the end of 1915. By providing analyses of patriotic events and rhetoric, it demonstrates the extent to which the anniversary commemorations which took place in April 1916 were neither ‘new’ nor ‘invented’, but rather were shaped significantly by discursive and performative practices already well established.

Chapters Three and Four both cover the same chronological period and explore similar themes – the planning and morphology of anniversary commemorations and their enactment in April 1916. The division here is geographical. Because events in Queensland, in particular the work of Canon Garland and the ADCC, have been prominent features in the historiography of Anzac Day’s origins, it is useful to examine their activities

⁷⁷ Stephen Clarke, “Ka Maumahara Tonu Tatou Ki a Ratou/We Will Remember Them: Anzac Day in Aotearoa New Zealand,” in *Reflections on Anzac Day: From One Millenium to the Next*, ed. Anne-Marie Hede and Ruth Rentschler (Heidelberg, Vic: Heidelberg Press, 2010), 78.

in greater detail. Chapter Three shows that the imperatives which mobilised the event's organisers in 1916 had at least as much to do with recruiting and mobilising the home front around the war effort as they did with offering a public recognition of individual trauma and ritual space for communal grieving. The following chapter then breaks new ground by analysing commemorative events in the other states. Rather than following any blueprint set down by the ADCC, commemorative practices varied considerably across Australia in 1916. As in Queensland, however, organisers failed to accurately gauge the need for a solemn memorial space. While the tone of Anzac Day marches and public gatherings was increasingly inflected by the public expression of grief and the emotional needs of the bereaved, this inflection was not incorporated into commemoration formalities.

The specific discourse of Anzac commemoration in 1916 is examined Chapter Five. From the mouths and pens of pro-war loyalists there came a rhetoric of commemoration which served quite specific political ends. By insisting that 25 April 1915 was the 'birth of the nation', or at least the most significant date in its history, influential speakers and writers placed the war at centre stage. Endeavours which drew attention or energies from the pursuit of victory at any cost were at best inconsequential, and at worst, transgressive. Moreover, these same pro-war elites packaged and deployed the rhetoric of Anzac in such a way as not to allow for any differentiated discursive unpacking. In order to 'partake' of Anzac, it was necessary for Australians increasingly to accede to its pro-war, loyalist expectations and precepts – that sacrifice in war was an honour to be borne proudly; that soldiers of the AIF were to be venerated as encompassing all that was virtuous and that victory was to be pursued at any cost. By 1917 and 1918 however, as Chapter Six shows, a war-weary populace in a nation rent by divisions around conscription found such a recipe much less palatable. As Anzac Days resounded with the shrill tones of Empire loyalists who postured abrasively and sought to berate and admonish any who might not share their views, the disaffected used the occasion to celebrate their own private 'Anzac Days' in churches and away from the patriotic hoopla that characterised increasingly under-subscribed official commemorations.

The account that emerges from the thesis Chapters, taken separately and together, moves beyond a forensic analysis of what people wrote, to one which seeks to gain an understanding of how people acted and what they thought about a phenomenon which has come to be Australia's pre-eminent national commemoration. As a cultural history exploring public discourses around national commemoration, it analyses not only what was written and circulated about Anzac and war in Australia to 1918, but probes in part the

personal impact on the many of those whose grieving remained unacknowledged in the lofty official rhetoric. In this respect the thesis is a product of the contemporary historical moment, where “eerily de-peopled” accounts of the impacts of any war are no longer viewed as synonymous with objectivity, and where war trauma is no longer seen as a character flaw.⁷⁸ While staying squarely within the boundaries of an evidence-based historical analysis, it asks hard questions about the negative effects of hegemonic versions of national interest, as represented by the Anzac myth, on individual people’s lived experience in the past.

⁷⁸ Erica McWilliam, "The Future Is Not What It Used to Be," in *Richard Selby-Smith Oration (Australian College of Educators)* (Brisbane2015), np.

Chapter One

A “Solemn National Festival”: Marking a Place in the Commemorative Calendar

In the early weeks of May 1915, Australian newspapers published eye-witness accounts of the Gallipoli landing. The impact of this reportage was immediate and profound. The accounts, written by British war-correspondent, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, and by Australian journalist, Charles Bean, were so enthusiastically embraced by Australians that the event rapidly took on national significance. The event was being “made national” in the geographical and cultural sense¹ at a time when the Federation itself was in its early stages. Prior to May 1915 the vast majority of Australians would not have heard of Gallipoli, let alone been able to locate it on a map. The word ‘Anzac’, which was only coined in early 1915, was nevertheless omnipresent a year later. As the governor of South Australia, Sir Henry Galway, noted in April 1916, it had become “a name to conjure with ... the watchword of Australia today”.² Some wanted to claim Gallipoli as Australian territory, while for the majority it was comprehensively mythologised and enshrined in national memory.³ Moreover, the campaign’s anniversary memorial, Anzac Day, was being promoted by its organisers and the press as the paramount national commemoration – “the most important day in the Australian calendar”.⁴ Yet the Anzac landing was clearly not the first significant event in Australian history worthy of commemoration, nor was Anzac Day the first date that was promoted as a national observance. This chapter shows how Anzac Day’s makers were able to make such a convincing case for its lofty status with such apparent rapidity. It does so by tracing the genealogy of Anzac Day through the period prior to the outbreak of war in 1914, presenting evidence to demonstrate that the commemoration helped resolve post-Federation tensions around the idea of a day of national significance.

For Australians in 1915, Anzac Day had no serious rivals as the most significant day in Australia’s history. A lacuna had existed in the Australian national commemorative calendar, with the nation lacking a Bastille or Independence Day to act as focus for patriotic sentiment. As the *Western Mail* noted in 1916, reflecting on the birth of Anzac Day: “Every virile nation has its red-letter days, recalling great and striking events in its

¹ Graeme Turner, *Making It National: Nationalism and Australian Popular Culture* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 1.

² *Register*, 26 April 1916, 4.

³ *West Australian*, 27 April 1916, 7.

⁴ *Gippsland Farmers Journal*, 21 April 1916, 2; *Advertiser*, 25 April 1916, 5; *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7

history, and Australia and New Zealand by the valour of their sons have become joint heirs of one which has in it every element which lends inspiration to a people”.⁵ The lack of a “red-letter day” before Gallipoli meant that none of the many and various commemorations that had been proposed and promoted in the decades leading up to 1914 had yet been accepted by the majority of Australians. Meanwhile, there had been a growing conviction that only through military action would Australia’s status as a nation be truly established. Thus, although the word ‘Anzac’ itself was only coined and popularised in 1915, two key features of the discursive scaffolding which came to support the ensuing legend and its annual consecration were already in evidence before the landing occurred.

As elaborated below, Australians told each other at the outbreak of the war in 1914 that they lacked a ‘true’ national day. There was, therefore, a void into which Anzac Day could be inserted. Many Australians were well-disposed towards identifying and investing in an historical landmark that purported to transcend regional, political and religious affiliations, one worthy of reverence that was not merely an excuse for merriment. The particular dynamics of the Australian case – that it had emerged as a nation within an empire, but as an outpost of European settlement in what was perceived as an increasingly threatening Asia – meant that it needed to be a commemoration which acknowledged rather than repudiated the British imperial context. Moreover, the notion that Australia would be ‘made’ through blood sacrifice in some future military struggle and hence that the nation would be forged in the furnace of war, had a powerful hold on the consciousness of many Australians. Such an event would relieve mounting anxieties about the moral degeneration of the race and the nation which were commonly voiced from the press and the pulpit in observations about ‘national character’. Events in April 1915 thus facilitated a powerful and convenient convergence of discourses about national identity and aspiration which had been in evidence in the decades prior to the Australians scaling the cliffs at Gallipoli. Anzac Day, then, has a genealogy. While its organisational origins can be located in 1915 and early 1916, its discursive origins can be traced to an earlier period – most specifically, in the case of this chapter, the period from Federation to the outbreak of war in August 1914.

No historian to date has sought to contextualise Anzac Day’s origins by interrogating the debates around commemoration, nationalism, imperialism and militarism in the decades

⁵ *Western Mail*, 28 April 1916, 31.

prior to 1915.⁶ Nonetheless, a number of researchers have done valuable work to contextualise and inform the arguments made here. Some have analysed the development of national commemorative days in other contexts, most notably Eric Hobsbawm, who demonstrates that they are a relatively modern historical phenomenon. While the events marked therein, such as the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in the United States, or the storming of the Bastille in France, might have occurred in earlier centuries, the commemorations themselves were largely a late nineteenth-century phenomenon.⁷ Certain dates on the calendar were promoted as logical rallying points around which to build national consciousness. Cultural repertoires were assembled and synthesised, enabling, in Benedict Anderson's terms, the imagining of community.⁸ In that sense, as David McCrone and Gayle McPherson argue, national days reinforce national identity ostensibly by enshrining a particular version of past events.⁹ Traditions were invented and reinvented, sometimes with alacrity. Furthermore, these national days were not necessarily consensual. Some were, as Lyn Spillman has pointed out, subject to contestation – on occasions they were a direct expression of conflict.¹⁰

Writing in 1974, Ken Inglis provided a valuable social history of Australian holidays and festivities through to 1870.¹¹ In part, this chapter extends the parameters of that work through to 1915. In the Australian context too, David Carter has reiterated the point that national days are a relatively modern historical phenomenon, pointing out that they iterate a particular version of the past and also imply a future. Moreover, Carter argues that the efficacy of national occasions is directly related to their capacity to generate and consolidate notions of unity.¹² Richard White also emphasises the capacity of the national day to disseminate a consensual shared version of the past. He points out that, while in France and the United States, national days mobilise a sense of national community, in

⁶ Militarism is defined here as in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the prevalence of military sentiment and ideals among a people".

⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 303.

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

⁹ David McCrone and Gayle McPherson, "Introduction," in *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity*, ed. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1.

¹⁰ Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 36.

¹¹ K. S. Inglis, *The Australian Colonists: An Exploration of Social History 1788-1870* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1974).

¹² David Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity: Issues in Australian Studies* (Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education, 2006), 91.

Britain, such phenomena are conspicuously absent.¹³ For the two new republics forged in the eighteenth century, there was a perceived need to construct a mythology of nationhood. Britons, on the other hand, could trace a line of monarchy and mould an identity connected with traditions that were both elaborate and enduring.

While he does not set out specifically to trace Anzac Day's genealogy through the Federation period, Ken Inglis has addressed issues around the development of Australia Day, Empire Day and Wattle Day. He notes, too, an exchange between Banjo Paterson and Rudyard Kipling in which the latter observed that Australia's dedication to the Melbourne Cup overrode all other priorities on the national calendar. Moreover, Inglis demonstrates that, despite involvement in the Boer War, there prevailed, in the decades leading up to World War I, a sense that the nation had escaped, or been denied, war.¹⁴ He goes on to argue that, after 1915, 25 April superseded all other commemorations. In significant ways, then, this chapter is informed by and builds on Inglis's work. The themes he introduces – a jockeying for position around national commemorations and festivals, the sense that the nation's realisation and destiny is reliant on some future military struggle, the prevailing idea that Australians were not paying sufficient attention to the serious matter of building the nation's physical and moral fibre – are all elaborated here in greater detail with specific reference to the early years of the twentieth century.

As the second decade of the century dawned, the lack of a unifying national day in Australia was palpable. In October 1910, the *Barrier Miner* argued: "Australia needs a genuine National Day. The approach of the Melbourne Cup suggests that it is as of yet Australia's only national day."¹⁵ The use of upper case for "National Day" was significant, marking it as an event worthy of reverence. On the tenth anniversary of Federation, "A Sydneyside Australian", wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "Australia is now a united and indestructible nation, and a definite national holiday may be appropriately observed in celebration of the fact."¹⁶ On 29 April 1912, Reginald Cohen of the Australian Natives' Association (ANA) spoke at a ceremony held at the statue of Captain Cook in Hyde Park, Sydney: "Our foremost citizens should urge the Government to set apart a national day, either on this day [the anniversary of Cook's landing at Botany Bay] or on Anniversary

¹³ Richard White, "National Days and the National Past in Australia," *Australian Cultural History*, no. 23 (2003): 55-58.

¹⁴ K. S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1998), 72-79.

¹⁵ *Barrier Miner*, 29 October 1910, 6.

¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January 1910, 11.

Day, for some comprehensive celebrations accessible to all.”¹⁷ In correspondence around the relative merits of St George’s Day, St Andrew’s Day and St Patrick’s Day, a Brisbaneite wrote to the *Brisbane Courier* in March 1914:

I urge upon all genuine Australians to make an effort supreme to cultivate an Australian national sentiment, and this cannot be better begun than by causing a properly authorised day to be both observed and set apart with that object in view. If we cannot make a serious effort to institute such a day in the near future we ought to be ashamed to call ourselves Australians. All other national days should be less important than that one. That day should be a national day in every possible way ... I was pleased when I heard of the observance of Wattle Day but it seems to me that such a day is only a farce. There is no set day as yet.¹⁸

Another weighed in to the debate a week later:

What we really want is one Grand National Day for Australia that would help to promote national sentiment among rising Australians. A day on which Englishmen and Irishmen would be both forgotten with the Commonwealth flag flying, and every other flag furled up ... What is really wrong is that in the Catholic Schools there is too much Irish, St Patrick’s Day, ‘Oh, Erin my country,’ and the rest of it. In the State schools there is too much England and the dear old Union Jack.¹⁹

National days, like national flags and anthems, were symbols of nationhood. These Australians were clearly articulating their concerns about the absence of a unifying national festival and at the same time acknowledging the ethnic and sectarian sensibilities and tensions which needed to be resolved or superseded before such a day and date could be agreed upon.

It was not a case of Australia being without national festivals. Indeed, there were significant dates on the commemorative calendar. Nonetheless, the act of Federation failed to furnish Australia with an iconic consensual date in which to invest national historical significance. In the years between 1901 and 1914 a number of commemorations, including Anniversary Day, Eureka Day, Wattle Day, Trafalgar Day and Empire Day, were

¹⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 April 1912, 5.

¹⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 March 1914, 19.

¹⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 April 1914, 19.

promoted and competed for public affections with varying degrees of success. For various reasons, all fell short of evoking what Carter has called a “shared historical legacy” for Australians.²⁰ Kipling’s and Twain’s observations, as noted by Inglis, suggest that, in their bids to capture the national imagination, they may have all run second to the Melbourne Cup.²¹ There was something of a commemorative lacuna here – an opportunity that the ‘makers’ of a new commemoration, Anzac Day, were able to exploit. This in part accounts for the rapidity with which events in an unknown place remote from Australian shores could so quickly and permanently come to occupy centre-stage. Anzac Day was seen to resolve long-term tensions around competing claims to be Australia’s national day.

Commemorating Nation: Federation, Anniversary Day, Eureka Day and Wattle Day

Australia officially became a nation on 1 January 1901. While the day itself was marked with ceremonial pomp, in particular in Sydney and Melbourne, the anniversary was never inscribed on the commemorative calendar. As others have pointed out, 1 January was a date already associated with the commemoration of broader non-national themes – in particular the passing of time and new beginnings – “recovery and resolutions rather than remembrance,” as one historian has put it.²² As a significant commemorative event, it competed ineffectively with the after-effects of a night’s heavy partying, a limitation to the possibilities the day might have for ceremonial gravitas in the future.²³ This fact was noted at the time in a *Bulletin* cartoon by Alf Vincent, entitled “Australia Faces the Dawn”, which depicted the new state premiers, in the company of empty bottles and much the worse for wear after a night’s revelry, standing at the base of a statue of Captain Arthur Phillip and gazing toward the dawn of a new era in Australian political life.²⁴

Federation has been called a “technically impressive political achievement” by one historian.²⁵ Another, John Hirst, points out that it wore a “progressive air” and generated a flurry of reflexive poetic endeavour promoting what he calls a “civic nationalism”. Yet Hirst acknowledges that the constitution itself lacked a stirring preamble or a bill of rights.²⁶

²⁰ Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity: Issues in Australian Studies*, 92.

²¹ Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, 74.

²² Erin Ihde, “Australia Federates, Australia Celebrates,” in *Turning Points in Australian History*, ed. Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 92.

²³ White, “National Days and the National Past in Australia,” 60.

²⁴ *Bulletin*, 5 January 1901, 17.

²⁵ John Eddy, “Nationalism and Nation-Making from Federation to Gallipoli,” in *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism: Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa First Assert Their Nationalities, 1880-1914*, ed. John Eddy and Deryck Schreuder (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 133.

²⁶ John Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 14-15, 25, 163.

Federation produced little in the way of convincing rhetoric to stir the nascent nation from its seeming contentment about its progress and place in the world. Moreover, it failed to define a set of national values or to assuage fears about racial degeneration and the ongoing legacy of Australia's convict origins. Federation was a celebration and consummation of Australia's British heritage. Edmund Barton's dictum about "a nation for a continent, and a continent for a nation", "a phrase memorable for its descriptive symmetry rather than a rallying cry or a statement of national principles", as Erin Ihde has observed, was about as close as the nation's citizens had come to the moving appeals of the French '*liberté, égalité, fraternité*' or Thomas Jefferson's "self-evident truths".²⁷ Federation was achieved through a peaceful democratic process of debate and negotiation. It was undramatic. Federation could not easily be 're-enacted', nor did it produce iconic, empowering narratives of heroism and struggle against adversity. The fact that there was no "grand drama or bloody conflict" in the Federation story, unlike Anzac, was a fact that was lauded by the event's poets and speechmakers.²⁸ While it might have helped to create the conditions which made the promotion and commemoration of a national day possible, the act of Federation did not lend itself to actual commemoration. The term "Commonwealth Day" was used only once – in 1901. Thereafter, as Hirst points out, 1 January "was New Year's Day on which sport scored highly and federation not at all."²⁹

Others sought to mark a January date, some weeks after the Federation anniversary, as Australia's national day. The 26th of January had been commemorated variously as Anniversary Day, First Landing Day, ANA Day, Commonwealth Day or Foundation Day from the 1820s, but, as Inglis points out, with little traction outside New South Wales and Victoria.³⁰ The very lack of an agreed name for the commemoration suggests something of a chequered and wavering history. The designated holiday was not even set on a fixed date within each state. Rather, it was shifted to adjust to local sporting and other events. A 1911 Tasmanian newspaper voiced its disquiet about this state of affairs:

Nearly every quarter of Tasmania, as well as the Commonwealth, has a different day for the celebration of the day in order to suit some local fixture, and the consequence is that to-day will not be recognised as a general holiday.³¹

²⁷ Ihde, "Australia Federates, Australia Celebrates," 94.

²⁸ John Hirst, "When Was Our Nation Born?," *Eureka Street* 11, no. 4 (2001): 24.

²⁹ Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* 313.

³⁰ Inglis, *The Australian Colonists: An Exploration of Social History 1788-1870*, 143-45.

³¹ North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, 30 January 1911, 2.

If the day could not be uniformly celebrated in Tasmania, the smallest state, there was little hope that this might occur in the rest of country. It was a flexible anniversary which could be ignored or shifted to meet the imperatives of local events coordinators in what was already becoming, it seems, the 'land of the long weekend'.³² The ANA, founded in 1871, had particularly promoted the date for the 1888 anniversary but inter-colonial rivalries meant that most of the colonies/states continued to commemorate their own 'Foundation Days' or 'Proclamation Days'.³³ In the case of Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania these were the dates of their very separation from New South Wales. Western Australia and South Australia commemorated their own independent foundations.³⁴

The question remains as to why 26 January failed to generate anything like the reverential aura surrounding Bastille Day or American Independence Day. Most significantly, it was doubtless tainted by its associations with the nation's convict past. To acknowledge the day's significance meant recognising the continuity from penal times to the present.³⁵ South Australians in particular sought to distance themselves from what the *Brisbane Courier* had called the "cancer of convictism".³⁶ Convictism was a shameful memory and not to be celebrated. Moreover, fears that criminality was an inherited trait meant that the date and the period of history it implicitly acknowledged was, for many, best forgotten. As it transpired, South Australia did not commemorate the event as Australia's "Foundation Day" until 1910.³⁷ The timing of the event also militated against its ascendancy. Schools were essential institutions for creating commemorative traditions. The fact that the date was marginal to the school calendar meant that curriculum could never focus on it in the way that it did for related celebrations – Empire Day, Wattle Day and later, Anzac Day.

Indifference towards 26 January as a significant national landmark extended beyond South Australia. In 1906 Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, a Victorian, bemoaned its lack of traction in the public consciousness: "Our celebration marks little more than another holiday, and holidays are so frequent in this country that no special distinction attaches to it on this account".³⁸ With its labour affiliations and its geographical location, one might reasonably

³² Although that expression itself was not coined until 1978. Ronald Conway, *Land of the Long Weekend* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1978).

³³ Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* 39.

³⁴ Inglis, *The Australian Colonists: An Exploration of Social History 1788-1870*, 143.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 3 June 1881, 2.

³⁷ Elizabeth Kwan, "Celebrating Australia: A History of Australia Day,"

<http://www.australiaday.org.au/pages/images/CelebratingAustralia.pdf>.

³⁸ Cited in David Andrew Roberts, "26 January 1788: The Arrival of the First Fleet and the 'Foundation of Australia'," in *Turning Points in Australian History*, ed. Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 42.

expect the *Sydney Worker* to endorse, if not promote the event. On the contrary, it observed in 1911: "The anniversary of the hoisting of the British flag at Port Jackson was not an event calculated to call forth any display of special enthusiasm among Australians."³⁹ There was, it seems, widespread agreement that 26 January did not command the appropriate reverence to function appropriately as Australia's national day.

Significantly, re-enactments and ritual were not commonly part of 26 January commemorations until the 1930s. Re-enactments are valuable vehicles for creating a popular understanding of historical events.⁴⁰ National occasions typically propagate mythologies about origins. Therein lies their symbolic weight. However, from the perspective of the white colonist of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century, the 'original' event was devoid of the drama and heroism that made for the necessary commemorative gravitas – unlike say, accounts of the adventures of explorers such as Cook, Flinders or Burke and Wills. David Roberts points out that Anniversary Day largely celebrated the colony's, and by extrapolation the nation's, achievements and apparent destiny more than it did its origins.⁴¹ In other words, the founding moment itself was not a matter of national pride and therefore not worth revisiting.

A further reason for the failure of 26 January to mobilise the cultural mood lay in the fact that those who promoted the commemoration in the early part of nineteenth century were typically prominent emancipists and free-borns who had 'made good'.⁴² The somewhat inglorious, unprepossessing nature of Australia's foundation meant that historical narratives centred around progress and the colony's unrelenting upward trajectory. As journalist and politician E.W. O'Sullivan noted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1905: "Like many other States which afterwards achieved greatness, we had our seamy side at the beginning, but that shadow merely heightens the glory of our subsequent success".⁴³ Such observations support Anne Coote's claim that discourses constituting the event commonly devolved into a simplistic binary contrast of then and now.⁴⁴ Unlike Anzac, the events which occurred on 26 January 1788 did not embody a profound set of nation-building ideals to be invested in. Rather, they were something to be overcome. They did not constitute an adversity as such – one that might actually *be* nation-building – but were

³⁹ *Worker* (Sydney), 26 January 1911, 12.

⁴⁰ Adele Wessell, "History Making, Making Histories: Traversing the Boundaries between Contesting and Commemorating Australia Day and Columbus Day" (University of New South Wales, 2009), 263.

⁴¹ Roberts, "26 January 1788: The Arrival of the First Fleet and the 'Foundation of Australia'," 40.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1905, 4.

⁴⁴ Anne Coote, "'This Is the People's Golden Day': Anniversary Day Press Coverage and National Consciousness in New South Wales," *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 12(2010): 51.

merely an unsavoury beginning against which present achievements might be favourably measured.

Held during the height of summer, the Anniversary Day festival was celebrated in Sydney with picnics, races and commemorative dinners. Victorian commemorations too, as organised by the ANA, had a distinctly carnivalesque atmosphere, with foot and cycle races as well as competitions in art, literature and music.⁴⁵ While it did function as a rallying point for a version of local patriotism, 26 January was largely an occasion for recreation, for a focus on present pleasures and not an occasion for deep historical reflection. For the time being at least, and perhaps for well into the future, 26 January was to be enjoyed as a day's relief from the workday grind, rather than a day on which to commemorate national beginnings.

There is the possibility, too, that Australia's 'sunburnt soul' might have militated against 26 January as the commemorative day.⁴⁶ Michael Geisler has argued that the successful take-up of national holidays often involves an historical 'over-writing' of religious traditions with the secular ideology of nationalism – that the religious holiday lies hidden under the thin veneer of the nationalist day.⁴⁷ Was it a feature of the Australian 'national character' to eschew devout religious practice and hence to be less susceptible to the consecration of 'civil religion' through the commemoration of national days? One observer at the time thought so. "As to irreverence", wrote prominent educationalist Percy Rowland in 1903, "it is surely not unnatural that the citizens of the new nation, reared beneath no shadow of ancient shrines, devoid of household gods, should refuse their reverence to aught to which they do not think it is due."⁴⁸ Twelve years later, however, Australians were erecting new shrines – Anzac shrines – over which they wept and to which they unanimously pledged their profound reverence.

This lack of enthusiasm for 26 January was testament, according to some observers, to a paucity of national spirit in Australia. In editorial reflections on Anniversary Day/Foundation Day, concerns were voiced about levels of patriotism and the absence of solemnity in the

⁴⁵ E.C. Buley, *Australian Life in Town and Country* (London: Newnes, 1905), 182.

⁴⁶ David Millikan, *The Sunburnt Soul : Christianity in Search of an Australian Identity* (Homebush West: Anzea Publishers, 1981).

⁴⁷ Michael E. Geisler, "The Calendar Conundrum: National Days as Unstable Signifiers," in *National Days: Constructing and Mobilising National Identity*, ed. David McCrone and Gayle McPherson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 18.

⁴⁸ Percy Rowland, *The New Nation: A Sketch of the Social, Political and Economic Conditions and Prospects of the Australian Commonwealth* (London: Smith, Elder, 1903), 259.

observance of the national day. Broken Hill's *Barrier Miner* put it this way on 26 January 1910:

If Australians were a people of greater imagination and it has, with sorrow, to be said of more patriotism than they are, to-day would be a great national holiday ... Instead of this, the holiday is but half-heartedly observed anywhere ... the nation that does not consider its birthday worth celebrating cannot, it may be believed, think very highly of itself.⁴⁹

After expressing concerns that the day was largely of interest to the "sports and racing men" and comparing Foundation Day celebrations unfavourably with those surrounding American Independence Day, the editor went on to conclude that "we shall not have a fitting celebration of Foundation Day until we have the national pride and enthusiasm of which the celebration should be the expression".⁵⁰ The birth of the nation, it seemed, had happened not with a bang but a series of unremarkable whimpers.

Other dates were also promoted as worthy of commemoration. Keen to foster the cause of national sentiment, the ANA wrestled with the issue of 'choosing' a national day. The organisation had played a significant role in the furthering of Federation, especially in Victoria, and was, as we have seen, active in the promotion of 26 January. Yet in 1910, its New South Wales branch proposed shifting the anniversary from 26 January to 29 April, the day in 1770 when James Cook and his crew had gone ashore at Botany Bay. Here perhaps, was an heroic moment to be celebrated. The interstate conference of the association was not persuaded, however.⁵¹ In March 1911 William Holman, the Labor Premier of New South Wales, announced the possibility that yet another date, 22 August, the date on which Cook took 'possession' of the east coast of Australia, would become the focus for national commemoration.⁵² The New South Wales government's resolve subsequently disappeared in the face of a hostile reaction from the public and press. Such an oppositional response, however, did not hinge on any idealistic or sentimental attachment to 26 January. The *Sydney Morning Herald* resented the shift to a different day because, it claimed: "The summer is the time for play as much as the winter is the time for work".⁵³ The response was fanned by the influential sailing fraternity whose Anniversary

⁴⁹ *Barrier Miner*, 26 January 1910, 2.

⁵⁰ *Barrier Miner*, 26 January 1910, 2.

⁵¹ Kwan, "Celebrating Australia".

⁵² Maurice French, "The Ambiguity of Empire Day in New South Wales 1901-21: Imperial Consensus or National Division," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 24, no. 1 (1978): 69.

⁵³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 April 1911, 8.

Regatta on Sydney Harbour, a fixture on the Sydney events calendar since 1837, was threatened by the change of date.⁵⁴

The ANA, despite being an organisation whose greatest influence lay in Victoria, continued to advocate a more thorough integration of 26 January to promote national awareness, though it appears that the organisation remained open to the possibility that some other date might also suffice to effect the same objective. It is possible to discern indeed, an element of desperation in the tone of this communication from one of the ANA's officers in 1912:

One thing we are doing is endeavouring to secure the recognition of one day in the year, marking some great Australian event, as a national holiday throughout the Commonwealth – a day which shall be established in the law of the land by Federal enactment and be as faithfully observed even as Christmas Day; a day which shall not be marred by the caprice of provincial Government or by the disruptive resolutions of any organisation whatever – in short, "Australia's Day".⁵⁵

Yet the ANA, an organisation which putatively eschewed party politics and was ostensibly dedicated to the promotion of an Australian national consciousness, was itself the subject of internal division based on state, regional and political lines. Controversy ensued when, in 1904, the Western Australian branch of the organisation, whose political alignments tended to reflect its working- and lower-middle-class constituency, sought to promote the commemoration of Eureka Day on 3 December, the fiftieth anniversary of the uprising on the Ballarat goldfields. It was not the first time the date had been advocated. At the time of the Centenary celebrations in 1888, the *Bulletin* had published an essay entitled "The Day We Ought to Celebrate" which proposed the day be commemorated.⁵⁶ In response to the 1904 proposal, one newspaper correspondent, signing themselves "Loyalist", wrote sarcastically to the *West Australian*: "Why resurrect a deplorable thing that has been buried fifty years? Why not celebrate all the riots and rebellions that have taken place in the British Dominions?"⁵⁷ The *Sunday Times* provided a more tempered response, noting and praising the *intent* of the commemoration:

⁵⁴ French, "The Ambiguity of Empire Day in New South Wales 1901-21: Imperial Consensus or National Division," 69.

⁵⁵ A.G. Evans, Secretary, ANA, Broken Hill Branch in *Barrier Miner*, 26 January 1912, 4.

⁵⁶ *Bulletin*, 21 January 1888, 5.

⁵⁷ *West Australian*, 11 October 1904, 8.

The A.N.A. deserve every credit if only for seeking something that can be commemorated with a "celebration" in Australia. We really require, so to speak, a few land-marks in our history – some events which will enable us to appeal to local patriotism. That motive must be noble which seeks to awaken pride in the deeds of our own citizens and to stimulate patriotism by a record of the heroism of the patriots of the past.⁵⁸

From the perspective of the early twentieth century the nation's historical record was not overly-endowed with significant episodes worthy of such commemoration. Citizens needed to be made cognisant of potential landmarks in the past and, by implication, significant events in the future which held the potential to serve the needs of "stimulating patriotism". The *Sunday Times* then went on to give a brief account of events at Eureka, nuanced in such a way as to downplay the seditious aspects of the uprising and to stress its ennobling constitutional elements. Parallels were drawn with Cromwell's and William of Orange's uprisings against unpopular despots in Britain's past: "It was not revolution but simply reform that was intended," it noted.⁵⁹ Thus it was possible to re-frame politically divisive and highly conflictual events such as Eureka in such a way as to serve the cause of constructing a unifying national mythology.

Despite attempts to sanitise events at Eureka, it did not unify national sentiment. This became evident in 1904, when the West Australian Trades Hall Council proposed the third of December as the date for a combined national celebration of Eight Hours Day/Labour Day, a day which was, (and remains) celebrated, on different dates throughout the states. In December 1904 there were significant commemorations of the fiftieth anniversary of Eureka at Ballarat (an ANA stronghold), Broken Hill, Kalgoorlie and in Perth where members of the "ANA, the Irish National Federation, the Celtic Club, the Social Democratic Federation and many labour unions" formed a procession through the streets of the town.⁶⁰ While it continued to be commemorated locally in the Ballarat area, support for "Eureka Day" or ("Stockade Day" as it was also known), dissipated rapidly, so that it had virtually disappeared by 1914.

The ANA was more successful and united in the promotion of Wattle Day, typically celebrated in late August or early September. The 'manufacture' of the day was, in part, a

⁵⁸ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 23 October 1904, 5.

⁵⁹ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 23 October 1904, 5.

⁶⁰ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 6 December, 1904, 30.

reaction to the introduction of Empire Day, as was acknowledged by Adelaide's *Register* in 1915.⁶¹ According to one account, the celebration had its genesis at an Empire Day celebration at the Girls High School in Sydney in 1906.⁶² It was not till August 1909 however, that a meeting was held in Sydney's Royal Society rooms with a view to "stimulating national sentiment and connecting it with love of our beautiful flora." This meeting resolved to recommend the "setting apart throughout the Commonwealth of a day on which the Australian national flower – the Wattle Blossom – might be worn, and its display encouraged."⁶³

The wattle had been promoted by middle-class, largely urban patriots as a wholesome national emblem from the late 1880s.⁶⁴ South Australia's Wattle Blossom League had close associations with the ANA. It promoted social events and encouraged the creation of Australian literature and songs.⁶⁵ The links between a distinctive Australian spirit and a distinctive indigenous floral emblem were made manifest. Indeed, since the 1890s, the promotion of native motifs and icons in literature and art had been a feature of the Australian cultural landscape, with some appearing on the coat of arms.⁶⁶

Wattle Day was first celebrated in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide in September 1910. The flower was worn at public and school events including tree plantings, excursions and presentations.⁶⁷ Curriculum could be built around the exploration and celebration of Australia's botanical distinctiveness. The healthy exploration of nature, too, would help to offset the deleterious physical and moral effects of city living. As Libby Robin points out, non-Indigenous Australians confronted what was, for them, a foreign ecology measured by expectations and precepts gained through long exposure to European literatures, arts and lifestyles.⁶⁸ Dorothea Mackellar's 'wide brown land' was still alien territory to many of Australia's inhabitants. The Wattle Day movement was consistent with a broader cultural imperative to address this situation by encouraging bushwalking and a more thorough-going engagement with the Australian landscape. Regrettably, the conservationist imperatives implicit in the movement could come unstuck. In their energetic pursuit of the

⁶¹ *Register*, 30 July 1915, 8.

⁶² Edwin Ride, "Wattle Days from Adam Lindsay Gordon to Ginger Mick," *National Library of Australia News* 17, no. 11 (2007): 5.

⁶³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 August 1909, 5.

⁶⁴ Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, The Australian Experience (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 117.

⁶⁵ Maria Hitchcock, *Wattle* (Canberra: AGPS, 1991), 3.

⁶⁶ Libby Robin, "Nationalising Nature: Wattle Days in Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 26, no. 73 (2002): 14.

⁶⁷ Hitchcock, *Wattle*, 10-11.

⁶⁸ Robin, "Nationalising Nature: Wattle Days in Australia," 16.

bloom, some enthusiasts around Melbourne destroyed trees on public and private property in September 1912, to the point where the Heidelberg Progress Association vigorously protested the celebration of the day.⁶⁹

Notwithstanding minor controversies of this kind, Wattle Day was typically unprovocative and well-supported in the press. Indeed Sowden, editor and part proprietor of the *Register*, was a pioneer in the movement from its inception and the president of the South Australian Branch of the Wattle Day League. It is hardly surprising then that his newspaper sought to guard against the accusation that the initiative might be considered “trivial” and endorsed the event in these terms:

That there is a strong and increasing Australian sentiment no competent observer will deny. Underneath all questions of policy, class and creed is the emerging national consciousness and all who love the young nation and are concerned in her destiny will not regard as trivial an attempt to materialise Australian patriotism in an Australian flower.⁷⁰

In January 1913 the Wattle Day League held its first national conference where it began lobbying for the adoption of the event federally. It was promoted as an inclusive day and a means with which to foster a national sentiment that would apparently transcend political and religious division.⁷¹ The day’s champions were quick to ensure, however that the odour of the wattle should not be tainted by any whiff of anti-British republicanism. Duly chastened perhaps by the political controversy surrounding their earlier flirtation with Eureka Day, the West Australian branch of the ANA endorsed the initiative in 1913 in these terms: “The 1st of September, the proposed Wattle Day, *having no party or political significance*, [emphasis added] we as an association claim that it might well be a national holiday.”⁷² “Political significance” was by now understood to sound a death knell to national unity.

Wattle Day, as a day “with no party or political significance”, gained in popularity nationally such that by 1912 it was also celebrated in Western Australia and Queensland – though not on the same date.⁷³ It did not create controversy, nor did it attract the kind of contestation associated with Anniversary Day, Eureka Day or, as will be shown, Empire Day. On the other hand it lacked a certain gravitas. As with other national days it was

⁶⁹ Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian, 13 September 1912, 3.

⁷⁰ *Register*, 30 August 1910, 8.

⁷¹ *Register*, 26 August 1912, 6.

⁷² *West Australian*, 8 July 1913, 5.

⁷³ Libby Robin, “Wattle Nationalism,” *National Library of Australia News* 18, no. 4 (2008): 4.

invented, yet its invention was considerably more transparent than others. It could not appeal to an iconic founding event or historical episode. The wattle blossom, one of its advocates later claimed, was “like a piece of solidified sunshine representing the cheerful spirit of a people that [sic] will not be downtrodden”.⁷⁴ This was hardly a profound or national motto. There was no legend or tradition to inspire or from which to take comfort or imagine and build a future. Australians would wait for the consecration of Kipling’s ‘Lest We Forget’ in April 1916 for such evocative rhetoric. The *Worker* gave Wattle Day “an approving pat on the back” but could not resist gently mocking the botanical preoccupations of the patriots. “If the wattle ever dies out, Australia should never go short of a substitute. There is always the prickly pear”.⁷⁵

The Call to Empire: Trafalgar Day and Empire Day

Some of the competing commemorative observances had their origins in events outside Australia. At the same time that the commemorations discussed above were being advocated, Empire-wide initiatives, such as Trafalgar Day and Empire Day were advocated in Australia to reaffirm its imperial connections. Britain had no real history of celebrating an iconic national day based on an historical event, though Waterloo Day (18 June) had been an occasion for dinners and social gatherings since the 1840s. Trafalgar Day and Empire Day however, were recent inventions. In 1894, in the context of its growing naval race with Germany, Britain’s Navy League launched Trafalgar Day, 21 October, marking Nelson’s victory over the French in the famous sea battle. The event was also popularised in Australia, in particular on its centenary in 1905. It was an occasion for newspaper editorials to play the Empire card and to emphasise the nation’s shared British heritage. Trafalgar constituted less of a turning point in a new era in British achievement than one landmark in a progressive accumulation of victories in an inexorable march towards imperial greatness. Nelson’s achievements were located within the context of “that long line of sea fighters who have made the navy”.⁷⁶

The ‘invention’ of this tradition departed in significant ways from the production of days of national significance elsewhere. The nationalist mythologies of France, the United States and the nation-states which emerged in continental Europe in the nineteenth century were often built around discourses of newness, change and an ideological break with the old order. Britain’s mythmakers on the other hand, stressed continuity and heritage and the

⁷⁴ K.R. Cramp, *Wattle Day and Its Significance* ([Sydney]: Australian Wattle League, [1935?]), 5.

⁷⁵ *Worker* (Brisbane), 7 May 1914, 13; 21 August 1913, 10.

⁷⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 October 1905, 12.

efficacy of values long-held and traditions long-practised – even if they had actually been invented just a few years earlier.

Attempts were made to downplay the event's overtly-propagandist intent and mark it as one which somehow transcended the political. In its 1909 leader on Trafalgar Day, Launceston's *Examiner* wrote: "It is with a feeling of relief that we turn from the petty, sordid struggle for place and pay presented by Tasmanian politics to a contemplation of the crowning episode in the life of a man whose soul was above self, and whose one thought was the weal and honour of his country."⁷⁷ Here "politics" was equated with the actions of the labour movement and its supporters. This "petty sordid struggle for place and pay" was an imperative which a labour paper would likely have called an ongoing battle for social equality and wage justice. The empire, Nelson, the flag, the crown, the "soul above self" and the "weal and honour of the country", were all cherished higher values not to be threatened nor sullied by association with more base political aims such as those associated with labour and the union movement. The defence of the realm could not be sacrificed to such selfish political point-scoring. Loyalties to nation and empire were supposed to trump any loyalty to class. Yet, like Empire Day, Trafalgar Day was thus highly 'political' in the values that it promoted.

Empire Day, 24 May (Queen Victoria's birthday), was instituted in Canada in the late 1890s and popularised in Britain by Reginald Brabazon, the twelfth Earl of Meath. The commemoration, which has been analysed in some depth by Maurice French, Gavin Souter, and also by Stewart Firth and Jeanette Hoorn, was promoted in Australia under the auspices of the British Empire League (BEL) – "the foster home of British patriotism" as Maurice French called it.⁷⁸ Souter has argued that imperial fervour, while existing at all levels of society, was stronger among the middle class and wealthy than among the working class.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the parliamentary voice of the working class, the Labor Party, acknowledged, promoted and practised what one historian has called an "empire nationalism", even if its performance did not extend to the jingoistic fervour typically in evidence on Empire Day.⁸⁰ For its part, the BEL was an Anglophile pressure group whose

⁷⁷ *Examiner* (Launceston), 21 October 1909, 4.

⁷⁸ Maurice French, "'One People, One Destiny' - a Question of Loyalty: The Origins of Empire Day in New South Wales, 1900-1905," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 61, no. 4 (1975): 242.

⁷⁹ Gavin Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia*, Revised ed. (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2000), 138.

⁸⁰ Mark Hearn, "Bound with the Empire: Narratives of Race, Nation, and Empire in the Australian Labor Party's Defence Policy, 1901-21," *War & Society* 32, no. 2 (2013): 95.

constituency was conservative, middle-class and closely linked to the Church of England.⁸¹ Moreover, as Stewart Firth and Jeanette Hoorn have pointed out, it was formed to oppose the Anti-War League which was campaigning against the prosecution of the Boer War.⁸² Historians have suggested that the Empire Day initiative was taken to allay post-Federation fears about dissident republicanism and the possible weakening of ties with Britain.⁸³ Australia's response to the declaration of war in August 1914 would suggest that the move was either highly successful in achieving its goal of sustaining imperial allegiance or, more likely, that fears that Australians might choose to 'cut the painter' were largely unsubstantiated.

The commemoration emphasised and nurtured British imperial loyalties through schools. Children were taught both the benefits and responsibilities of the imperial connection. The curriculum delivered accounts of British military and naval 'heroes' and their victories, while the children performed drills and rituals, pledged to fight to preserve the Empire should it be required of them in the future, waved Union Jacks and delivered renditions of "God save the King".⁸⁴ Inspired once again by the model of American 4th of July celebrations, a date which he claimed "had helped to keep the states together and had ever reminded them of their oneness," the founding President of the BEL, Anglican clergyman Canon F.B. Boyce, lobbied hard for the institution of what he called a "Citizen's Empire Day", a "kind of Empire Christmas Day" – a day for adults as well as children.⁸⁵ From 1903, the BEL had proposed Empire Day be substituted for the existing August Bank Holiday, which was described by Boyce as "a meaningless holiday clothed with no national or historical significance."⁸⁶

Empire Day had a broader uptake beyond the schools. While it was never a national public holiday, the event found expression in patriotic gatherings, processions, public luncheons, and concerts. Martin Place played host to the annual celebrations in Sydney.⁸⁷ For many of its proponents Empire Day was a sacred occasion.⁸⁸ Protestant churches endorsed the

⁸¹ French, "The Ambiguity of Empire Day in New South Wales 1901-21: Imperial Consensus or National Division," 63.

⁸² Stewart Firth and Jeanette Hoorn, "From Empire Day to Cracker Night," in *Australian Popular Culture*, ed. Peter Spearritt and David Walker (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), 18.

⁸³ Kwan, "Celebrating Australia"; French, "The Ambiguity of Empire Day in New South Wales 1901-21: Imperial Consensus or National Division," 63.

⁸⁴ Firth and Hoorn, "From Empire Day to Cracker Night," 26.

⁸⁵ F.B. Boyce, *Empire Day* (Sydney: Christian World, 1921), 9.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁷ Firth and Hoorn, "From Empire Day to Cracker Night," 19.

⁸⁸ Neville Meaney, "Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography," *Australian Historical Studies* 32, no. 116 (2001): 79.

day in Sunday services. Congregations joined in singing enthusiastically the words of Kipling's poem "The Recessional", which alluded to the decline of past empires, warned against the perils of imperial hubris, and demanded vigilance from the current generation through its refrain "Lest we forget, Lest we forget". It was a phrase that would be put to work ten years later by another Anglican clergyman, Canon David Garland, in the service of Anzac commemoration.

The champions of Trafalgar Day and Empire Day often sought to downplay the gaudy displays of jingoism with which the events were typically associated. For the *West Australian*, Trafalgar Day was an occasion for reflection, if not solemnity: "Beneath all the surface ebullience that may accompany to-day's celebration there is a grave and enduring thoughtfulness," it wrote in 1909.⁸⁹ For Boyce, Empire Day was an occasion to mobilise his muscular Christianity to brace against the potential moral decay of the nation. He called for moral and spiritual renewal:

Let them remember that sin weakened the national life, and had led to the fall of empires, while righteousness exalted people. They should aim to make their manhood vigorous, and generally this would not be unless men were morally strong. They should fight against foes within and especially against that trinity of evil – intemperance, gambling, and impurity. No quest, no conquest.⁹⁰

Thus the view from the high moral ground in Australia was, characteristically, both judgemental and alarmist. It was a disposition which was shared, as we shall see in later chapters, by many of the proponents of Anzac Day.

Despite its popularity, Empire Day was highly divisive. Gavin Souter has called the day "the closest approximation Australia had yet found to a national day" and "an occasion for anthems and collective self-esteem".⁹¹ David Carter suggests that Empire Day was a more popular and more solemn occasion than 26 January.⁹² Boyce's stated desire was that the day, like all such commemorations, "should be kept free from any party entanglements."⁹³ With wistful, naïve optimism he declaimed in 1908: "Catholic and Protestant, Liberal, Progressive and Labour Parties should all on this day forget their differences and stand

⁸⁹ *West Australian*, 21 October 1909, 6.

⁹⁰ Boyce, *Empire Day*, 40.

⁹¹ Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia*, 129, 31.

⁹² Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams & Diversity*, 61.

⁹³ Boyce, *Empire Day*, 23.

together".⁹⁴ Given the political and sectarian dynamics of Australian society at the time it was a vain hope. In marked contrast to the initial commemoration of Anzac Day in 1916, where Labor politicians joined with conservative clergymen to promote the day, "party entanglements" continued aplenty over Empire Day. When Boyce proposed the Empire Day celebration in Australia he did not envisage it replacing 26 January.⁹⁵ The event nonetheless provoked a hostile, satirical response from the pages of the labour press which typically saw itself as the voice of nationalist Australian sentiment. The *Bulletin* referred to it as "the official feast day of St Jingo"⁹⁶. In 1905, the *Worker* attacked the initiative with more rancour, railing against what it called the "lickspittle reverence" for empire being inculcated in schools and labelling the event "a blow at Australian nationalism".⁹⁷ A year later it called the event "Anti-Australian".⁹⁸ The *Bulletin's* responses tended to become more temperate and conciliatory from the 1910s, often ignoring the event all together.⁹⁹ The *Worker* (Brisbane) sustained its critique of the event through the period leading up to the outbreak of war in 1914.¹⁰⁰ Simply put, any bid to commemorate Empire Day as Australia's national day was divisive and would be blocked by some as class-based and therefore anti-Australian.

While contesting Empire Day was good sport on the Left, it was not their sole preserve. In 1908 Cardinal Patrick Moran, head of the Irish-dominated Catholic Church in Australia, spoke out against the celebration. British imperial fervour ran contrary to Moran's and many Catholics' commitment to Irish and Australian national self-determination. Moran proposed an alternative celebration for schools on the same date, dubbing it 'Australia Day'. Nearly one quarter of Australians were Irish or descended from Irish.¹⁰¹ The majority, though not all of these, were Catholics, many of whom were reluctant to subsume their Irishness into British Imperial identity.

Sectarian division and militant Irish nationalist sentiment had long been notably contentious features on the Australian social landscape. Such tensions ran high over the issue of Empire Day. Many Catholics committed to a form of patriotism which pledged support to Australia without forsaking Ireland. In 1913 a senior Catholic prelate

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹⁶ *Bulletin*, 18 May 1905, 8.

⁹⁷ *Worker* (Sydney), 27 May 1905, 3.

⁹⁸ *Worker* (Sydney), 19 May 1906, 3.

⁹⁹ John Rickard, "Loyalties," in *Out of Empire: The British Dominion of Australia*, ed. John Arnold, Peter Spearritt, and David Walker (Port Melbourne: Mandarin, 1993), 37.

¹⁰⁰ *Worker* (Brisbane), 28 May 1914, 7; 22 June 1912, 4.

¹⁰¹ Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia* (Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1986), 120.

pronounced Australia Day “the only truly Australian national festival.”¹⁰² While some have argued that Empire Day celebrations were not devoid of Australian nationalist references, tensions around the celebration of the occasion were testament nonetheless to what one historian has called a “sustained, if sometimes muted, nationalist versus imperialist dichotomy”.¹⁰³

Consensus around a singular national commemoration was, by 1914, more elusive than ever. Australians were encouraged to acknowledge loyalty jointly to Australia and to the Empire. Maps on the walls of school classrooms, marked prominently in red, signified Britain’s all-encompassing and seemingly benevolent imperium. Despite some incipient gestures in the direction of republicanism voiced in the *Bulletin* and elsewhere in the 1880s, the notion that Australia might become politically independent from Britain was, by 1901, largely unthinkable.¹⁰⁴ Federation had never been intended as a break with Britain. Australian nationhood was severely circumscribed by its umbilical connection to, and the nature of the legal compact made with, the home country. Many Australians practised an ecumenical patriotism in which commemorations such as Anniversary Day, Wattle Day and Empire Day might each appeal to some aspect of the national consciousness and to people’s understanding of who they were. Any national day which might purport to ‘belong’ to all Australians needed to accommodate the nationalist/imperialist paradox, bear few signs of contrivance, be acceptable to the range of political parties and have the required degree of gravitas to attract allegiance to it.

While some days were commemorated enthusiastically in some sectors, none were commemorated unanimously. Nor was one necessarily commemorated at the expense of another. The heterogeneous and somewhat abeyant nature of national commemoration in Australia during this period derived from the occurrence of a number of socio-cultural phenomena: the dual nature of loyalty to both Australia and to Britain; the legacy of old colonial rivalries and allegiances; and the sentiments of the significant portion of the population who were Catholic and Irish or descended from Irish. Even the Labor Party, that great nationalising force in Australian politics, could not sustain a unified national commemoration. The movement took to the streets to celebrate its achievements annually on Labour Day – a public event in which all states and territories took part. Yet the legacy

¹⁰² Archbishop Michael Kelly, cited in Firth and Hoorn, "From Empire Day to Cracker Night," 24.

¹⁰³ Walter Phillips, "Protestants and Australian Patriotism from Federation to the First World War," *Proceedings of the Uniting Church Historical Society Synod of Victoria* 5, no. 2 (1998): 48; French, "The Ambiguity of Empire Day in New South Wales 1901-21: Imperial Consensus or National Division," 65.

¹⁰⁴ Rickard, "Loyalties," 37.

of the movement's colonial and regional origins remained. The date and even the name for the event, Eight Hours Day and May Day in some cases, varied from state to state.¹⁰⁵

Commemorations such as Labour Day and St Patrick's Day represented sectional interests. Their observance was a political statement and hence seen as inherently divisive, as was conversely, the observance of Empire Day. Anniversary Day (26 January) was contested on a number of counts and failed to capture the national imagination. Enthusiasm for Eureka Day was sectional and local. Wattle Day was contrived and lightweight – “only a farce”, as the *Brisbane Courier* correspondent quoted above called it. It is no surprise, then, given the persistence of this lacuna around national commemoration, that Australian patriotic commemoration was measured and found wanting against benchmarks set elsewhere in the world. In January 1914 a Queensland newspaper commented thus:

That national vanity has not become the besetting sin of the Australian people is abundantly proved by this the perfunctory way in which they are content to celebrate the anniversary of their country's birth. We have adopted with a generous tolerance all kinds of high days and holidays from other lands, but as yet this young nation celebrates its own natal day with maimed rites.¹⁰⁶

A significant distinction was being made here between “high days” and “holidays”. Australians clearly relished the latter. “High days” were another matter. The British celebrated no particular equivalent national commemorative day, so the mother country provided no clear model or impetus. Australians seeking to promote a sense of national consciousness did invoke and praise examples from other countries, however. In response to the Centenary celebrations of 1888, the *Bulletin* insisted that “the so-called Australian centenary is a feeble copy of the great American celebration of a few years ago, [1876] and it resembles it in the same degree as an ape resembles a man.”¹⁰⁷ Likewise, in a 1905 piece, an Australian journalist noted of the American citizen: “the memories of the 4th July, of the work of Washington, of Lincoln, of McKinley, urge him to be true to the ideals for which these men fought and died”.¹⁰⁸ Ironically, given the turn of events eighteen months later, it was the commemoration of the *Deutsches National Fest* by the Brisbane German community which was favourably reviewed by the *Brisbane Courier* in January 1913 as an

¹⁰⁵ Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity: Issues in Australian Studies*, 91.

¹⁰⁶ *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 26 January 1914, 6.

¹⁰⁷ *Bulletin*, 21 January 1888, 4.

¹⁰⁸ C.H. Northcott, “Is Australia a Nation?,” *Review of Reviews* 27, no. 6 (1905): 566.

exemplar of such occasions.¹⁰⁹ Yet, for all the acknowledgement of the value of such events for others, Australia's citizenry was yet to find, by 1914, an equivalent event or ceremony worthy of the status of 'National Day'.

In summary then, early twentieth-century Australians knew what a genuine national 'founding moment' looked, felt and sounded like, and they also knew that it was yet to be part of the national fabric. While it was applauded as a virtuous civic achievement, Federation failed to command the attention required to ensure a status as national day. The disreputable 26 January did not meet expectations because it recognised and implicitly acknowledged convictism. Eureka Day offended the conservatives by raising the spectre of sedition and anti-authoritarianism. Wattle Day was lightweight. Thus, at the outbreak of war in August 1914, Australia was still lacking an iconic national commemoration.

Moral rearmament and the urge to war

Many proponents of a national day stressed that the commemoration should be a solemn occasion and not simply an excuse for junketing and a day off work – "high days" rather than "holidays" was the nomenclature used by the *Morning Bulletin*. In that January 1914 column, the editor went on to insist that Australia, "as the only nation in the world which has a definite birthday", required a "universal Foundation Day, a solemn national festival and no mere holiday".¹¹⁰ A national "holiday" was serious business. A horse race would not suffice. Significant national anniversaries should be marked with the appropriate gravitas. They were not simply an occasion for beach excursions, sporting events and picnics. In some quarters at least, there was a perceived need to shift the emphasis away from such hedonistic, frivolous and self-indulgent activities. The Australian preoccupation with spectator sport, too, was symptomatic of a profound national malaise. As essayist and progressive reformer, Walter Murdoch noted in 1912: "If the vast crowds which came together to witness gladiator shows were a sign of national decadence, I do not see how we shall avoid saying the same of the vast crowds which assemble to watch the big football matches."¹¹¹ The business of reverential national commemoration went hand in glove with instilling appropriate notions of citizenship as a plank in the bulwark against the seeming threat of what Murdoch and others called "national decadence". In the years prior

¹⁰⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 18 January 1913, 5.

¹¹⁰ *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 26 January 1914, 6.

¹¹¹ Walter Murdoch, "Hopes and Fears for Australia," *Australia Today: Special Number of the Australian Traveller* (1912): 116.

to 1914, the rhetoric of moral rearmament often accompanied these occasions. As will be shown in later chapters, it was also a notable feature of Anzac commemoration during the war years.

There had long been anxieties in the nation that the Australian climate and topography would impact adversely on their 'British stock'. Darwinian forecasts were being made about the development of a monolithic Australian 'national type,' many of which were decidedly pessimistic.¹¹² The discourse of anxiety was fuelled by such social trends as growing urbanisation and a reduced birth-rate, both of which had been evident since the late nineteenth century. Moral guardians of the period voiced alarm at shifting public standards such as mixed bathing at beaches, ragtime music and the fact that a man walked down Pitt Street, Sydney, in March 1907, without a hat on his head!¹¹³ Such trends were seen as symptoms of the rapid onset of moral degeneration in Australian society. For some, the seemingly pre-eminent national day, Melbourne Cup Day, that "annual riot of fiends", was itself testament to the kind of moral turpitude into which the nation had sunk.¹¹⁴

An important thematic in this discourse of anxiety was the perceived degeneration of Australia's urban youth. Graeme Davison has charted the shift in fictional images of Australian male youth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – from the robust, muscular and healthy to the sallow-faced, hollow-chested image of the urban larrikin.¹¹⁵ The 'demise' of Australian youth was associated in the literary imagination with the debilitating effect of city life. Prominent among proponents of the theory of 'urban degeneration' was none other than C.E.W. Bean, whose role in the later construction of the Anzac mythology was highly significant. In a series on the Australian city, produced for the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1907, Bean wrote:

The civilisation of Australian cities is already decadent. Its amusements show it; its literature shows it ... As soon as a nation begins to shut itself up in cities, it begins to decay. First its bodily strength, and along with that its moral strength declines.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Stephen Garton, "War and Masculinity in Twentieth Century Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 22, no. 56 (2009): 88; White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, 64-66.

¹¹³ C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, vol. V (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1981), 279, 315.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 332.

¹¹⁵ Graeme Davison, "The City-Bred Child and Urban Reform in Melbourne 1900-1940," in *Social Process and the City*, ed. Peter Williams, *Urban Studies Yearbook* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 143-45.

¹¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1907, 6.

Such a world view made no allowance for a separation of physical and moral wellbeing. A crisis, such as war, would test both a nation's physical strength and its moral fibre. The nation's redemption lay in its potential to demonstrate its prowess in both spheres within the context of war. As with Murdoch's comments above, Rome's rise and fall was evoked as the classical example of the potential for imperial collapse from within, unless the appropriate moral buttressing was applied.¹¹⁷ H.H. Austin of the ANA emphasised that organisation's role in the maintenance of national civic virtue:

From our position as representing the national and patriotic association, comes an insistent call to resist and oppose to the uttermost, every trend in the national character that makes for decay. We are cowards and utterly false to the trust reposed in us if we do not stem the tide to the extent of our ability. It will mean much obloquy, misrepresentation, and cheap sneers from that section (and a large section) whose motto seemingly is let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die. But the hour has not arrived when we must abandon our country to these blind, selfish fools, whose one aim in life is self-gratification.¹¹⁸

Austin demanded that Australia turn its attention to the important matter of nation-building, eschewing the "self-gratification" associated with the tote, the race course and the pub.

Other moral campaigners, such as Brisbane medical practitioner Thomas Pennington Lucas, threw down the gauntlet to public figures to model appropriate behaviours and to lead the country from the moral malaise in which it found itself: "The moral tone of the nation is the national barometer. The duty of public men is to raise the all-round morals of the people. We cannot do that unless we struggle to suppress all public evil."¹¹⁹ For Lucas, governments had to take responsibility for the building of national character through inculcation of healthy notions of citizenship, of which the appropriate commemoration of a "national day" would be just one indicator. For others, such as James Barrett, another medical practitioner, national character, like the human physique, could only be forged in adversity. Writing a decade before Gallipoli on the Victorian character, Barrett prophesied chillingly: "The only doubt remains as to whether she [the state of Victoria] has the right quality; that is to say whether the Victorian character will be complete until a few tens of

¹¹⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1907, 6; See for example the comments of H.H. Austin of the Australian Natives Association, *Register*, 22 April 1909, 4.

¹¹⁸ *Register*, 22 April 1909, 4.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Pennington Lucas, *Shall Australasia Be a Nation* (Brisbane: Edwards, Dunlop, 1907), 313.

thousands of native-born have been mown down with Maxims and 4.7 inch guns."¹²⁰ It was war which was the ultimate test of the nation and/or the race. Therein lay Australia's moral redemption from the iniquities which some believed encompassed it. As Davison suggests, prophecies such as Barrett's were not merely evidence of this mindset but also an indicator of the powerful psychological urge to warfare building up during the Edwardian era.¹²¹ The nation's redemption at Gallipoli was being prefigured and in a sense predetermined here, ten years before the event took place.

Divine judgement for moral decay could, it seems, be wrought from the mailed fist of the nation's enemies. Events such as Empire Day and Trafalgar Day were often occasions to stress the need for military preparedness. In its 1912 editorial on Empire Day, the *Sydney Morning Herald* told its readers: "In some quarters it is still the fashion to sneer at Empire Day as an excuse for flag waving and bombastic speechifying. That is not its purpose at all." It went on to note that, "at the present time, more than ever before, it behoves us to show the world that the Empire is united. It is an age of war and rumours of war, and who can say when the blow will fall."¹²² Many believed that war was imminent and even inevitable. Nor, however, was the proposition that nations were engaged in an ongoing struggle in which only the fit would survive, unique to Australians.¹²³ Thus the purpose of commemoration was bound up with the business of military and spiritual preparation for an impending conflict. Moreover, success in such a conflict was vested as much in what was typically referred to as "national character", as it was in training and the build-up of armaments. "Old Salt", applauded the loyalist sentiments expressed in the *Examiner* on Trafalgar Day 1909, but warned further of the dire consequences of a lack of vigilance and the ongoing moral decay he witnessed around him:

But how vain such thoughts, when one looks round at the deadly apathy displayed by the present generation; how thankless for the glorious heritage and noble traditions, handed down and won by the lavish expenditure of the best blood of England's noblest sons. All noble aspirations seem to be sacrificed to a sordid, grasping cupidity, a continuous struggle for place and pay amongst the elders, whilst our

¹²⁰ Barrett, James "National Character", cited in Davison, "The City-Bred Child and Urban Reform in Melbourne 1900-1940," 149.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹²² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 1912, 8.

¹²³ Henry Reynolds, "Are Nations Really Made in War?," in *What's Wrong with Anzac?: The Militarisation of Australian History*, ed. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), 33.

youth are wholly given over to play and sport as the chief business of life. I'm afraid a rude awakening awaits us in the near future, unless a great change takes place.¹²⁴

Old Salt's "rude awakening", of course, was war. War was the cleansing fire which would purge the nation of its indifference and lift it out of its moral malaise.

The champions of events such as Empire Day and Trafalgar Day were not unique in Australia in warning against the threat to the nation of war and the spectre of possible invasion. By the early 1900s the imagination of the coming war and the disposition towards military preparedness were very evident. The imagined war was typically a race war with Asia – China or Japan or some combination of the two. Pleas to guard the nation against this threat featured prominently in discourses promoting a sense of national consciousness, such as this from the *Brisbane Courier*: "Australia will perish as the home of white men unless the national consciousness is awakened to impending dangers, the need for compulsory military and naval training".¹²⁵ Catriona Elder suggests that such anxieties and fears were central to an understanding of what constituted Australianness at this time.¹²⁶ Dystopian fictional accounts of invasion, such as Kenneth Mackay's *The Yellow Wave* (1895) and C.H. Kirmess's *The Australian Crisis* (1909), painted gory scenes of an Australia over-run by Asian hordes as a consequence of Old Salt's "sordid grasping cupidity" – apathy, selfishness, and an abject national moral flabbiness.

By contrast, others such as poet Grant Madison Hervey, saw in such a conflict Australia's making rather than its downfall:

Up from the glooming east shall drive, o land o'erwhelming

But we shall bring thee through, shall bring thee to the shore.¹²⁷

As Inglis points out, many expressed the belief that Australia's 'making' was still in the future. It was this imagined future which was pressed into service to promote a particular version of nationalism which revolved around the experience of war.¹²⁸ The proposition that nationality would only be realised through the test of war was a powerful trope in Australian writing from the 1890s. In 1895 Henry Lawson wrote in "The Star of Australasia":

¹²⁴ *Examiner* (Launceston), 22 October 1909, 7.

¹²⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 August 1908, 4.

¹²⁶ Catriona Elder, *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2007), 17.

¹²⁷ "Battle Hymn of the New Australia" in Grant Madison Hervey, *Australians Yet: And Other Verses* (Melbourne: Lothian, 1913), 195, 97.

¹²⁸ Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, 72.

And this you learned from the libelled past,
Though its methods were somewhat rude –
A nation's born where the shells fall fast,
Or its lease of life renewed.¹²⁹

In 1907 journalist and lawyer Alfred Buchanan suggested that Lawson's invocation quoted earlier was, to date, unrealised. "Australia must develop some variation in the pleasure-seeking, money-making, work-shifting propensities that represent the greater part of social life", he noted.¹³⁰

The Australian must be prepared, in the event of great emergency, to die for something or somebody ... Australia badly wants an ideal. At present it has none worthy of the name. It is not looking for one; at least there are few indications of a search. What is everybody striving for? Unto what altar is the mysterious priest of nationhood leading his followers?¹³¹

Buchanan's questions were answered in April 1915. The "mysterious priest of nationhood" had led Australians to a sacrificial altar – and a bloody one at that.

Australian involvement in the Boer War had created expectations about national self-realisation. *Flashes*, a popular Brisbane magazine, predicted in February 1900 that "from the landing of Australian troops on African soil will date the true birth of Australian nationhood".¹³² While there was an air of self-satisfaction around the achievements of colonial troops, the Boer War failed to capture the national imagination in the way that Gallipoli later did.¹³³ A distinct, masculinist, robust Australian national identity was not forged in the Boer War. The symbols and iconography of Australian nationality remained, as John Hirst points out, notably female. Moreover, the war reaffirmed the bonds of Empire

¹²⁹ "The Star of Australasia" in Henry Lawson, *In the Days When the World Was Wide, and Other Verses* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1900), 116.

¹³⁰ Alfred Buchanan, *The Real Australia* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1907), 43-44.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 22, 38.

¹³² Cited in Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 8.

¹³³ Alistair Thomson, "Anzac Legend," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed. Peter Dennis et al, *Oxford Reference Online* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995), 43; Martin Crotty, "Naive Militarism: Australia's World War I Generation," in *The Great Mistakes of Australian History*, ed. Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006), 110.

more than it gave impetus to any nationalistic aspirations.¹³⁴ Troops were organised on colonial and not national lines; there was no defining major engagement with the enemy which featured Australian soldiers only; after the anxieties of “Black Week” it was a rather one-sided affair; there were relatively fewer involved than in 1915 and the rationale for the war itself was more contested and controversial. The return of the soldiers was not systematic but spasmodic, with significant numbers of veterans staying on in South Africa to take advantage of economic opportunities presented there post-war. Some newspapers expressed disappointment about the lack of enthusiasm mustered on the soldiers’ return, especially in comparison with the grand gestures they witnessed on their departure.¹³⁵

Moreover, the Boer War failed to maintain its hold on the popular imagination. E.W. O’Sullivan, the state member for Queanbeyan, remained unconvinced that the Boer War had constituted a genuine “bleeding” of the nation. In his “Anniversary Day Reflections” of 1905 he found praiseworthy the achievements of the nation’s sportsmen but warned that “we may need to go through the crucible of misfortune to prove our stamina and courage”.¹³⁶ As Alistair Thomson points out, while the first duty to the nation of the female citizen was the bearing and nurture of children, the prime duty of the male citizen was to sacrifice himself in times of war.¹³⁷ Walter Murdoch, writing in 1912, expressed the same idea in these terms “War is the stern pedagogue who teaches citizenship as nothing else can and from that bitter schooling we have hitherto been exempt”.¹³⁸ The term of exemption was running out and O’Sullivan’s “crucible of misfortune” would soon engulf the nation in tragically destructive ways which neither he, nor most of his contemporaries for that matter, could have reasonably predicted.

Twenty years after Lawson’s “Star of Australasia”, Banjo Paterson offered “We’re all Australians now: a letter to the troops at the Dardanelles”, a poem begun to mark the sinking of the German light cruiser *Emden* in November 1914 by *HMAS Sydney* and expanded and completed in 1917.¹³⁹ Paterson’s words were, in a sense, both a riposte to, and a consummation of Lawson’s.

¹³⁴ John Hirst, “Blooding the Nation: The Boer War and Federation,” in *The Boer War: Army, Nation and Empire*, ed. Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (Canberra: Department of Defence Army History Unit, 2000), 219, 21.

¹³⁵ *Mercury*, 22 June 1901, 5; *West Australian*, 10 June 1902, 6.

¹³⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1905, 4.

¹³⁷ Thomson, “Anzac Legend,” no pagination.

¹³⁸ Murdoch, “Hopes and Fears for Australia,” 118.

¹³⁹ Jill Hamilton, *From Gallipoli to Gaza: The Desert Poets of World War One* (East Roseville, NSW: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 38.

The mettle that a race can show
Is proved with shot and steel,
And now we know what nations know
And feel what nations feel.¹⁴⁰

The urge towards militarism had been so strong in Federation-era Australia, that untimely proposals like that from the Peace Society to celebrate “Peace Day” on 9 November, were held to be at best infelicitous, and at worst transgressive.¹⁴¹ Australian militarism was developed around the precept of a supposedly democratic citizen army, as evidenced by the instigation of compulsory military training from 1911. Such training would reap benefits not just for the physical and moral tone of the nation. The nation’s Labor leaders may have sought to distance themselves from associations with anything that smacked of crusty military cliques, yet this was militarism nonetheless. Humphrey McQueen suggests that it required a major war before this preoccupation could reveal its logic, but such was its discursive efficacy that it became something of a self-fulfilling prophecy.¹⁴² By the time Gallipoli occurred, the battles had been fought many times on the page and in the collective imagination, albeit with different enemies and with different results.

In some cases the urge to militarism had been resisted by voices in the labour movement. At the outbreak of war in August 1914, labour writers faced a conundrum.¹⁴³ Some insisted that the movement was irreconcilable with war. Joan Beaumont, for example, has argued the trade union press depicted the war as ‘a phase of capitalist society’ for which there was no extenuating reason, and which was based on no great principle or issue that would justify loss of life. She also notes that a “cluster of anti-war and pacifist organizations” demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities.¹⁴⁴ Two months after the outbreak of the Great War, Henry Boote, writing in the *Australian Worker*, the prominent Australian labour paper and mouthpiece for the powerful Australian Workers Union, told readers that the

¹⁴⁰ A. B. Paterson, *Song of the Pen: A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson Complete Works, 1901-1941* (Sydney: Lansdowne, 1983), 371.

¹⁴¹ *Register*, 11 May 1911, 4.

¹⁴² Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism*, Revised ed. (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1986), 83.

¹⁴³ During the war years the *Daily Standard*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Daily Post* and the *Barrier Daily Truth* were published in Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart and Broken Hill respectively. They were supplemented by the weeklies: *Labor Call* (Melbourne); the *Australian Worker* (Sydney); the *Westralian Worker* (Perth) and the *Worker* (Brisbane). Each of these organs championed the cause of the working class interests in general and unionism in particular, countered the bias of the conservative press and typically, though not exclusively, supported the parliamentary wing of the Labor Party.

¹⁴⁴ Joan Beaumont, "'Unitedly We Have Fought': Imperial Loyalty and the Australian War Effort" *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 401.

labour movement was “the supreme apostle of peace”. The labour movement and the war, it claimed, were “natural enemies” in the sense that they were “opposed to each other at every point of the compass. A perpetual and necessary antagonism divides them. So irreconcilable are they that they can’t go on breathing the same atmosphere ... If war is inherent in the make-up of men then it’s goodbye to the Labor movement.”¹⁴⁵

The *Australian Worker* was not alone in taking an unequivocal anti-war stance. Other journals such as *Direct Action*, produced by the small, militant but influential Industrial Workers of the World, voiced similar sentiments.¹⁴⁶ From August 1914 labour editorials typically began with a bold declaration that war was abhorrent to labour’s principles. Yet other labour scribes found themselves conceding that the times demanded a qualification of an overtly pacifist position. A pacifist assertion was often followed by some justification for the need for Australia to involve itself militarily in the current crisis. For example, John MacDonald noted in the *Daily Standard* that: “Labor abhors war. The appeal to the bullet and the sword by the nations as a means of settling disputes it regards as a repulsive inheritance from the days of savagery.” Yet MacDonald conceded that, in August 1914, war was “a distressing reality that must be faced”.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Victorian trade union organiser L.J. Villiers, writing in *Labor Call*, noted that that “the creed of Labour is frankly anti-militarism.” While deploring war in principle, he insisted nonetheless that, because the war was “founded on capitalism,” workers had cause to be mobilised and should resist “the last revolt that Anti-labour is making against the spread of the Labour doctrine”.¹⁴⁸ The *Westralian Worker* told its readers in May 1915: “From top to bottom the Labor movement is against war ... but it would be supreme folly to talk about peace.”¹⁴⁹ While Sarah Gregson draws attention to the fact that labour in this period was “broad church” on a wide range of issues, and while Peter Love suggests that this catholicity was evidence of a “profound ambivalence” in labour ideology around issues of nationalism and imperialism, labour ideologues nonetheless insisted, in this period, that war and militarism were fundamentally at odds with their core philosophy.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ *Australian Worker*, 14 October 1914, 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Direct Action*, 1 October 1914, 2

¹⁴⁷ John MacDonald, “Democracy and the World War”, *Daily Standard*, 24 August 1914, 4.

¹⁴⁸ L. J. Villiers, “The Worker and the War”, *Labor Call*, 15 October 1914, 4-5.

¹⁴⁹ *Westralian Worker*, 14 May 1915, 4.

¹⁵⁰ Sarah Gregson, “War, Racism and Industrial Relations in an Australian Mining Town, 1916-1935,” *Economic and Labour Relations Review* 18, no. 1 (2007): 82; Love, *Labour and the Money Power: Australian Labour Populism*, 57.

Conclusion

In the decades leading up to the war a lacuna existed around a national commemorative day in Australia. In early 1914 Australians were writing to newspapers noting that we had yet to find 'the' day which fulfilled national expectations. The void was yet to be filled. Such were the conditions of discursive possibility that would produce a particular effect: the desire for a commemorative day to transcend all contenders. This phenomenon accounts in part for why 25 April was rapidly and successfully promoted in the national commemorative pantheon. It fulfilled certain expectations about what a genuine national day should be. Australians were told that it was a day which could transcend sectarian, political and regional tensions. Moreover, it was a commemoration forged in war – a context in which nationhood was so forcefully imagined. Thus it would serve to resonate and inspire. As will be shown in forthcoming chapters, they were told too that this was the 'birth of the nation' and most had little reason to argue. It was a day which could accommodate the apparent paradox in the realisation of nationhood within empire. In 1915, Anzac Day had few viable rivals for that title. In that sense, Gallipoli was prefigured as the nation's commemorative saviour. Moreover the Day's rhetoric could be built on discursive buttressing already in place – namely the notion that a nation was born in war and that this war constituted an opportunity to rearm morally as well as physically. Such themes were central to the production of Anzac commemoration throughout the rest of the war years.

Chapter Two

Anzac Day Prefigured

In 1921, the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland published an account of its activities which stated that, in 1915, Thomas Augustine Ryan, a Brisbane auctioneer and the father of a soldier, had approached Colonel A. J. Thynne of the State Recruiting Committee, suggesting the commemoration of the Australian landing at Gallipoli. Subsequently, a public meeting was held in Brisbane in January 1916 from which the Queensland Anzac Day Committee was born.¹ Ryan's obituary, published in the *Queenslander* in January 1924, credited him with having been "the originator of Anzac Day". It was a sobriquet assigned to him by the Minister for Defence, George Pearce, who had written to Ryan acknowledging this achievement.² Since then, studies of the history of Anzac Day, in their bids to pinpoint the precise origins of the event, have tended to reproduce this version of the 'creation' of the day.³

While the events described were likely a precursor to the organisation of the first anniversary commemoration in Brisbane, to see this dialogue between Ryan and Thynne as a high moment of invention for Anzac Day would be inaccurate and misleading. This conversation was not the 'source' of Anzac Day. That phenomenon is not so easily pinpointed. There was such enthusiasm for the notion of an Anzac-related commemoration and such a plethora of patriotic days being organised and celebrated across Australia during 1915 and early 1916, that it would be pointless to try to nominate any one individual as the 'originator', or any one event as the 'first'. Moreover, much of what was said and written about the nation, its soldiers and the war on 25 April 1916, was not revelatory nor unique to that occasion. Rather, Anzac Day 1916 witnessed the coalescence of a set of narratives and propositions which had been in circulation and commonly articulated since news of the landing was first published in Australia on 8 May. This chapter traces the emergence of the rhetorical formations around Anzac in the twelve months after the landing in April 1915 – the building blocks of Anzac Day – the rhetoric, the narrative, the

¹ H.J. Diddams, *Anzac Commemoration 1921: A Brief History of the Movement : Sermons and Addresses Delivered Throughout Queensland : The Immortal Story of the Landing* ([Brisbane]: Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland, 1921), 7.

² *Queenslander*, 5 January 1924, 40.

³ John A. Moses, "The Struggle for Anzac Day 1916-1930 and the Role of the Brisbane Anzac Day Commemoration Committee," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 88, no. 1 (2002): 55; Wendy Merryllan Mansfield, "Anzac Day 1915-1937: Its Origins, Its Cultural and Political Mythology, a Queensland Perspective" (University of Queensland, 1979), 37-39; Eric Andrews, "25 April 1916: First Anzac Day in Australia and Britain" *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 23(1993): 13.

rites and rituals which came to be assembled in April 1916. It also incorporates a cultural anthropology of public patriotic rituals during this period in order to highlight the extent to which the anniversary commemoration was prefigured in the year which preceded it.

Chapter One has shown that there was both an inviting commemorative space to be filled and that expectations about national fulfilment through warfare were ripe by 1914. This chapter examines how Anzac Day was prefigured, both discursively and performatively, in the twelve months leading up to the first anniversary commemoration. It argues that, following the Gallipoli landing itself, the work of journalists, politicians, poets and clergymen produced a rapid propagation and uptake of a particular version of the events such that by early 1916, most of the fundamental elements of Anzac Day commemoration were already being articulated. The result was less an accurate record of actual events on Gallipoli than it was a fiction which projected both the hopes and expectations of many Australians and also the imperatives of an elite who sought to galvanise support for the war on the home front.

'Originating' Anzac

The idea of an 'original' Anzac Day is problematic. Australians could not wait for its anniversary to celebrate the Gallipoli experience. Reference works and other histories typically note developments in Queensland in particular, and attribute the 'creation' of Anzac Day to the work of that state's Anzac Day Commemoration Committee.⁴ There are, however, multiple claims to being the 'originator' of the idea. Indeed the notion of *an* Anzac Day was so prevalent in public discourse that it is pointless trying to nominate an originator. The commemoration emerged from the public celebration of 'patriotic days' and drew heavily on discursive and performative practices around those occasions. There were a number of 'dress rehearsals' for Anzac Day which prefigured it and helped establish a script for the commemorations of 25 April 1916.

The event had no precise moment of invention. There are multiple examples of possible claimants to being the 'first' Anzac Day. On 30 April 1915, before news of the Gallipoli landing had even appeared in the Australian press, the citizens of Perth celebrated a Flag Day – "an opportunity", as one newspaper described it, for "giving vent to patriotic feelings stirred by the news of the first Australian engagement."⁵ On 11 May, just three days after

⁴ Carl Bridge, "Anzac Day," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed. Peter Dennis, *Oxford Reference Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). 33; Moses, "The Struggle for Anzac Day 1916-1930 and the Role of the Brisbane Anzac Day Commemoration Committee." 54-74.

⁵ *Daily News* (Perth), 29 April 1915, 10.

the reports of the landing were published in the press, the Hobart *Mercury* printed a letter from a correspondent suggesting a national flag day “for our boys who are making history at the Dardanelles”.⁶ On 16 May 1915, three weeks after the landing, a “patriotic demonstration” was organised by the Australian Natives’ Association in the Kalgoorlie Town Hall, “commemorating the Gallipoli landing and honouring the soldiers who have fallen on the battlefield”.⁷ A similar event was conducted at Boulder nearby.⁸ It is likely that these Western Australian towns were not alone in such initiatives. The expression of patriotic fervour was indeed ubiquitous.

Any quest for the ‘original’ articulation of the idea of an Anzac Day also needs to consider events which surrounded the arrival of the first ships carrying wounded returned soldiers. On 18 July 1915, the transport ship *Kyarra* berthed at Port Melbourne carrying 56 wounded – the first to be repatriated from the war. The welcome had been muted and carefully controlled by military officialdom. On 22 July a correspondent to the *Argus* expressed concern that “wounded heroes” returning from Gallipoli “should have been so coolly received here”.⁹ In the Victorian Parliament five days later Edward Warde, the Labor member for Flemington, asked the Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, whether he might “enter into negotiations with the Premiers of the other states of Australia with a view to having an annual commemoration of the landing on Gallipoli Peninsula of the Australian forces on the 25th April.”¹⁰ The transaction was reported by the *Argus* the following day under the title, “Gallipoli Day”.¹¹ The premier failed to act on the recommendation.

By August 1915, the idea of an Anzac commemoration had sufficient currency to put paid to the view that the notion might have one singular and identifiable ‘creator’. Yet ‘origin’ stories persist in the literature. According to Janice Pavils’s research on early Anzac Day developments, the idea of commemorating Anzac Day was suggested in early August 1915 by Walter Torode, a prominent Adelaide builder and vice-president of the local Wattle Day League.¹² Later that month the *Advertiser* announced that a Robert Wheeler of Prospect had won the prize in a competition to name a “patriotic procession and carnival” being planned for October. Mr Wheeler had suggested “Anzac Day”. The paper pointed

⁶ *Mercury*, 11 May 1915, 2.

⁷ *West Australian*, 17 May 1915, 8.

⁸ *West Australian*, 17 May 1915, 8.

⁹ *Argus*, 23 July 1915, 8.

¹⁰ Victoria. Parliament. Legislative Assembly. *Parliamentary Debates*, 27 July 1915, 1439.

¹¹ *Argus*, 28 July 1915, 9. In fact Gallipoli wounded were a relatively small percentage of the *Kyarra*’s complement. The ship was also carrying 102 cases of venereal disease and a large number of soldiers who were returning for disciplinary reasons. Thirty of these malefactors had already deserted when the ship docked at Fremantle. *Argus*, 19 July 1915, 8.

¹² Janice Pavils, *Anzac Day: The Undying Debt* (Adelaide: Lythrum Press, 2007), 9.

out that “the name had been sent in by many competitors and lots had to be drawn for the prize”.¹³ Doubtless further research would uncover more prospective ‘originators’ of the day.

By late 1915 the words “Anzac” and “Gallipoli” were regularly being used to badge patriotic events. Residents of Hobart celebrated “Gallipoli Day”, a fund-raising carnival in September 1915.¹⁴ On 17 and 18 December 1915, Victoria celebrated a series of Anzac Remembrance Days – button/collection days to support repatriated soldiers. The centrepiece of the event was a street parade of wounded Anzacs and a tableau representing the Gallipoli landing. On 25 March 1916, residents of Unley, South Australia, celebrated “Gallipoli Day”, another fund-raiser for “trench comforts”. Tableaux representing Britannia, John Bull and “the Kaiser in a cage” were cheered by the gathering.¹⁵ There were still a number of references to 25 April 1916 as “Gallipoli Day”, until acting Prime Minister George Pearce officially named the day Anzac Day.¹⁶ Perhaps the news that the Turks themselves had celebrated “Gallipoli Day” in Constantinople in January 1916, had discouraged that term’s further use.¹⁷

There is little doubt that the idea that the event was worth commemorating, had wide currency in Australia by early 1916. Victorian schools were certainly quick to take the initiative. Indeed, while the moves by Queensland’s Anzac Day Commemoration Committee (ADCC) were clearly influential in promoting a commemoration, the activities of the Victorian Education Department are irrefutable evidence that, in early 1916, the idea of an Anzac Day anniversary commemoration was as well entrenched as in the northern state. In February 1916, the *Education Gazette* advised Victorian teachers about plans for an Anzac Day. The recommendation was the product of discussion at meetings of the Department’s War Relief Fund Executive. Rosalie Triolo’s research indicates that the matter was being considered by the Department in early 1916, “if not late 1915 for the matter to be discussed at the first meeting of 1916”, in which case it likely predates the iconic meeting in the Brisbane Exhibition Hall in January 1916.¹⁸

Clearly then, the name ‘Anzac Day’ was not an invention of one individual, nor was the idea that the Gallipoli landing constituted an event worthy of commemoration. This

¹³ *Advertiser*, 27 August 1915, 9.

¹⁴ *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 13 September 1915, 2.

¹⁵ *Advertiser*, 17 April 1916, 7.

¹⁶ *Cairns Post*, 12 February 1916, 5; *Mercury*, 19 February 1916, 8; Bridge, “Anzac Day,” no pagination.

¹⁷ *Barrier Miner*, 28 January 1916, 2.

¹⁸ Rosalie Triolo, *Our Schools and the War* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012), 276.

genealogy of Anzac Day eschews heroic narratives of individual agency in the creation of the event.¹⁹ Yet despite the fact that the notion of an Anzac Day had great currency in Australia by early 1916, the precise forms that such a commemoration would take, were still negotiable. The day had precursors if not, as yet, a clear prototype. Manifestly, Anzac Day did not emerge from the ether, fully-formed in April 1916.

Growing the Cult of Anzac

Any account of the emergence of Anzac Day must take due consideration of the emergence of the legend which the day helped enshrine. As Ken Inglis has pointed out, Ashmead-Bartlett's hyperbolic account of the landing was splashed across Australian newspapers on 8 May 1915 and its impact was profound. Bean's first despatch was not read until six days later. Kevin Fewster has also emphasised Ashmead-Bartlett's role in the production of the Anzac legend, as have Fred and Elizabeth Brenchley.²⁰ As Inglis notes: "Many of the things which were to be said about the landing, in newspapers, parliaments, pulpits and public meetings, had been said before the Australian reporter's version of it arrived."²¹ It was, of course, those "things [which] were said about the landing" that came to constitute the discourse of Anzac. As Cochrane shows in his analysis of "Simpson talk", these stories were persistent, moving amongst the "trenches, the classroom and the pulpit" through repeats, variations and refinement" and were later inscribed in school texts, poetry, film, published memoirs and in monuments. Moreover, as Cochrane notes, such narratives were not exclusively orchestrated by imperial patriots in some Gramscian way. Rather they reflected the capillary nature of language use itself inflecting local, folkloric accounts that, in turn, shaped collective cultural experiences.²² There is insufficient space here to trace a detailed exposition of the growth of the Anzac legend. Its historiography is voluminous and in the introduction to this thesis I have delineated its major contours. Bean's role is clearly seminal, yet he was far from alone in the making of the legend. Inglis and Fewster have both detailed the flowering of a version of the Gallipoli narrative in 1915 through school publications, a feature film and Ashmead-

¹⁹ Moses, "The Struggle for Anzac Day 1916-1930 and the Role of the Brisbane Anzac Day Commemoration Committee."

²⁰ Fred Brenchley, *Myth Maker: Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, the Englishman Who Sparked Australia's Gallipoli Legend* (Milton, Qld: John Wiley & Sons, 2005); Kevin Fewster, "Ellis Ashmead Bartlett and the Making of the Anzac Legend," *Journal of Australian Studies* 6, no. 10 (1982).

²¹ K. S. Inglis, "The Australians at Gallipoli - 1," *Australian Historical Studies* 14, no. 54 (1970): 220-21.

²² Peter Cochrane, *Simpson and the Donkey: The Making of a Legend* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992), 52,53,56.

Bartlett's lecture tour of Australia in February 1916 which, according to Fewster, "set the seal on the legend he [Ashmead-Bartlett] had done so much to create".²³

In an age when print media ruled, the Gallipoli campaign was the major focus of journalists' attention. Bean and Ashmead-Bartlett were not the only journalists at the scene or in proximity. Indeed in September 1915, both the *Age* and the *Argus* discontinued publication of Bean's more temperate reports in preference for the florid journalism of others.²⁴ As well as receiving copy from Reuters agents, based in Egypt and in Greece, the Australian press, at various times, also published reports from Philip Schuler, Charles Smith and Keith Murdoch. In addition, *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Oliver Hogue, who had enlisted in the Light Horse and was serving at Gallipoli from June 1915, sent regular despatches under the byline "Trooper Bluegum". These were published widely in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. According to Gerster, Hogue's writings, like much of what was written about Gallipoli, paid "little attention to bland historical truth".²⁵ While none of the Australian journalists quite matched the unfettered grandiloquence of Ashmead-Bartlett, they all tendered an image of the Anzac as heroic, self-sacrificing, laconic, noble and exemplary in martial skills.²⁶

As well as publishing the reportage of Australians, newspapers readily publicised any tributes to the AIF which appeared in the British press. "The achievements of the Australians in the Dardanelles are eulogised in all the newspapers", the *Mail* told its readers on 8 May 1915. It then proceeded to reproduce appropriate extracts from the *Evening Standard*, the *Westminster Gazette* and a variety of other British papers.²⁷ Tributes from leading British military figures were enthusiastically noted, as were what Geoffrey Serle has termed the "fulsome, cloying eulogies" of prominent British literary figures such as John Masefield and Compton Mackenzie.²⁸ "World-wide tribute has been paid to the men of Anzac", one commemorative publication noted. It supported this claim

²³ Fewster, "Ellis Ashmead Bartlett and the Making of the Anzac Legend," 19-21, 26-30; Inglis, "The Australians at Gallipoli - 1," 221-22.

²⁴ Robin Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1987), 28.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁷ *Mail* (Adelaide), 8 May 1915, 1s.

²⁸ Geoffrey Serle, "The Digger Tradition and Australian Nationalism " *Meanjin Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1965): 151.: See for example those by Generals Birdwood and Hamilton in *South Australia State War Council, Anzac Souvenir* (Adelaide: Govt. Printer, 1916), 11.

by quoting from a singular prominent British political figure, Arthur Balfour.²⁹ “World-wide” in this instance meant any tributes from the United Kingdom.

In addition to these journalistic endeavours, the campaign generated a wave of cultural production in 1915 and 1916 as authors rushed into publication to capitalise on the episode’s commercial possibilities. As well as filling the columns of newspapers, Gallipoli generated a number of book projects and an abundance of poetry.³⁰ David Kent has argued that the *Anzac Book*, edited by Bean and originally published in early 1916, “was primarily responsible for making it [the Anzac legend] part of the public consciousness.”³¹ There can be no doubting the fact that this text was a major seller and doubtless played a role in the ongoing promotion of the legend.³² Yet newspaper references to the *Anzac Book* in mid-February 1916 clearly have the look of pre-production advertising about them. Bean’s book was not readily available for sale in Australia until March 1916. Its influence in shaping the discourse around the first Anzac Day was therefore limited.³³ Bean’s book was pre-dated by others about Gallipoli. In mid-1915, the London publisher Andrew Melrose published Ernest Buley’s *The Dardanelles and Their Story and Their Significance in the Great War*. That book was followed a few months later by the same author’s *Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War*.³⁴ Buley was an Australian journalist who had moved to London after serving jail time for fraud and theft. Both books were highly successful commercially. *Glorious Deeds* was reprinted three times before the end of 1915.³⁵ By October 1915, the press was also regularly publishing the work of Signaller Tom Skeyhill, the “Blind Soldier Poet”, prior to the publication of his *Soldier Songs from Anzac (Written in the Firing Line)* in December.³⁶ Skeyhill’s book of poetry sold 50,000 copies between 1915 and 1917 and he was a highly successful speaker on the Tivoli circuit. The poet’s ‘blindness’ was later miraculously ‘cured’ on a trip to the United States in 1918.³⁷

²⁹ South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir* (Adelaide: Govt. Printer, 1916), 7.

³⁰ Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, 34-39.

³¹ D A Kent, "The Anzac Book and the Anzac Legend: C.E.W. Bean as Editor and Image-Maker," *Australian Historical Studies* 21, no. 84 (1985): 376.

³² Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, 28.

³³ *Mercury*, 12 February 1916, 4; *Argus*, 4 March 1916, 6.

³⁴ E.C. Buley, *Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War* (London: Melrose, 1915); E.C. Buley, *The Dardanelles and Their Story and Their Significance in the Great War* (London: Melrose, 1915).

³⁵ Bear Alley Books, "E.C. Buley," <http://bearalley.blogspot.com.au/2010/08/e-c-buley.html>.

³⁶ Tom Skeyhill, *Soldier Songs from Anzac: Written in the Firing Line* (Melbourne: Robertson, 1915).

³⁷ Jeff Brownrigg, "From Anzac Cove to Hollywood: The Career of Tom Skeyhill," *National Library of Australia News* 17, no. 11 (2007): 7,10.

Anzac's wordsmiths then, were sometimes men for whom the call of currency had as much appeal as did loyalty and patriotism. Their role in shaping this legend and giving an audience what they wanted to hear – hyperbolic praise of the deeds of the AIF – cannot be ignored. Thus Kent's claim that it was the *Anzac Book* which so firmly established the Anzac image in the "popular imagination", can be called into question.³⁸ Clearly Bean's book had little influence on the making of Anzac Day 1916. The words and ideas of other panegyrists were the key ingredients in the rhetorical blend from which Anzac Day orators could draw their material. Thus the 'industry' of Gallipoli writing, with its hyperbole and indeed its outright fabrication, performed a particular kind of cultural and political work which had a profound influence on the shaping of the discourse of Anzac. Sacrifice, glory, martial prowess, honour, courage, race, nation, empire and pride were imbricated into a powerful set of rhetorics for re-inscribing the failure and loss at Gallipoli as a high ground of Australian endeavour.

By April 1916, the rhetorical assertion that Gallipoli, rather than 26 January, constituted the "birth" of the nation, was in full flower.³⁹ As has been noted above, Australia's history had, to this time, failed to provide a defining founding episode or moment capable of being effectively mobilised in a foundation myth. Within a very brief period, 25 April usurped 26 January's role in the national mythology by substituting a popular and efficacious foundation narrative for a highly-contested and inglorious one. In the six months prior to April 1916, journalists, politicians, teachers, clergymen and recruiters were all promulgating the notion that Australia had been somehow born, or at least "come of age" at Gallipoli. According to Martin Crotty, this mythology of national birth served a powerful purpose in that it "eased doubts, salved consciences and consoled the hurt".⁴⁰ Moreover, it was a mythology which demanded prioritisation of Gallipoli and the war – indeed it was now more than a priority, it was the *only* priority, the centrepiece of a 'history' of the nation worthy of the telling, and re-telling.

By mid-1915, it was clear that Gallipoli was an iconic founding moment. At a recruiting speech on 19 June, New South Wales Senator, Edward Millen, stated: "If it was reproach that we had hitherto had no history in Australia, that reproach has been wiped out by our

³⁸ John Barrett, "Historical Reconsiderations Vii: No Straw Man: C.E.W. Bean and Some Critics," *Australian Historical Studies* 23, no. 90 (1988): 108-08; Kent, "The Anzac Book and the Anzac Legend: C.E.W. Bean as Editor and Image-Maker," 377.

³⁹ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 8; *Register*, 26 April 1916, 7; *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7.

⁴⁰ Martin Crotty, "25 April 1915 Australian Troops Land at Gallipoli: Trial, Trauma and the 'Birth of the Nation'," in *Turning Points in Australian History*, ed. Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 109.

heroes at Gallipoli in 24 hours.”⁴¹ A month later, the *Sydney Morning Herald* echoed Millen’s sentiments and rhetoric. Recalling the departure of the AIF in November 1914, it stated: “Then we had no history behind us. Our men had not known or faced the dire perils of modern warfare.”⁴² “History” here was synonymous with war. The frontier wars did not figure in this reckoning. Their remembering, if it occurred at all, lacked the upward and forward momentum – the discursive splendour and scale – necessary to nation-building mythology. Gallipoli, from this perspective, generated for the nation “a glorious history – a history of splendid achievement”.⁴³

In mid- and late-1915 Gallipoli’s significance was often expressed in terms of Australia’s having made a name for itself internationally and having gained a place at the imperial table. Our troops, the *Advertiser* claimed, “had made the name of Australia greater than it ever was before”.⁴⁴ Prominent naval figure, Sir William Creswell, stressed the imperial connection, noting that “the overseas Dominions had really become members of a team desirous of taking their share and playing the game.”⁴⁵ The Empire’s war was Australia’s war. Australian politicians and soldiers were anxious to raise the country’s status within in an imperial pecking order and shed any stigma associated with the nation’s convict origins. Others were content to insist on Australia’s birth at Gallipoli without reference to the imperial connection. At an Australian Women’s National League function at Benalla (Victoria), in August 1915, the organisation’s president noted that “as someone has finely said, Australia as a nation was born on the heights of Gallipoli.”⁴⁶ A month later, a correspondent to a Victorian newspaper wrote: “It has been said that the Australian nation was born at Gallipoli”.⁴⁷ Neither of these users of the phrase took credit for its linguistic invention. In a manner which is characteristic of the way such propositions pervade and prevail in public discourse, each attributed the saying to an unknown or uncited ‘other’. Thus the idea of Australia’s ‘birth’ at Gallipoli had emerged, was circulating and was increasingly ‘common knowledge’ by the second half of 1915. Moreover, it was now a maxim whose locus of authority came not from a statement by some leading political, military or ecclesiastical figure. Rather, like the idea of Anzac Day itself, it had no readily-traceable high moment of initiation or instigating agent. The statement required no

⁴¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 1915, 13.

⁴² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1915, 13.

⁴³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1915, 13.

⁴⁴ *Advertiser*, 3 July 1915, 15.

⁴⁵ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 1 June 1915, 10.

⁴⁶ *Benalla Standard*, 3 August 1915, 2.

⁴⁷ *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 2 September 1915, 3.

empirical proof. Nonetheless, it was convincing, sustainable and indeed, 'likely'. It came to possess, what Stephen Garton has referred to (in inverted commas) as an "obviousness and coherence".⁴⁸ Put simply, it was a proposition which could hardly be challenged.

There is little doubt that the idea of Australia's birth at Gallipoli dovetailed with the needs of recruiters and those who sought to promote commitment to the war, in particular through the government-orchestrated recruitment campaigns in Victoria and New South Wales from mid-1915. It was, as will be shown in more detail in Chapter Five, a construction which served a number of specific political ends. There is clear evidence that, by mid-1915, the proposition was being used to galvanise support for the war. If this initiation into the war was the "birth of the nation", then it invited and even insisted upon the participation of all Australians in that same war, be it through recruitment, fund-raising or assistance in some other form. Having been born, the nation required protection and all were complicit and had a role to play in fighting in defence against outside aggression, however putative. Australia's initiation into the war was promoted as the most significant event in the nation's history. As a consequence, that war must be made the highest priority of all Australians. Those who sought to promote the nation's war aims put this rhetorical formation to work well before the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landing.⁴⁹

The proposition of national birth, in turn, helped to enable a precise set of rhetorical formations organised around service and sacrifice. These formations prioritised recruiting and mobilisation on the home front over all other imperatives. Thus, in August 1915, the *Sydney Morning Herald* could insist that the military was "the only life worth living in these days for those who are of military age and free of family ties."⁵⁰ An article on Christmas shopping in Sydney went under the heading, "One thought – the war".⁵¹ This was an appeal to the "hundreds and thousands [who] are carrying on their businesses and amusement as if no word of reality could penetrate their minds."⁵² The conservative press warned against a 'business as usual' approach to the war, seeking to shock Australians out of a perceived apathy by emphasising the threat that German victory posed to

⁴⁸ Stephen Garton, "Cultural History and Anzac History," in *The Humanities and a Creative Nation: Jubilee Essays: Papers from the Silver Jubilee (1969-1994) Symposium of the Australian Academy of the Humanities Held at the State Library of NSW, Sydney, 2-5 November 1994*, ed. Deryck Schreuder (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1994), 219.

⁴⁹ Joan Beaumont, "The Anzac Legend," in *Australia's War, 1914-18*, ed. Joan Beaumont (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 151.

⁵⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1915, 12.

⁵¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 December 1915, 9.

⁵² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1915, 6.

freedoms at home. The message was that it was now 'the nation' which was at arms and not merely its soldiery.

Another way to reinforce the idea that the war was the only thing that mattered was to argue that Australia must eschew old political squabbles and unify around the task ahead. On 24 July 1915 the *Sydney Morning Herald* entitled its war editorial: "One mind and purpose", addressing an appeal

to the leaders of political thought in this country to sink all party differences and unite for the common good, just as we appeal to the leaders of the Churches to sink all differences of creed and meet on the common ground of brotherhood.⁵³

A few months later, the Liberal Opposition Leader in New South Wales, Charles Wade, stated that such unity of purpose was being achieved: "Never had there been such a co-mingling of the classes and such unity at which they all rejoiced", he proclaimed at a memorial service in Sydney in September 1915.⁵⁴ The rhetoric of political harmony characterised the first anniversary of Anzac Day as well. Yet social divisions and dissent prevailed. Indeed one prominent Anzac, Colonel Neville Howse of the Australian Medical Corps, wrote to the Mayor of Orange from Gallipoli in August 1915: "Australia became a nation on April 25. Ostracise every healthy young man who does not volunteer immediately for service".⁵⁵ With its increasing stigmatising of 'shirkers', or any who remained ambivalent or sceptical about the nation's war aims, Anzac commemoration, as will be shown in future chapters, was as much about creating and reinforcing division, as it was about uniting around a collective cause.

Anzac and Public Ritual

Having examined this formative period in the development of an Anzac rhetoric, it remains to illustrate how this discourse was put to work at public commemorations. One notable feature of this genealogy of Anzac Day is the manner in which the approved version of the Gallipoli narrative, that which derived from the writings of Ashmead-Bartlett and Bean, infused discourses around other commemorative days in Australia. Public rhetoric around Anniversary Day/Foundation Day, Empire Day and Wattle Day was now incomplete

⁵³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 July 1915, 12.

⁵⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 1915, 9.

⁵⁵ *Forbes Times*, 24 August 1915, 2.

without Gallipoli references. References to events at the Dardanelles and their impact on the nation were also increasingly evident on all manner of commemorative occasion.

Empire Day 1915 (24 May) also saw the introduction of a distinctly Anzac flavour into the imperial rhetorical fare. The *West Australian* suggested that, on this Empire Day, the thoughts of the children were “not so much of Trafalgar and Waterloo as of the Dardanelles”.⁵⁶ The centrepiece of the Empire Day lesson at the Subiaco Central School, was now the reading of an account of the Australian landing at Gallipoli.⁵⁷ The Minister for Defence, George Pearce, noted at that Empire Day event in Melbourne: “The fact that grandchildren of men who have distinguished themselves in the Crimea and Indian Mutiny have gained the highest distinction in the Dardanelles shows that the British stock has not deteriorated”.⁵⁸ Here at last was an opportunity to dispel *fin de siècle* anxieties about the ‘degeneration’ of the Australian ‘national type’.⁵⁹ Here too was evidence of the ready recuperation of a nationalist mythology about the exceptional qualities of Australian soldiers into a broader imperial discursive framework.

The Gallipoli experience shaped Empire Day celebrations in another other way too. In a manner which was to become characteristic of Anzac Day rhetoric, valorisation and fanfare over military and national achievement were accompanied by new discursive and performative elements – solemnity and mourning. Commemoration was now simultaneously festive and funereal. Politicians, pressmen, preachers and teachers imbued the day with a new significance.⁶⁰ As the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it in May 1915: “Empire Day this year is not to be festive. There will be songs and flags and speeches, but there will be too, a period of solemn hush and silence, the tribute to our own heroes; to those who have given to the Empire their most precious gift of life.”⁶¹ Richard Ely describes an Empire Day commemoration on Sunday 23 May, in Hobart, in which militia, senior cadets and rifle club members gathered at a monument at the Anglesea Barracks to pay their respects to the Gallipoli dead.⁶² The following day, there was a wreath-laying ceremony at the Boer War memorial attended by the chief justice, the

⁵⁶ *West Australian*, 25 May 1915, 4.

⁵⁷ *West Australian*, 25 May 1915, 5.

⁵⁸ *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 1 June 1915, 10.

⁵⁹ Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, The Australian Experience (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981).69-71.

⁶⁰ Inglis, "The Australians at Gallipoli - 1," 223.

⁶¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1915, 5.

⁶² Richard Ely, "The First Anzac Day: Invented or Discovered?," *Journal of Australian Studies* 9, no. 17 (1985): 49.

premier of Tasmania and the mayor of Hobart.⁶³ Similarly the *Argus* reported that, during Melbourne Empire Day church services, lists of casualties of local parishioners were read out and prayers offered.⁶⁴ The process of solemn public commemoration had begun by May 1915.

Anzac was increasingly interwoven with other national rituals and commemorations. Arbor Day, historically associated with tree-planting ceremonies in schools from the late nineteenth century, also took on a decidedly commemorative tone. In July 1915, at the Boys' State School in Petrie Terrace, Brisbane, camphor laurels were planted in memory of two former students killed at Gallipoli. Only a few weeks before, students and staff at Lameroo School in South Australia took part in a similar ceremony.⁶⁵ The wattle, and its commemorative day, also took on both a new significance and a new complexion with the war. Special permission was obtained by the Wattle Day League for soldiers to wear sprigs of the bloom on their uniforms, while collections of pressed wattle sprigs were distributed to the wounded in Egyptian hospitals. The wattle flower was even sent in letters to soldiers on active service.⁶⁶ Through such activities and the enthusiastic promotion of fund-raising and patriotic events, the Wattle League aided and abetted the hegemony of the Anzac legend. Prior to coming into its own as a 'the' national day, Anzac was infusing and reshaping older commemorations.

Light-hearted celebrations were no longer appropriate. In Adelaide, in 1915, Wattle Day was an occasion for the unveiling of a newly-constructed 'Gallipoli Landing Memorial' in Wattle Park, with attendant speeches from dignitaries valorising the deeds of the Anzacs.⁶⁷ The *Register* foretold that, in a post-Gallipoli Australia, a 'new meaning and significance will be imparted to the usual Wattle Day'.⁶⁸ Older national symbols and rituals were now reconfigured and re-interpreted in the light of the Gallipoli experience. The *Register* was one of many newspapers which espoused the idea that the day now held "a new meaning and significance".⁶⁹ Its editorialising on Wattle Day in 1915 was rich with Gallipoli references, adding a certain gravitas to the commemoration which had been absent in earlier years:

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶⁴ *Argus*, 25 May 1915, 8.

⁶⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 10 July 1915, 4; *Register*, 5 August 1915, 10.

⁶⁶ Maria Hitchcock, *Wattle* (Canberra: AGPS, 1991), 14.

⁶⁷ *Advertiser*, 8 September 1915, 12.

⁶⁸ *Register*, 30 July 1915, 8.

⁶⁹ *Register*, 30 July 1915, 8.

The wattle is the emblem too of the golden chivalry of our manhood. It scintillates with undying prestige. That's a finer thing by far than the glory of trade and commerce, this entwining of the Australian flower with the rose, the shamrock, and the thistle, amid a grim pageantry of Empire.⁷⁰

The wattle played a new role, invoked in the language of sacrifice, duty and heroism. Significantly too, the rhetoric surrounding the day was also inflected in such a way as to incorporate the nation's role in an imperial war. The overtly nationalist flourishes were downplayed. The wattle was linked with the floral symbols of England, Ireland and Scotland – “the rose, the shamrock and the thistle” to produce a figurative imperial garland. It was a garland in which Australia now took its legitimate place as an equal to other imperial nations, born of struggle and sacrifice.

The discourse of Anzac and Gallipoli commemoration was ubiquitous even beyond the bounds of other mainstream commemorative days. In a manner befitting the reconciliatory mood of the time, one correspondent wrote to the *Advertiser* in October 1915 inquiring as to whether Guy Fawkes night, historically an anti-Catholic commemoration, might even be rebadged as Anzac Day.⁷¹

Despite the fact that, in January 1916, Anniversary Day celebrations across the country were muted, the rhetoric of this commemoration was nonetheless infused with the martial spirit of Anzac. In Adelaide in 1916, the day was celebrated with a carnival to raise funds for the Returned Soldiers' Association, which incorporated “a realistic demonstration of the hard fighting conditions which our gallant defenders experienced on the Gallipoli Peninsula”.⁷² As had been done in past commemorations, the date was an occasion for some to reflect on the trajectory of the nation's ‘development’. Inevitably now, Gallipoli was seen as a critical marker in that process. As the *Advertiser* noted in January 1916:

[S]ince the last celebration of Foundation Day, Australia has witnessed a remarkable development of national self-consciousness. The sense of nationhood has been deepened by the war in a manner which could not be rivalled by the influence of purely political events.⁷³

⁷⁰ *Register*, 7 September 1915, 4.

⁷¹ *Advertiser*, 21 October 1915, 12.

⁷² *Register*, 31 January 1916, 4.

⁷³ *Advertiser*, 31 January 1916, 6.

Yet in 1916, the Adelaide newspaper maintained its lack of enthusiasm for 26 January commemoration and suggested instead a “yearly Anzac Day would suggest reflections much more agreeable to Australian sentiment”.⁷⁴ There were clear signs that, despite the lack of any real formal organisation of such an event, in some quarters at least, Anzac Day was being mooted as *the* national commemoration. The Anniversary Regatta Day luncheon on 26 January 1916 in Sydney was an occasion for more speeches eulogising the Anzacs’ achievements. At that event, Judge Backhouse noted that Australian participation in a world war constituted the realisation of nationhood and that, a century before, the idea that Australians would be participating in a world war could only be considered “a wildest dream.”⁷⁵ In 1916, in some centres in New South Wales, the day was rebadged as a patriotic commemoration – Allies Day.⁷⁶ Like Empire Day and Wattle Day, Anniversary Day was now invested with new significance and was permeated with the discourse of Anzac.

The rhetorical formation around Anzac colonised a range of commemorative events with which it had no obvious thematic links or association. The symbol of the wattle was pressed into service around commemoration and the invocation of Australian war spirit. Empire Day was no longer an occasion for Australians to merely bask in the reflected glory of their imperial heritage, as they were now much-lauded active participants in imperial militarism. Anniversary Day continued to mark the nation’s maturation from humble origins, but Gallipoli signified the beginning of new era in that development. Through this process newspaper editors, politicians, preachers, teachers and public speakers propagated the notion that the war demanded the nation’s full energies because it, and Gallipoli in particular, constituted the most significant event that had yet occurred in Australia’s development. Such was its mooted significance that previous commemorations were now sublimated to its apparent discursive power.

“Pageants of Patriotism”: Dress Rehearsals for 25 April 1916

The period from September 1914 witnessed the proliferation of public events, patriotic and Red Cross carnivals, and ‘days’ designed to support and promote the war effort through fund-raising and recruiting. A sample drawn from South Australia, indicates that, between 8 April 1915 (Belgian Flag Day) and 25 April 1916, the citizens of Adelaide organised and participated in more than twenty “flag days”, “button days”, “cheer-up days”, patriotic

⁷⁴ *Advertiser*, 31 January 1916, 6.

⁷⁵ *Farmer and Settler*, 28 January 1916, 3.

⁷⁶ *Lockhart Review and Oakland Advertiser*, 26 January 1916, 2; *Leader* (Orange), 28 January 1916, 8.

carnivals and public commemorations, of which Anzac Day 1916 was just one.⁷⁷ It does appear that South Australians were slightly more enthusiastic about these events than residents of some other states, but such commemorations were nevertheless widespread nationally and occurred regularly. Often in rural areas and in smaller communities, these celebrations were organised by local committees with no central co-ordination on a state-wide basis. Typically, these events combined military displays such as processions of marching soldiers, boy scouts, students and school cadets along with other entertainments.⁷⁸ In South Australia there was such a groundswell of patriotic fund-raising activity that a “Council of Control of Patriotic Street Sales” regulated the button days and fund-raising events.⁷⁹

These patriotic commemorations have been analysed by a number of historians. With the suspension of many sporting fixtures, these occasions provided a public spectacle to be attended and partaken in – “escape and relief for a weary populace”, as Marilyn Lake describes it.⁸⁰ Stephen Alomes suggests that such home front efforts were not so much symptomatic of escapism, but were the “trivial equivalent” of the ugly face of war, designed to distract attention from the tragedies being acted out on the battlefield – although the bloody reality of that endeavour was often suppressed through censorship and re-coloured through propaganda.⁸¹ Importantly, neither Alomes nor Lake dismisses these occasions as mere ostentatious jingoism. It would be easy, but misleading, to do so. As well as assisting with fund-raising, these patriotic days provided a focus for community activity and gave citizens, women in particular, a sense that they were ‘doing something useful’ for the war effort. Joan Beaumont notes that, in the wake of Gallipoli, such events were a factor of the imperative to mobilise the home front towards a more appropriate war footing.⁸² As with future Anzac Days, they also provided an opportunity for those partaking in the organisation to give support to, and share personal anxieties about, sons, brothers, fathers and loved ones at the front. Middle-class women on the home front did not just knit socks. They also knitted community and mutually supportive relationships.

⁷⁷ The sample comes from my analysis of the pages of *Observer Illustrated Supplement*, 1915-1916.

⁷⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 2 September 1914, 7; 14 September 1914, 4; 19 November 1914, 4; 23 November 1914, 10; 27 November 1914, 8.

⁷⁹ Janice Pavils, "The Emergence of South Australian Anzac Culture 1915-1925," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 89, no. 2 (2003): 128.

⁸⁰ Marilyn Lake, *A Divided Society: Tasmania During World War I* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1975), 13.

⁸¹ Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last: The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988* (North Ryde, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1988), 58.

⁸² Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 94.

Gallipoli brought a significant shift in the tone of these patriotic events. Prior to May 1915, that tone was typically martial, celebratory and festive.⁸³ After May 1915, speeches at, and commentaries on, these events all made reference to the Anzacs. Australia now had a history of contribution to be acknowledged and a defined role in the proceedings. With that role, the nation lost any seeming immunity it may have had to the tragedy of war. A growing death toll and letters from the front now told an increasingly sobering tale.⁸⁴ There is clear evidence that the tone shifted from the simple celebration of military endeavour, to the incorporation of solemn tributes to the dead and respect and concern for the grieving.

South Australia's Violet Day, held on 2 July 1915, was symptomatic of this shift. The name for the event had originally been suggested at a meeting of the Cheer Up Society, an organisation founded to assist with the provision of comforts and the raising of funds for the soldiers. The Cheer Up Society was later prominent in the planning and production of Anzac Day commemorations in Adelaide during the war. The original proposal for Violet Day, which came in early May, before casualty lists and news of the Gallipoli landing were published, had suggested another fund-raising event.⁸⁵ By the time its organisation was under way, Violet Day was being badged as "an event in honour of our fallen brave".⁸⁶ The organisers asked the military for buglers to sound the 'Last Post' throughout the city and sought permission from the city council to hold a public memorial service in the Exhibition Building.⁸⁷ Unlike other one-off patriotic events, Violet Day was originally planned as an annual commemoration.⁸⁸ The Cheer Up Society reported that regional centres were also organising "a fitting ceremonial" and that plans were being made for "leading public men to speak eulogistically about our heroes".⁸⁹

This then was a new kind of commemoration – one in which the organisers clearly imagined and were seeking to reconfigure a patriotic observance which was responding to the human losses of the Gallipoli campaign, rather than merely masking or denying them in a flag-waving jingoistic spectacle. As it transpired, the event was held at the Soldiers' Memorial Statue. The governor, the premier and the military commandant all delivered addresses. There were no parades. The military band played solemn music – 'The Dead March from Saul' and 'Lead Kindly Light', compositions which came to feature commonly

⁸³ See for example the editorial on St George's Day, *Register*, 23 April 1915, 6.

⁸⁴ Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 92-93.

⁸⁵ *Register*, 1 May 1915, 10.

⁸⁶ *Register*, 21 June 1915, 2.

⁸⁷ *Daily Herald*, 23 June 1915, 5.

⁸⁸ *Advertiser*, 23 June 1915, 10.

⁸⁹ *Register*, 26 June 1915, 11.

at Anzac Day events during the war years. Violets were sold and worn with a ribbon bearing the words 'In Memoriam'. Growing casualty lists meant that it was no longer acceptable to merely 'celebrate' the war effort or to ignore its impact. Violet Day was to be, according to the state governor, a "solemn conclave".⁹⁰ Trivial pastimes and indulgences were now inappropriate. Although, as will be seen, there was still ample space for the carnivalesque in patriotic celebrations, true patriotic performance now encompassed a new element, hitherto little evident – a solemn acknowledgement of war's personal cost and a sharing of the sorrow. Patriotic days now had an added purpose – the management of personal and national grief.

In significant ways, Violet Day anticipated the Anzac Day commemorations of April 1916. As Janice Pavils has pointed out, the original Violet Day orders of service closely resemble those of the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landing held 10 months later.⁹¹ The crowd at the event, which numbered many thousands, included a large contingent of grieving women. One mother, who had recently received news of her son's death at Gallipoli, was applauded in the press for the way she "bravely carried on". According to the governor, Gallipoli had provided "a great lesson which we must all try to emulate and to do our duty unflinchingly for our country". Yet for the same speaker, Violet Day was also an occasion to remember "splendid achievements which will be recorded in granite or brass".⁹² On Violet Day in Adelaide in July 1915, the key rhetorical figures which came to characterise Anzac Day were being articulated from the speakers' platform. It was not just a day to acknowledge war dead, but also to rejoice in and be inspired by their achievements. The rate of voluntary enlistment in mid-1915 was such that no urgent pleas for recruits were yet required. By April 1916, that scenario had changed and the rhetorical figures noted above were to be increasingly joined on Anzac Day by exhortations for more men to rally to the flag. On Violet Day, the Queen's representative in South Australia, Sir Henry Galway, noted that: "If any day is to be chosen for Australia's day I think it should be April 25."⁹³ It was a statement which was to be echoed in public rhetoric over subsequent months.

Thus patriotic events were being *reconfigured* such that they effectively *prefigured* the observances that characterised Anzac Day from 1916. Anzac rhetoric had not merely infused pre-existing commemorations such as Anniversary Day, Empire Day and Wattle Day. It was also informing and shaping new versions of commemoration and

⁹⁰ *Advertiser*, 3 July 1915, 17.

⁹¹ Pavils, "The Emergence of South Australian Anzac Culture 1915-1925," 128.

⁹² *Advertiser*, 3 July 1915, 17.

⁹³ *Advertiser*, 3 July 1915, 17.

memorialisation – in events such as Violet Day, and, as we will see, Australia Day. These commemorations were being instituted in response to the events on Gallipoli. Yet the dominant voices of the day sought to acknowledge the tragedy and the trauma of bereavement within a rhetorical framework which emphasised nobility, courage, duty, sacrifice, honour and the celebration of martial prowess, empire and nationhood. Thus the speechifying at such events came to be marked by a pride/sorrow binary – the same rhetorical figure which, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, proved characteristic of Anzac Day commemoration. In its Violet Day editorial, the labour newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, noted that the deeds of the Anzacs had caused a “thrill of pride to mingle with our grief”, eulogised them as “the bravest of the brave” and noted also the mobilising effect of their actions on the home front – “they stiffened the sinews, summoned up the blood”, readers were told.⁹⁴ The rhetoric of the day sought to convince the public of the importance of remembering and honouring the fallen, while simultaneously celebrating and emulating their achievements in order to propel the nation towards victory in the war.

The same rhetorical binary was very much in evidence at an occasion in July 1915 which witnessed the first attempt to coordinate a commemorative and fund-raising event on a national scale. After the success of a Belgian Day appeal, the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal* began, in mid-May 1915, to promote the idea of an ‘Australia Day’ to raise funds for comforts and care of Australian soldiers.⁹⁵ Later that month, at a public meeting convened by the Red Cross in Sydney’s Town Hall, which was attended by the governor and the lord mayor among others, the premier of New South Wales noted what he called “an opportunity for a renewal and a revivifying of their activities in the light of the doings of their own soldiers in the Dardanelles during the past few weeks.”⁹⁶ Gallipoli, then, could inject a new purpose into patriotic public performance. In Sydney, the Red Cross had appointed as organiser impresario and theatre entrepreneur Hugh Ward, who had organised their Belgian Day event. In a move to nationalise the occasion, Holman contacted the other state premiers in early June, requesting they also make plans to organise similar events.

Moreover, Holman sought to downplay any festive tone associated with the event, issuing a public statement urging that “dignity” should surround the proceedings. Controversially, the premier dismissed Ward and appointed in his place a “responsible committee in which

⁹⁴ *Daily Herald*, 2 July 1915, 4.

⁹⁵ *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 18 May 1915, 2.

⁹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 May 1915, 6.

the public had confidence.”⁹⁷ One correspondent to the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, R.T. Doyle, applauded the decision. In doing so he reproduced a letter from his son in the Australian Medical Corps, giving a graphic account of a military hospital:

Here I am on night duty, surrounded by a mass of hashed humanity, poor scarified bodies with wounds here there and everywhere ... there are moments when this place becomes a pandemonium of groans and of yells at an imagined foe.⁹⁸

This was a far cry from Ashmead-Bartlett’s accounts, sent in the initial despatches in early May, which described smiling wounded whose “cheers resounded through the night” at the Gallipoli landing.⁹⁹ In mid-June, Australia received news that the first contingent of Gallipoli wounded was on its way home. Despite the efforts of the censors and the propagandists, the populace was, by mid-1915, increasingly aware through letters home and the publication of casualty lists, of the impact of industrialised warfare on its soldiers. Doyle (senior) then went on to ask: “Are we going to besmear and insult that picture by a renewal of low comedy exhibitions through the streets of our city, whilst these fevered noises from our wounded are being echoed into our ears?” He thanked the premier for seeking to “guide” the populace to “methods that are sane and dignified”.¹⁰⁰ Some days later, Holman appealed to the people of the state “to take off his [sic] coat and throw every ounce of energy into the movement”.¹⁰¹ Here was a foretaste of Anzac Day appeals to make the winning of the war the responsibility of the entire nation and not just its soldiers. Australians were now being asked to make the war the only national priority such that any public or personal endeavours which took energies in other directions were increasingly devalued.

Holman’s ministrations to the other states had a noticeable impact. In many centres, local committees formed to organise the event. Circular letters were sent from state capitals to regional centres encouraging and providing guidelines for the commemoration.¹⁰² State governments were urged to declare the day a public holiday, though none did.¹⁰³ Some

⁹⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 18 June 1915, 7.

⁹⁸ *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 18 June 1915, 3.

⁹⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 May 1915, 13.

¹⁰⁰ *Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 18 June 1915, 3.

¹⁰¹ *Northern Star*, 22 June 1915, 5.

¹⁰² *Bunbury Herald*, 13 July 1915, 3.

¹⁰³ *Mercury*, 15 July 1915, 8. Queensland’s equivalent celebration on 28 August was declared a public holiday.

state education departments, however, did declare the day a school holiday, with children actively encouraged to participate in processions and displays.¹⁰⁴

Australia Day in July 1915 was the first occasion in which returned troops paraded and were publicly feted. Twenty thousand citizens gathered in Sydney for the event. According to one source, the returned troops were the major drawcard.¹⁰⁵ Where available, they were also paraded in regional centres and municipalities.¹⁰⁶ While the concept was most enthusiastically promoted in New South Wales, and in Sydney in particular, it also had traction nationally, with Australia Day commemorations held in all states on 30 July 1915. Queensland's participation, however, was minimal, with Toowoomba the only town in the state to stage an event. Brisbane and the rest of the state commemorated a similar event nearly a month later on 28 August.¹⁰⁷

While Holman had striven to invest proceedings with a "dignified" tone, the result was, nonetheless, a celebration of Australian national pride. The promotion of the day was ripe with nativist national symbolism. Commemorative eucalyptus leaves, with the word "Dardanelles" and "Gallipoli" on them were produced as mementos.¹⁰⁸ The *Launceston Examiner* told its readers: "The Kangaroo will not be missing".¹⁰⁹ Posters in Adelaide too included an image of a kangaroo "who asks you to do your duty by the wounded soldiers", with a map of Australia featuring the coat of arms located firmly in the centre and a banner with the words "Don't Forget Our Heroes". Melbourne's event included an historic pageant featuring a veteran of the Eureka Stockade, a Cobb & Co coach and Ned Kelly's armour.¹¹⁰ The war could now generate the assembly of an inventory of national icons and invest them with a significance which peace-time celebrations had failed to muster.

Rhetorical figures which would be heard by many future generations at Anzac Day commemorations also prevailed on that Australia Day. The now familiar narrative of the landing was recited. Newspaper editorials were indistinguishable from the kinds of copy Anzac Day would subsequently generate.¹¹¹ Politicians spoke of exultation and mourning – the characteristic Anzac Day binary. It was, according to Liberal Opposition leader Joseph Cook, a "day of pride for the heroism and bravery of our boys" but also a day of "solemnity

¹⁰⁴ *Examiner* (Launceston), 27 July 1915, 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1915, 13.

¹⁰⁶ *Geraldton Guardian*, 7 August 1915, 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 18 August 1915.

¹⁰⁸ *Examiner* (Launceston), 27 July 1915, 6.

¹⁰⁹ *Examiner* (Launceston), 27 July 1915, 6.

¹¹⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1915, 13.

¹¹¹ *Malvern Standard*, 31 July 1915, 2.

for our future battle covenants”.¹¹² Sacrifice and gratitude were the watchwords of the event.¹¹³ Here also was the idea that a debt was owed by the nation to the soldiers, repayable in part in a commemorative currency that acknowledged the pain and sacrifice endured. The day’s promoters used the slogan “Remember Gallipoli” in their advertising.¹¹⁴ There was something distinctly prescient, too, about the *Sydney Morning Herald’s* observation that there was “an element of ‘lest we forget’ in yesterday’s procession”.¹¹⁵ Copies of Ashmead-Bartlett’s and Bean’s accounts of the Gallipoli landing were printed in pamphlet form and made available for purchase at news stands and booksellers, with the proceeds going to the Australia Day Fund.¹¹⁶ In significant ways then, Australia Day was a dress-rehearsal for Anzac Day 1916.

In the lead up to the event, members of the public expressed concerns about what constituted a proper tone for the observance. As will be shown in Chapter Four, the same phenomenon occurred before Anzac Day 1916. The acknowledgement of growing casualty lists and the arrival home of wounded produced a shift in the nature of the commemoration. As one newspaper put it, “the war is now coming home to us in a way that we have not previously felt.”¹¹⁷ For many, the appropriate solemnity needed to be performed in a manner befitting the occasion. Church spokesmen agreed. The Rev S.H. Cox told an Australia Day planning meeting in Perth, in early July 1915, that “the day should be lifted to a higher plane”.¹¹⁸

As with subsequent Anzac Days, the church also played a major role in the commemoration. Though 30 July 1915 fell on a Friday, the previous Sunday was chosen by many of the churches as the day for conducting special “Australia Day” services. At St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Broken Hill, the Rev R.G. McCarron unveiled a roll of honour, recounted the narrative of the Gallipoli landing to his congregation and then preached a sermon about duty.¹¹⁹ Similarly, at Christ Church in Queanbeyan, the Rev Gordon Hirst spoke of Australia’s history in these terms:

There was a danger that Australia might perish in the flame of her own wellbeing. It was felt that something was needed to develop our

¹¹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1915, 7.

¹¹³ *Sunday Times* (Perth), 18 July 1915, 11; 1 August 1915, 2.

¹¹⁴ *Southern Record and Advertiser*, 3 July 1915, 4; *Young Witness*, 6 July 1915, 2.

¹¹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1915, 13.

¹¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 July 1915, 8.

¹¹⁷ *Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser* (Nambour), 25 June 1915, 6. The comment was made with reference to the parallel Queensland commemoration on 28 August 1915.

¹¹⁸ *Daily News* (Perth), 2 July 1915, 4.

¹¹⁹ *Barrier Miner*, 26 July 1915, 2.

national life and supply us with a vision of true greatness. This war might work the desired result.¹²⁰

As Michael McKernan points out, the notion that war was a source of moral renewal in the lives of nations and individuals was frequently espoused by clergymen in Australia during this period.¹²¹ It was a theme which was to be further-developed and reiterated from Anzac Day pulpits across the nation.

The language of unanimity and national cohesion was also ubiquitous on Australia Day, whether heard from speaker's platforms or read in the press. "With pride and enthusiasm all classes of Australians have entered into the Australia Day movement", the *Register* announced, "Political opponents stand in the true role of statesmen, high and low intermingling, all working in a common cause of humanity and freedom."¹²² A few days before, the press had drawn a distinction between this "Special Australian Day" and "ordinary Australian days" like 26 January. "It is a day on which all Australians are 'Australia United,' and on which 'Australia' means 'All Australians United.' Nobody must beat the political big drum, the class big drum, the religious big drum, or any other big drum to-day".¹²³ This rhetorical formation was a foretaste for Anzac Day commemorations in 1916.

Yet any declared hopes for national unity around the war were to prove short-lived, not to say fanciful. Australia was about to enter a period of the greatest social and political unrest in its history. In mid-1915, the national commemoration of the Anzac experience still remained intellectually quarantined from the vigorous political and sectarian contestation, so evident in Australia around the conscription debates of 1916 and 1917. While they were never successful in overrunning the Turkish positions on the heights of Gallipoli, the Anzacs and their champions had, by July 1915, clearly occupied the moral high ground on the home front. Gallipoli could be promoted as a genuinely unifying national experience.

Australia Day provided other portents of future Anzac Days too, in so far as the commemoration provided a focus for recruiting. The very fact of parading the wounded was a call to "fill the empty saddle". The *Sydney Morning Herald* was confident that the Australia Day movement would provide a stimulus to recruiting because "every man who volunteers for the front will go away assured that, if disaster overtakes him, his comfort

¹²⁰ *Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer*, 27 July 1915, 2.

¹²¹ Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1980), 18.

¹²² *Register*, 30 July 1915, 11.

¹²³ *Register*, 30 July 1915, 8.

and convalescence will be made as pleasant as possible".¹²⁴ Such a commemorative event offered a recruitment opportunity. Earlier in July, the New South Wales Opposition leader, Sir Charles Wade, had encouraged the state government to mount a recruiting campaign around the Australia Day celebrations.¹²⁵ It was a suggestion in line with Holman's thinking.¹²⁶ Ongoing recruitment was a way of honouring the debt owed to the Anzacs. Such initiatives were replicated elsewhere, for example, in Victoria and South Australia, where recruiting committees worked closely with Red Cross Committees "for the double purpose of securing soldiers and collecting money for the Australian wounded".¹²⁷ The governor-general's Australia Day message spoke to all potential recruits: "The Empire is fighting for its existence. Every available man who loves his country, who is loyal to his race, and who venerates its traditions, should join the colours."¹²⁸ It was a message that was unambiguous about the importance of continuing the now established tradition of national service and sacrifice.

In many respects the Australia Day commemoration of 30 July 1915 had as much, if not more, in common with subsequent Anzac Day anniversary events, as did the first major event actually called Anzac Day. That was an event which took place in South Australia on 13 October 1915, the state's Eight Hours Day. Trades Hall and the Labor government promoted the event, agreeing to suspend the labour celebration in favour of an Anzac Day commemoration.¹²⁹ Trade unions marched with their banners in the procession. The spirit of labour solidarity with a unified war effort was applauded in the local press.¹³⁰ The newspapers peddled the florid rhetoric of unity and cross-class purpose. "Instead of a pageant of politics there was a pageant of patriotism" noted the *Register*.¹³¹ While the notion was idealised and the imagery was clearly affected, it is telling that the first 'Anzac Day' celebrated in Australia was on a day which had historically been a proud labour movement commemoration.

Some of the elements of future Anzac Day rituals were enacted at the Adelaide commemoration. Wounded soldiers were paraded in cars. To valorise the Anzacs' achievements, the leader of the Liberal Opposition, A.H. Peake, invoked the memory of

¹²⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 July 1915, 8.

¹²⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July 1915, 12.

¹²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 July 1915, 8.

¹²⁷ *Traralgon Record*, 23 July 1915, 4.

¹²⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 July 1915, 7.

¹²⁹ Gareth Knapman, "Adelaide and the Birth of Anzac Day," in *Legacies of War*, ed. Nigel Starck (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2012), 178.

¹³⁰ *Advertiser*, 12 October 1915, 6.

¹³¹ *Register*, 14 October 1915, 4; *Mail*, 16 October 1915, 1; *Advertiser*, 13 October 1915, 9.

great British military victories at Crécy and Agincourt – ironically two battles fought against the French.¹³² The governor, who was not in attendance, sent his vice-regal message of support, honouring “the glorious memory of our heroic dead whose epitaphs are engraved on the hearts of a proud and grateful people”. He also used the occasion to promote recruiting, reminding readers of an “equally great and solemn obligation to fill the place of every sick and wounded man as it becomes vacant”.¹³³ The event generated the characteristic discourses about the “debt of honour” owed to the Anzacs and accounts of the Gallipoli landing were again rendered with alacrity.¹³⁴ The *Advertiser* commended “the union of the holiday spirit with the serious purpose of the day”, yet the “holiday spirit” was rather more the dominant texture that emerges from newspaper reporting. A carnival atmosphere prevailed around the proceedings that appears somewhat irreverent and thus out of character with subsequent commemorations.¹³⁵ The *Register* described a city “gay in bunting and bright decorations and gay in festive spirit of holiday-making people”. The Adelaide crowd was smaller than that which had gathered for Australia Day in July.¹³⁶ As a fund-raising venture, it was only a moderate success. It certainly did not glean nearly as much from the apparently over-taxed public as did Australia Day.¹³⁷

Gareth Knapman has argued that “the significance of this hosting of the first Anzac Day on Eight Hour Day cannot be underestimated.”¹³⁸ But in some sense, it can. It bore little resemblance to the commemorations which were enacted in April 1916. If Australians were fumbling towards an appropriate Anzac commemoration, then this was a digression along quite a different path – something of a blind alley. While the reverence for the Anzac experience so characteristic of discourses evident at other public occasions was evident in part, it was interspersed with cultural material that struck a very different tone. The Adelaide event centred on a street procession featuring, amongst other novelties, a “motor car of golliwogs” and a “parade of mounted ladies”.¹³⁹ The parade was followed by a programme of entertainment on the Adelaide Oval for the 15,000 in attendance.¹⁴⁰

This ‘Anzac Day’ was also marred by a serious riot that occurred on the afternoon of the event. Police attempted to arrest drunken soldiers being encouraged by packs of revellers.

¹³² *Register*, 13 October 1915, 7.

¹³³ *Mail* (Adelaide), 16 October 1915, 1.

¹³⁴ Pavils, *Anzac Day: The Undying Debt*, 3.

¹³⁵ *Advertiser*, 14 October 1915, 9.

¹³⁶ *Register*, 14 October 1915, 4.

¹³⁷ According to the *Register*, 19 November 1915, 6, £4,600 had been raised by November. In contrast the Australia Day fund contributed upwards of £180,000 according to *Advertiser*, 6 November 1915, 17.

¹³⁸ Knapman, “Adelaide and the Birth of Anzac Day,” 178.

¹³⁹ *Advertiser*, 27 September 1915, 8.

¹⁴⁰ *Advertiser*, 29 September 1915, 9.

A mob charged the police who were “kicked and jostled and knocked about.”¹⁴¹ Arrests and convictions followed. There was an unruly “bread and circus” flavour to Australia’s first ‘Anzac Day’ commemoration. Entertainment was designed for mass appeal. Takings were down. The worker constituency had less to give. The governor was absent and drunken revellers got out of hand. The ANA, Wattle Day and patriotic leagues which had been responsible for the organisation and promotion of Australia Day and Violet Day were taking a back seat. Bourgeois decorum in public patriotic performance was not strictly adhered to. Nor is there evidence that, in the ‘City of Churches’, there were related Anzac Day services or sermons. This event was much more of a workers’ “holiday” than any kind of “holy day”.

It would be misleading then to view this Adelaide event as a prototype for future commemorations. Indeed, as will be shown in Chapter Three, Anzac Day planners in Queensland in 1916 deliberately sought to disavow the tone of the Adelaide event. There was an occasion which owed more to the church memorial services increasingly commemorated for individuals and the collective “fallen and wounded in the war”, from May 1915. By April 1916, hundreds of these services had been held across the country. At St Paul’s Church of England Cathedral in Melbourne, on 9 May, Archbishop Lowther Clarke addressed the bereaved in his congregation and sought to console them by emphasising the righteousness of the imperial cause for which their loved ones had given their lives.¹⁴² On 15 June of that year, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, conducted a special service in St Paul’s Cathedral, London, in memory of the “fallen Australians and New Zealanders” that was widely publicised in advance by the Australian press.¹⁴³ Davidson spoke of the “dauntless gallantry” which the Anzacs showed and reminded those present that “their deeds had become part of the Empire’s heritage forever.”¹⁴⁴ Brisbane, too, held a major memorial service, specifically “to mark the sacrifice of the fallen at Gallipoli,” conducted in St John’s Cathedral by Archbishop Donaldson.¹⁴⁵ Such services were held across the nation and some were ecumenical. Not all were held in churches. Increasingly they were conducted in public halls because of the great numbers wishing to attend. On 20 September 1915, Sydney Town Hall hosted a large public commemorative service organised by the Salvation Army and attended by leading

¹⁴¹ *Advertiser*, 20 October 1915, 14.

¹⁴² *Argus*, 10 May 1915, 10.

¹⁴³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 June 1915, 7; *Advertiser*, 10 June 1915, 9.

¹⁴⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 17 June 1915, 7.

¹⁴⁵ John A. Moses, “Canon David John Garland (1864-1939) as Architect of Anzac Day,” *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal* 17, no. 2 (May) (1999): 51.

politicians and other dignitaries, including Joseph Cook, the leader of the Opposition.¹⁴⁶ A few weeks later a similar event was held in the Exhibition Building in Adelaide.¹⁴⁷ Solemn memorialisation had already begun to shift from the ecclesiastical to the civic space. Doubtless, many of the grieving were not regular church-goers and there was a need for their loss to be acknowledged and assuaged publicly, other than in a church.

Clergymen were committed to ministering to the spiritual and psychological needs of the growing numbers of bereaved and traumatised in their congregations. What Moses calls an “upsurge of grief management within the framework of traditional Christian liturgy” was doubtless a factor in the impetus towards, and shaping of, the commemoration.¹⁴⁸ Australians were following the leads set by other Anglican clergymen in Britain. Though uncommon at the beginning of the war, public prayers for the dead became increasingly widespread in Britain in 1915.¹⁴⁹ Following this British trend, and doubtless responding to a perceived need in his own community, the Anglican Archbishop Charles Riley conducted a requiem service in Perth’s St George’s Cathedral in November 1915. Similar memorials were held in other churches throughout the diocese. The archbishop offered his congregation the spiritual succour which came from a shared belief in an afterlife, made glorious by sacrifice in a “just” and “holy” war, thus serving to reaffirm and promote the church’s official view of the conflict.¹⁵⁰ There were pastoral duties to be performed by clergymen also. July 1915 witnessed the arrival home of the first of the sick and wounded. Confronting the shocking, disabling effect of war on loved ones placed major stresses on families.¹⁵¹ The living casualties of war needed to be assured that their injuries were ennobling rather than crippling. To reaffirm this vision, Anzac Day would see the wounded on public parade wherever feasible.

Conclusion

Thus, in response to mounting war casualties, the established churches refined a set of memorial practices which laid the foundation for the construction of an Anzac Day liturgy. Moreover, the discursive foundations had also been laid for an Anzac Day rhetoric which offered consolation but also buttressed an ongoing commitment to the struggle. By mid-

¹⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September 1915, 5.

¹⁴⁷ Robert D. Linder, *The Long Tragedy: Australian Evangelical Christians and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Adelaide: Open Book, 2000), 100.

¹⁴⁸ Moses, "The Struggle for Anzac Day 1916-1930 and the Role of the Brisbane Anzac Day Commemoration Committee," 55.

¹⁴⁹ Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: SPCK, 1978), 176.

¹⁵⁰ Archbishop Charles Riley, *West Australian*, 1 November 1915, 7.

¹⁵¹ Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs: Living with the Scars of War* (Kensington, NSW: UNSW Press, 2009), 24.

1915 ever increasing casualty lists, what Marina Larsson has called those “catalogues of loss”, had begun to demand a new discourse of death from the pulpit.¹⁵² Doubtless some clergymen, like other Australians, could take satisfaction and pride in the fact that their countrymen were now shedding their blood in battle, but a new rhetoric was required to euphemise the manifest carnage, if not to deny it.¹⁵³ Churches sought a shift to what one Anglican bishop called “a much brighter view of death”.¹⁵⁴ Hell-fire and brimstone sermons were no longer the order of the day. The death of Australians in the war gave church leaders the means to inscribe mortality with a higher meaning by imbuing it with the euphemistic language of heroism that came to characterise public Anzac commemoration. Its rituals consecrated the martyr’s fate and nurtured what that same bishop called “our faith in the beauty of death”.¹⁵⁵

The war mobilised participation in public rituals on a scale unseen beforehand. While the major impetus for these events was fund-raising, they served multiple purposes – the promotion of recruiting, community building, entertainment and grief management. After April 1915, they offered an opportunity for politicians, pressmen, recruiters, teachers and preachers to deliver their messages, to shape public perceptions of what occurred at Gallipoli and to promote their own interpretations and inflections on its significance. A military campaign which had been an abject and tragic failure was, by April 1916, fully reinvented as a ‘success’ – a celebration of national arrival and military prowess.

Moses has argued that the task of channelling the Gallipoli experience into a “ritual of national significance” was begun in Brisbane with the work of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee, spearheaded by Canon David Garland.¹⁵⁶ Doubtless Garland and that organisation, as will be shown in the next chapter, played a significant role in the shaping of future commemorations. By the first anniversary of the landing, however, Australians had already commemorated a range of “Anzac Days”. The nation was already well-rehearsed in a set of performative and discursive practices that would constitute what would come to count as proper public displays of patriotism and war commemoration.

Thus Anzac Day, as it came to be configured, filled a space in the national commemorative calendar. Many of the fundamental elements in its lexicon were already in

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁵³ Michael McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918* (Sydney: Catholic Theological Faculty, 1980), 70-71.

¹⁵⁴ Arthur Winnington-Ingram cited in Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, 180.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁵⁶ Moses, "Canon David John Garland (1864-1939) as Architect of Anzac Day," 51.

place. These included: the life cycle metaphors – birth, baptism, maturity of the nation; the valorisation of the character and deeds of the soldiers; the winning of imperial stripes; and, the promotion of Anzac Day as an egalitarian unifying force in society. In Anzac Day speeches and sermons over the next three years, orators continued to tell Australians a version of the Gallipoli narrative and regularly reminded them that the nation would be morally reawakened by war; that it was a day of both mourning and rejoicing, and that a debt was owed to the Anzacs for their sacrifice. Repayment of that debt would be, in part, by way of recruits that were needed to replace “the fallen”.

While it provided a commemorative space for reflection and for grieving, the fact that Anzac Day was conceived and forged during a period of high-pitched national enthusiasm for war meant that, despite the tragedy of the Gallipoli experience, it was not inflected in such a way as to reflect anything like a pacifist theme. Anzac Day was inextricably linked to the aggrandisement of Australia’s role in the war and indeed of war itself. Through the next phase of its life, the commemoration came increasingly under the aegis of civic organisers, politicians, clergymen, recruiting committees and returned servicemen’s associations. Those who came to organise and shape it were unflinching in their commitment to the pursuit of the war and fervent in their attachment to the British Imperial cause. For them, Anzac was as inextricably linked to the cause of Empire as it was to Australia. Anzac rhetoric would brook no talk of the failure, fear, waste, tragedy, carnage, horror and futility which defined the Gallipoli campaign.

Chapter Three

The Architecture of Anzac Day: Shaping the 1916 Observance in Queensland

On 10 January 1916 a public meeting was held in the Exhibition Hall in Brisbane, chaired by the Mayor, Alderman George Down. It was organised by Canon David Garland and featured addresses by prominent Queenslanders, including the premier and the governor. The meeting resolved that “in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that the first anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli shall be suitably celebrated in this State, and that the other States of Australasia [sic] be invited to consider similar action” and led to the formation of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee (ADCC).¹ Newspapers across Australia reported the proceedings and resolutions of the meeting within a few days.² The activities of the ADCC which met for the first time on 3 February 1916, also received publicity nationally. It has been argued that this meeting was the organisational genesis of Anzac Day.³

This chapter examines in detail the work of Garland and the ADCC in shaping the Queensland commemoration in 1916. It also analyses events that took place on the streets of Brisbane on 25 April 1916. Garland’s response to the failure of the Gallipoli campaign, his attitudes and dispositions were typical of the Anglican clergy of the time – pro-Empire and bellicose. The established churches were very much a part of the pro-war coalition which sought to promote Anzac Day. What follows is a re-assessment of Garland’s role in the proceedings within that context, showing that the organisation of the event was inspired as much by the desire to promote recruiting and to mobilise the home front around the war effort as it was to commemorate the memory of those who had died at Gallipoli. It was as much a ‘Call to Arms’ as it was a ‘Call to Prayer’.

As has been shown in the first two chapters of this thesis, Anzac Day does have a distinct genealogy. It was not “shaped largely in the mind of one extraordinarily energetic, public-spirited and organisationally gifted Anglo-Catholic priest”, as John Moses has claimed.⁴

¹ Resolutions – Meeting Exhibition Hall, Brisbane, Monday 10 January 1916, 8pm, OM71-41, Queensland Recruiting Committee Records, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

² *West Australian*, 11 January 1916, 7; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 1916, 9; *Examiner* (Launceston), 12 January 1916, 5; *Register*, 11 January 1916, 5; *Australasian* (Melbourne), 15 January 1916, 29.

³ Richard Ely, “The First Anzac Day: Invented or Discovered?,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 9, no. 17 (1985): 56; Eric Andrews, “25 April 1916: First Anzac Day in Australia and Britain” *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 23(1993): 13; John A. Moses and George F. Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration* (Canberra: Barton Books, 2013), 79.

⁴ Moses and Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration*, 9.

The concept that the day was worthy of commemoration had been expressed publicly and regularly since May 1915. It built on a tradition of patriotic 'days' and filled a commemorative vacuum created by the divisions surrounding Foundation Day and Empire Day, and the absence of gravitas around Wattle Day. If Garland was the "architect" of Anzac Day, as Moses claims, he was certainly not the inventor.⁵

While these organisational moves in Queensland gave impetus to the movement, the notion that the day was worth commemorating predated the inception of the Queensland committee. By late 1915, Australian newspapers were already referring to a phenomenon they called the "Anzac Day movement".⁶ The name implied an organisational impetus which was non-existent before February 1916. Yet the phrase nonetheless captures a sense of popular enthusiasm for commemoration of the Gallipoli landing in the lead-up to its first anniversary.

The ADCC shaped a commemoration from cultural material which was both to hand and pre-tested. Moreover, the vision of a commemoration which Garland and the ADCC sought to configure was a direct product of the institutional imperatives promoted by the established churches. Anzac Day was not an invention, nor was it a discovery. Rather, it was commemorative bricolage with elements assembled from that which was readily available, supported by a celebratory pro-war rhetoric. It was sustainable, because it was promoted to meet certain needs: a traumatised community's need to bond over a shared public ritual of commemoration and acknowledgement, as well as the state's need, in the face of defeat at Gallipoli and military reverses on the Western Front, to recruit and to maintain enthusiasm for the war effort. However, the question of whether it met those needs, a question at the core of this thesis, cannot be unequivocally answered in the affirmative. An account of the events in Brisbane on Anzac Day 1916 suggests that the efforts of the planners in Queensland did not necessarily produce the desired result.

Nonetheless, Eric Andrews's claim that it was no more than a cynical political exercise is something of an exaggeration and difficult to justify from the Queensland sources. A reading of the Committee's minutes gives little evidence of an unambiguously articulated statement of intent, though it is understandable how Andrews's conclusion might be drawn. Nonetheless, the observance of the day was manifestly in the hands of a loyalist elite who sought to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. As Martin Crotty and Craig

⁵ John A. Moses, "Canon David John Garland (1864-1939) as Architect of Anzac Day," *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal* 17, no. 2 (May) (1999).

⁶ *Daily Herald* (Adelaide), 19 November 1915, 4; *Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle*, 15 December 1915, 2.

Melrose point out, there were no places for unionists or women on the ADCC, let alone any of the other marginalised voices in Australia at the time (such as those who were not ethnically Anglo-Irish). While Queensland Labor Premier T.J. Ryan and Catholic Archbishop James Duhig were active members of the Committee, both men unequivocally supported the Empire's war aims.⁷ The ADCC was a loyalist pro-war organisation and it shaped a commemoration to meet those imperatives arising from the British Empire's war effort. The shaping of a "suitable commemoration" was, as Graham Seal points out, in the hands of the representatives of political, religious and military power.⁸ Yet evidence from the 1916 commemoration suggests strongly that these diverse elements and intentions within the commemoration failed to cohere. As a recruiting exercise and fund-raiser, it had limited success. Moreover, it failed to meet the needs of the public grieving the loss of loved ones. The personal psychological need for grief management sat uncomfortably with the state's 'need' for mobilisation around the war effort.

Anzac Day as Call to Prayer

It is not surprising that the established churches would be at the nexus of any national commemoration around remembrance of soldiers who died at Gallipoli. The churches had long exercised a dominant influence on memorialisation and funereal practice. Even those Australian citizens who were only nominal Christians would typically expect to have funeral rites conducted in a church. Many took comfort in the ritual and the belief system which underwrote it. Yet the churches' investment in Anzac commemoration extended well beyond the pastoral needs of offering solace to the bereaved. To appreciate the role played by Garland and the ADCC in the design of a commemoration in Queensland we need first to examine and interrogate the responses to the war emanating from the institutions in which Garland and other clergymen served.

The Protestant churches made an unambiguous ideological commitment to the war and to the Empire. They were, in effect, propagandists for the war crusade. Moreover, clergymen perceived an opportunity to extend their influence by buttressing and elevating the nation morally and spiritually in a time of crisis. During the war years, most Australians allied themselves with one of the major church denominations, at least nominally. The opinions expressed in pulpits, at public meetings and at denominational synods were publicised

⁷ Martin Crotty and Craig Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 96, no. 393 (2007): 684.

⁸ Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology* (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2004), 111-12.

widely in newspapers and church publications. Churches saw themselves as having a major part to play in the conduct of the war and their pronouncements attracted attention and almost certainly exercised influence. It is not surprising then, that clergymen played such a leading part in the shaping of Anzac Day commemoration through the ADCC and, more widely, through their positions on local organising committees throughout the country. Churches specialised in liturgy and solemn ceremony. As McKernan points out, they added “colour and theatre” to public formal occasions and their role as “national masters of ceremonies” was largely unchallenged.⁹ While Queensland political leaders invested in the idea of commemoration and actively promoted it, Ryan and his ministers were content to leave the details of the planning to the liturgical ‘experts’, such as Garland. While Garland was the most persuasive and energetic member of the Brisbane committee, he was not the only clergyman involved. Indeed, the ADCC was dominated by them,¹⁰ Indeed, churchmen formed more than half of the Executive Committee, while the rest were politicians (local and state), but for one soldier, Colonel Lee.

Because the clergy’s influence was formative in terms of the values and dispositions which shaped the observance, it is necessary to examine at the outset the position that the major churches articulated and adopted at the outset of war. Despite the ethical and theological conundrums it posed, the war was welcomed by most churchmen as an occasion for the reiteration of moral certitudes and as a source of spiritual renewal. It was seen as a reminder that the nation had drifted from the path of Christian righteousness. In response to declining congregation numbers and growing trends towards secularisation from the late nineteenth century, spokesmen for the churches expressed their belief that the institutions and belief systems which they represented had to be relocated back to the centre of Australian life.¹¹ In August 1914 South Australian Methodist minister, William Bainger, told his congregation:

War has been God’s instrument again and again to bring men to their senses, to a consciousness of their dependence on a divine power ... It has stimulated the virtues that make a nation great, and kindled not

⁹ Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1980), 14-15.

¹⁰ They included the Anglican Archbishop, St Clair Donaldson; the Catholic Archbishop, James Duhig; the Moderators of the Presbyterian and Methodists Churches, Rev William Smith and Rev Ernest Merrington; Rev Dr G.E. Rowe (Methodist); Rev A.G. Weller (Baptist) and Brigadier Wesley Harris (Salvation Army). The ADCC comprised both a General and an Executive Committee

¹¹ Patricia Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 74.

only the flame of patriotism, but a new intense conviction that religion is a gorgeous reality.¹²

In October 1914 Archbishop Donaldson noted privately that he had been “stung” by the “intense sense of opportunity” that the outbreak of war had brought.¹³ Churchmen were encouraged by the growth in congregation numbers. Garland noted: “Men were hungering for religion, stretching out their hands to God.”¹⁴ The Church of England issued a pastoral letter in December 1914, encouraging its followers to slough off their apathy and indifference towards the conflict and to embrace it as an opportunity for spiritual renewal through sacrifice.¹⁵ In his Lenten sermons of 1915, Donaldson lamented Australia’s sense of “apathy and self-content” and stressed that God required a response from the nation which was not yet forthcoming.¹⁶ A month prior to the first Anzac Day commemoration, Donaldson preached in a sermon at St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane: “Morally and spiritually we have not yet shown any sign of the chastening influence of the war. The nation must find its soul again.”¹⁷ “God”, insisted the Brisbane Anglican *Church Chronicle*, “was using the war to assert his own sovereign law of righteousness”. War offered the nation an opportunity, not just militarily, but spiritually as well, to make its place in the Empire. So realigned with the “gorgeous reality” of Christianity, the nation could be “chastened” and spiritually uplifted by the intensity of the war experience. It would allow the nation to recover its lost “soul”.¹⁸ Garland’s work on Anzac served to promote these very ends and was inflected with all the flavour of a moral and spiritual crusade.

Churchmen were manifestly conscious that their influence on society could not be wielded from the pulpit alone. They formed partnerships with government and the military to achieve the moral and spiritual renewal required to engender enthusiasm for the war. Anzac Day commemoration was another manifestation of the desire to carry this imperative into the secular space. Government administrators deferred to clergymen in the organisation of public ritual because they were justifiably confident that their aims were

¹² Cited in Robert D. Linder, *The Long Tragedy: Australian Evangelical Christians and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Adelaide: Open Book, 2000), 34.

¹³ Donaldson to Bishop of Carpentaria, 31 October 1914 cited in Alexander Philip Kidd, "The Brisbane Episcopate of St. Clair Donaldson 1904-1921" (University of Queensland, 1996), 198.

¹⁴ Garland “Sermon Notes”, OM64-14 S3 Garland Papers, Patriotic and War Sermons John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

¹⁵ Michael McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918* (Sydney: Catholic Theological Faculty, 1980), 63.

¹⁶ Donaldson cited in *ibid.*, 70.

¹⁷ Cited in *Truth* (Brisbane), 22 March 1916, 5

¹⁸ *Church Chronicle*, September 1914, cited in Len Eacott, "World War 1: A Testing Time for Australian Christianity," *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 95 (1992): 54.

identical with those of the politicians in power. Clergymen, in turn, sought to boost their relevance to society during wartime. An emphasis on Anzac's spiritual dimension was taken up in one of the first editorials to be published on the planned commemoration in the *Brisbane Courier* in March 1916: "There is a devotional and religious aspect which demands recognition. It is well to look above and beyond the physical and the military, and consider those deep currents which influence national character and life and carry people past the sordid and the material to the spiritual."¹⁹ Anzac commemoration, as framed by the ADCC, was conceived as a vector for that spiritual current. It was launched, in part, to sheet home a set of metaphysical imperatives.

It is also instructive to examine the churches' responses to the mounting casualties produced by the nation's military commitments through 1915 and early 1916. Anzac Day liturgy was not invented in early 1916. It grew, as has been demonstrated in Chapter Two, out of commemorative practices which had developed over the previous twelve months. Public memorialisation itself had begun well before the Anzac Day commemoration of 1916. "Gallipoli", as Bart Ziino has noted, "precipitated in Australia a profound encounter with death".²⁰ Honour boards and monuments began to appear in parks, town halls, schools, churches and other public places from mid-1915. Some of these were temporary constructions. In other cases, the names of Gallipoli dead were added to pre-existing monuments. Foundation stones were also laid and dedicated in preparation for forthcoming statues and obelisks.²¹ These constructions functioned, in part, as public versions of the intimate shrines of the deceased's personal artefacts which many of the bereaved kept in their own houses. They also served as substitute graves at which flowers would be placed and memories evoked. Like memorial services and requiem masses, such monuments offered a public acknowledgement of the trauma and loss.

Clergymen were conscious of the impact that the rapidly growing toll of dead and wounded was having on the community. They typically, though often reluctantly, accepted responsibility for what they called "the dread duty" of delivering telegrams informing next of kin of death. They were acutely aware of the effect that the war was having on Australian families.²² Doubtless, such ongoing contact with the bereaved was a source of great strain,

¹⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 8 March 1916, 6.

²⁰ Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Crawley, W.A.: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), 39.

²¹ K. S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1998), 108-10.

²² McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 25-26.

as some clergymen, like Garland, also had loved ones at the front. Prayers of intercession were a common occurrence in churches from the beginning of the war.

The fact that Anzac Day 1916 occurred the day after Easter Monday meant that the Christian language of sacrifice, death, rebirth and eternal glory could be readily mobilised around Anzac observance. Christian theology accommodated this inherent paradox. Indeed, it embraced it in so far as it commemorated the “victory” of this glorious and profound death over mere mortality. Newspaper editors were at liberty to apply this biblical rhetoric to the national context. “Anzac was national sacrifice at the altar of a great ideal,” the *Brisbane Courier* editorialised in March 1916.²³ Biblical notions of efficacy of sacrifice became incorporated into an already flourishing secular discourse about national birth.

Yet Anzac’s rhetoric of remembrance was typically coupled with a pedagogical purpose. “War was a test”, wrote Garland, “the crisis revealing all that had gone before.” War thus had a pedagogy. It taught the nation ‘lessons’. In Garland’s words:

If we thus repent, gird ourselves, bring back the sturdy British character, replace effeminacy with manliness, selfishness with generosity, indifference to duty with readiness to do our share; then and only then may we have confidence in the God of battles to uphold us.²⁴

For Garland, success in war derived less from superior military resources and prowess than from a strictly-gendered moral fibre and ‘national character’. The enemy could not be conquered until Australians had at first conquered their own base materialistic instincts. As one Queensland clergyman put it in a sermon at the war anniversary service in August 1915: “The war also taught that there were things dearer than life itself – liberty, freedom, and honour; and the men of the British Empire had thought these worth so much that they had cheerfully given their lives that these great possessions might be preserved to their countrymen.”²⁵ “Sadness mixed with pride” was a dominant motif at Anzac commemorations from 1916. To describe the by-products of war, Anzac speakers availed themselves of a language minted by rhetoricians of an earlier age – honour, glory, sacrifice, heroism, valour – what Paul Fussell has called the “high diction” of war.²⁶

²³ *Brisbane Courier*, 8 March 1916, 6.

²⁴ Garland “Sermon Notes”, OM64-14 S3 Garland Papers, Patriotic and War Sermons, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

²⁵ Rev. Joseph Robertson, *Queensland Times*, 9 August 1915, 6.

²⁶ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22.

Some clergy and ministers, however, expressed significant misgivings about the war and its impact.²⁷ Pacifism had exponents in the pulpit, such as Methodist minister B. Linden Webb in Hay, New South Wales, and the Sydney Congregationalist Albert Rivett.²⁸ The Reverend James Gibson similarly refused to support a motion sanctioning the nation's commitment to war, made at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland in Brisbane on 10 May 1915. Despite the fact that many of his relatives were at the front, Gibson argued that, as a Christian, he could not be a signatory to any official proclamation endorsing war of any kind.²⁹ Gibson was subsequently tarred with the brush of disloyalty and was publicly censured by Merrington, the Presbyterian representative on the ADCC.³⁰ In August 1915, the Quaker magazine *Australasian Friend*, dared ask the question: "Has Christianity failed?", noting that "It is only now that Europe has realised that if nations were Christian, there would be no war."³¹ Prominent Queensland Quaker, Margaret Thorpe, met with Donaldson in late 1915 in an unsuccessful attempt to shift his perspective.³² Throughout 1915 the established churches also attracted trenchant criticism from the militant left for their position on the war. In December 1915, "Ajax", writing in *Direct Action*, the journal of the Industrial Workers of the World, noted: "It is sheer clerical hypocrisy to pretend we are fighting for the ideal of Christianity ... this upheaval is a war for trade and class domination."³³

Like their British counterparts, Australian churchmen, unswayed by criticism from the militant left and a few dissenting voices from within the fold, were encouraged by the apparent religious revival which followed the outbreak of war.³⁴ Yet as the war progressed, many became increasingly perturbed by the nation's need to seek relief and entertainment away from the war – in theatres, cinemas and pubs, and at dances and sporting events. By late 1915, churchmen were noting that, apart from special memorial services, congregation numbers had returned to their pre-war levels.³⁵ In November 1915 Sydney's Anglican and Catholic Archbishops, John Wright and Michael Kelly, considered approaching the state government to promote a national day of prayer by proclaiming it a public holiday.³⁶ A few months later Wright sought to engage the assistance of the

²⁷ Linder, *The Long Tragedy: Australian Evangelical Christians and the Great War, 1914-1918*, 76-78.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 78-79; McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 30.

²⁹ *Cairns Post*, 14 May 1915, 5.

³⁰ McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 30-31.

³¹ *Australasian Friend*, 16 August 1915, 880.

³² *Australasian Friend*, 31 December 1915, 909.

³³ "Ajax", "War and Religion", *Direct Action*, 11 December 1915, 3.

³⁴ Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: SPCK, 1978), 72.

³⁵ McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918*, 88.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

Governor-General, Ronald Munro-Ferguson, in a national call to prayer. Munro-Ferguson passed the suggestion on to Prime Minister Hughes. On Christmas Eve, Hughes announced that Sunday, 2 January, was to be observed as a day of “special prayer for divine guidance and aid to the British Empire” and not, notably, a day of prayer for the soldiers themselves or the bereaved.³⁷

Such initiatives sought to address the issues thrown up by the war on a national scale, through supplications for the nation and empire, yet they were hardly designed to meet the needs of grieving kin. Anzac commemoration, in the absence of bodies and graves, could help substitute for the elaborate rituals of mourning which had developed in the nineteenth century. The war encouraged a new public restraint and stoicism around death. Jalland argues that it created a new configuration of “suppressed and privatised grieving”.³⁸ Inglis also suggests that much of this grief was “invisible and inaudible”.³⁹ Politicians and clergymen asked grieving loved ones to emulate the courage and stoicism of the Anzacs. Australian soldiers came to embody a set of ideals to which civilians should aspire. By encouraging public comportment and discipline, Anzac Day organisers prescribed culturally and politically appropriate ways of behaving. Ostentatious displays of mourning could undermine morale and thus run the risk of being construed as unpatriotic. The commemoration was engineered partly for the social control of public grieving.

An exemplar of such control was the period of silence, which was to become an iconic element in memorialisation generally and in Anzac Day ritual in particular. The ADCC announced that the commemoration would incorporate “one minute’s silence” to be observed at public meetings as a tribute to the fallen.⁴⁰ The observation of the period of silence was subsequently extended to include “all places of amusement” and businesses. A minute’s silence was also requested to be observed on board ships, while it was advised that “the Minister for Railways and the manager of tramways are invited to stop traffic for one minute at 9pm.”⁴¹ Moses claims that Garland had “devised” the rite and that it was the “genius of Garland’s concept ... that enabled persons of Roman Catholic or Protestant persuasion to pray or not to pray as was their custom, while atheists and agnostics could engage in a reverential reflection.”⁴² Yet the period of silence may not have such a clear-

³⁷ *Argus*, 24 December 1915, 6.

³⁸ Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 41.

³⁹ Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, 102.

⁴⁰ *Capricornian*, 11 March 1916, 19.

⁴¹ *Cairns Post*, 24 April 1916, 4.

⁴² Moses and Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration*, 169.

cut origins in Garland's thinking, as Moses suggests. Long before 1916, the practice of the "silent toast" was common as mark of respect to the deceased, especially in military circles. While it was not a regular feature of civil funereal practice in Britain, or in the United States before World War I, it may well have been practised in South Africa prior to Garland's 'invention' of it. When suggesting a period of silence be observed around Armistice Day commemorations in 1919, the British High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, claimed that a noon day "three minute's pause" had been observed in Cape Town since 1916.⁴³ In June 1916, the *New York Times* reported the practice in a ceremony paying tribute to the war dead, though that newspaper did not report the 1916 Anzac Day commemoration in Australia.⁴⁴ The prevalence on three English-speaking continents of a 'period of silence' around bereavement suggests that the practice need not have been 'devised' at all. Rather, it was available, fitting and 'found', and therefore applied as a culturally appropriate demeanour to acknowledge war casualties.

Anzac Day commemoration in Queensland was, therefore, shaped significantly by clergymen and it bore the influence of Christian liturgical traditions. Moreover, its formulation was a product of the theology and politics adopted by the established churches around the war. While doubts were voiced about its effectiveness in that role, especially for the loved ones of those 25,000 soldiers declared missing (those who lacked the finality of the formal military death notice), the day did provide a shared ritual and opportunity for public commemoration and memorialisation for non-church-goers and church-goers alike.⁴⁵ It was conceived, in part, as a form of grief management. Yet these initiatives were teamed with a mindset pursuing vigorous commitment to that very phenomenon which caused that grief – the war itself. While it was a call to prayer, these were prayers for the nation and the Empire, as much as for the soldiers or their kin.

Anzac Day as Call to Arms

The links between Anzac commemoration and the promotion of recruiting were manifest from the outset. The ADCC was, as Martin Crotty and Craig Melrose point out, "loyalist from its foundation."⁴⁶ Anzac Day organisation was in the hands of men for whom victory in the war was to be pursued at any cost. The commemoration in Queensland grew out of

⁴³ Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919-1946*, Legacy of the Great War (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 9.

⁴⁴ *New York Times*, 11 June 1916, 18.

⁴⁵ Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 97.

⁴⁶ Crotty and Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," 684.

recruiting initiatives promoted by private citizens. Garland had a history of association with patriotic pro-war activity. In June 1915 he had proposed that “a big patriotic demonstration” be held in Brisbane to stimulate recruiting.⁴⁷ Like much Anzac Day organisation during the war, this recruiting work was not at the behest of governments, federal or state. Rather, governments approved these initiatives retrospectively, authorising this version of commemoration.

As was noted in Chapter Two, one account of the origins of Anzac Day planning holds that the organisation grew from a dialogue between Thomas Augustine Ryan, a Brisbane auctioneer, and Colonel Andrew Thynne, a prominent solicitor, conservative politician and chairman of the Queensland Recruiting Committee.⁴⁸ Because this committee had a seminal role in promoting the Anzac commemoration its activities require close analysis. The Committee, formed in late May 1915, was not set up by the military, though State Commandant, Colonel George Lee, welcomed it and endorsed its initiatives. Nor was it an agency of the state or the federal government. No representatives of the newly-elected state Labor government were invited to attend its inaugural meeting.⁴⁹ Though it, for a short time, came under the aegis of the State War Council, at the outset it had no government representatives. It later included state government ministers John Adamson (Railways) and Herbert Hardacre (Public Instruction).⁵⁰ But the Committee was a self-funded operation consisting of private, prominent and influential citizens, many of whom were, like Thynne, retired military figures who took it upon themselves to work for greater commitment to the war effort. Many of its members were clergymen who went on to become members of the ADCC, including Garland, Donaldson, Duhig and Smith. It was the first such committee to operate in Australia. When Frank Gavan Duffy wrote, on behalf of the Federal Parliamentary War Committee, to Queensland Premier T.J. Ryan in September 1915 recommending the establishment of state recruiting committees, Ryan

⁴⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 June 1915, 7.

⁴⁸ H.J. Diddams, *Anzac Commemoration 1921: A Brief History of the Movement : Sermons and Addresses Delivered Throughout Queensland : The Immortal Story of the Landing* ([Brisbane]: Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland, 1921), 7.

⁴⁹ Suggested agenda paper for meeting to be held in Council Chambers Town Hall on Friday 28 May 1915 at 8pm, OM71-41, Queensland Recruiting Committee Records, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁵⁰ Tellingly, both men were later active proponents of conscription. Hardacre's enthusiasm for the cause was discouraged by Ryan. Adamson was not to be deterred however. His commitment to the cause saw his resignation from the ministry and the Labor Party in October 1916.

was able to advise him that one already existed in Queensland and was able to pass the request on to the existing organisation.⁵¹

What remains unclear is why this private committee chose this particular time to commence its activities. In May 1915 there was no desperate imperative to recruit. According to Ernest Scott's *Official History*, 35,575 men enlisted in July 1915, the highest figure for any month during the war.⁵² The Committee, moreover, had no government mandate. Indeed, it seems the opposite was the case. The recruiting committee first met three days after T.J. Ryan's Labor government had been elected to power – the first time a Labor government commanded a majority in the lower house in Queensland.⁵³ Thynne, a conservative politician in the Legislative Council, was a long-time political opponent of Ryan who had also clashed with him over a range of judicial matters.⁵⁴ Arguably, Thynne had little confidence at this stage in Ryan's 'loyalty' to the cause of the war and undertook either to place pressure on the government or to take his own initiatives. If so, Thynne's scepticism was ill-founded. Ryan proved a great supporter of the allied war cause, speaking at recruiting rallies, personally co-ordinating the activities of the Queensland War Council from October 1915, addressing the public meeting noted above in January 1916 and later proving a willing and influential advocate for the initiatives of the ADCC.⁵⁵

Brisbane Anglican clergymen, for their part, had been active recruiters. A few days before he conducted the memorial service in June 1915, Donaldson told a meeting of the Anglican Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane: "The nation would have to be roused to sacrifice and the clergy had a great part to play. Ought they to appeal for recruits? He had no doubt that they ought. If the war was not wrong in itself, they were bound to spare no effort or sacrifice in the prosecution of it."⁵⁶ As the Archbishop later wrote: "the main indication of the national spirit is the eagerness of the nation's manhood to get to the fighting line."⁵⁷ By mimicking their British counterparts in badging the conflict as a 'holy'

⁵¹ C. Gavan Duffy to T.J. Ryan, 13 September 1915, OM71-41, Queensland Recruiting Committee Records, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁵² Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, ed. Robert O'Neill, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press in association with The Australian War Memorial, 1989), 871.

⁵³ Minutes, 28 May 1915, OM71-41, Queensland Recruiting Committee Records, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁵⁴ D. J. Murphy, *T.J. Ryan: A Political Biography* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), 133.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵⁶ *Queensland Times*, 10 June 1915, 7.

⁵⁷ Church of England in Australia, *Year Book of the Diocese of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia* (Brisbane: Watson Ferguson, 1915), 15.

and a 'just' war to save the Empire and to avenge the 'Rape of Belgium', clergymen such as Donaldson and Garland saw no paradox in this 'Christian' position.⁵⁸

In promoting a vigorous commitment to the war, Donaldson and Garland were following the patterns set by the established churches, both nationally and throughout the Empire. The doctrine of a 'just war' had been espoused in the Christian church since medieval times and it underpinned much of the response to the outbreak of World War I.⁵⁹ From 1914, it was increasingly buttressed with the simplistic tenets of a 'muscular Christianity', a cohesive creed which had been nurtured in the English public school system and which espoused the simple 'virtues' of following the teachings of Christ and making war against England's enemies.⁶⁰ Nourished through schools, churches and such organisations as the Boy Scouts, YMCA and the Boys Brigade, the creed bore fruit from the outbreak of war in 1914, when Australian clergymen featured prominently at recruiting rallies, fund-raisers and at troop farewells.

The call to arms from the churches was entirely consistent with the belief that the populace needed to comprehend the gravity of the situation and be prepared to make the requisite sacrifice to defend itself and the Empire. Michael McKernan points out that, like the pre-emptive moves from the Queensland Recruiting Committee, the appeal for enlistments from the clergy often came well in advance of official state-run campaigns.⁶¹ Recruiting rallies often began with hymns and a call to prayers.⁶² Church services themselves were often indistinguishable from other public patriotic events. Flags were flown, medals displayed and guards of honour frequently featured, such that the "patriotic service" emerged as a common occurrence from August 1914.⁶³ In June 1915, the Brisbane Anglican Synod opened its door to the public, effectively turning the event into yet another public patriotic demonstration. Amongst the speakers were Colonel Lee, State Military Commandant and later a member of the ADCC.

Australian Protestants followed the lead of the English churches. Anglicans were truly a "Church of England" as many of the Australian senior prelates were British-born and British-trained. They often expressed a greater allegiance to their home country than to

⁵⁸ Linder, *The Long Tragedy: Australian Evangelical Christians and the Great War, 1914-1918*, 33-34.

⁵⁹ C.P. Barreira, "Myth of Poor Little Belgium as Mainspring: A Remark," *Flinders Journal of History and Politics* 19(1997): 61.

⁶⁰ Henry Randolph Harrington, "Muscular Christianity: A Study of the Development of a Victorian Idea" (Stanford University, 1971), 2.

⁶¹ McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918*, 68-69.

⁶² McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 27.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 20.

Australia. Virtually to a man, these churchmen put their faith in the cult of empire and would have endorsed Donaldson's sentiments, as expressed in his pastoral letter of 2 November 1914: "We believe that God has called us in the British Empire to save the world."⁶⁴ The Protestant churches stood shoulder to shoulder with the nation's political leaders and the military on the issue of the war. "Though not always completely Christian", one archbishop later noted, the Church of England "never failed to be utterly, completely, provokingly, admirably English."⁶⁵

Many clergymen promulgated the notion that God's hand was at work through the war and only through blood sacrifice would the desired moral cleansing take place. In April 1915, before details of the Gallipoli landing had been publicised, Anglican Bishop Montagu Stone-Wigg wrote that only a "shattering, sledgehammer blow" to the nation would awaken the people to the possibility of "war's cleansing spiritual revelation".⁶⁶ In Stone-Wigg's case it appears that sacrifice was not merely being adumbrated, it was being eagerly anticipated. In October 1915, one South Australian Methodist encouraged men to the front in these words:

There was no call like that of sacrificial blood poured out in a great cause, and at its challenge there was only one thing for honourable men to do, unless they were to remain under the lash of perpetual self-rebuke, that was to drink of the same sacrificial cup.⁶⁷

The idea of national redemption through the shedding of blood was, from 1916, increasingly advocated from Anzac Day pulpits.

Garland, whose influence in shaping Anzac commemoration was manifestly significant, was also a major promoter of recruiting in Queensland. In June 1915 he had offered his services as organising secretary for the Recruiting Committee.⁶⁸ He was the Senior Army Chaplain for Queensland, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and was not averse to using the pulpit as a means to promote enlistment. During 1915, he delivered sermons which vigorously encouraged eligible men to the front.⁶⁹ He also spoke regularly at public

⁶⁴ Archbishop Donaldson cited in Kidd, "The Brisbane Episcopate of St. Clair Donaldson 1904-1921", 199.

⁶⁵ Archbishop William Temple cited in Brian H Fletcher, "Anglicanism and Nationalism in Australia 1901-1962," *Journal of Religious History* 23, no. 2 (1999): 218.

⁶⁶ Quoted in McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 22-23.

⁶⁷ Henry Howard cited in Arnold Hunt, *Methodism Militant: Attitudes to the Great War* ([Adelaide]: South Australian Methodist Historical Society, [1975]), 12.

⁶⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 June 1915, 7.

⁶⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 10 May 1915, 8; 17 May 1915, 8; 24 May 1915, 8.

recruiting meetings in south east Queensland.⁷⁰ His speeches and sermons sometimes attracted controversy. Such was the case in August 1915, when Garland declared that 60,000 married men had volunteered for the services to date, whereas only 25,000 single men had enlisted. A correspondent to the *Brisbane Courier* pointed out the error in the claim, noting that married men comprised only twelve per cent of the force.⁷¹ Garland was clearly a man on a mission and prone to exaggeration, and even the 'manufacture' of information, to serve his rhetorical ends.

Why was he targeting single men so specifically? His commitment to recruiting, and later to Anzac Day commemoration, was entirely in keeping with a belief in the idea that the nation was in need of both moral and spiritual renewal and that the war and its commemoration, through Anzac, provided the occasion for both. Such renewal and reform was a precondition of victory. In Garland's eyes, and in those of most of his fellow clergymen, Protestant and Catholic, young single men were typically to be found at the locus of the seeming moral turpitude afflicting the nation. Redemption for the individual and thus collectively for all, lay through commitment to discipline generally, and to the Empire and the war specifically.⁷² Garland was acting in accordance with the tenets laid down by Thomas Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's School Days*, that "a man's body is given to him to be trained and brought into subjection".⁷³ If needs be, that body should be sacrificed too, but sacrifice could take many forms, not just the sacrifice of young men's lives on the battlefield. There must be an equivalent sacrifice on the home front. From June 1915, Garland was active in the "Follow the King" movement, a moral campaign for temperance inspired by George V's decision to abstain from alcohol for the duration of the war. Garland preached against the "the pursuit of pleasure" and materialism. In particular, he addressed the problem of "hangers on"—those who spectated at football matches and race meetings. In the interests of social reform, Garland advocated for the complete prohibition of such events during wartime.⁷⁴

The churches embraced the onset of war with enthusiasm. "Rather than stemming the tide of war hysteria", McKernan argues, "clergymen contributed to it and indeed shaped it." Yet Moses claims that in Garland's work, "no shred of glorification of war was evident".⁷⁵

⁷⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 2 July 1915, 8.

⁷¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 14 August 1915, 6.

⁷² McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918*, 2.

⁷³ Thomas Hughes cited in Harrington, "Muscular Christianity: A Study of the Development of a Victorian Idea", 14.

⁷⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 July 1915, 10.

⁷⁵ Moses, "Canon David John Garland (1864-1939) as Architect of Anzac Day."

Rather, he notes, Garland sought, through Anzac commemoration, to “call the nation to repentance for the sin of war”.⁷⁶ It is a proposition which cannot go unchallenged. Garland’s attitudes were entirely consistent with those espoused by other Protestant clergymen: indeed, he championed the cause of war. In a sermon in St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane in April 1915, Garland argued that the declaration of war constituted, “a moral victory for the principles of Jesus Christ”.

Those who formerly had given themselves up to pleasure only became foremost in their readiness to sacrifice themselves and to lay down their life for their brethren. The internal strife manifested in the politics of the country through the press, and in the recriminations, of public men, had given place to all speaking with one mouth for the nation. The hysterical women who had rendered the Government incapable had returned to the true ideals of womanhood.⁷⁷

As this sermon was given prior to the Gallipoli landing, Garland’s reference points were British – labour leaders, Irish nationalists and suffragettes. Garland and other Australian clergymen took their lead from the rhetoric emanating from Protestant pulpits in Britain.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, his Brisbane congregation would doubtless have made the connection to the local context. While war was not being ‘glorified’, it was certainly being revered and its moral and spiritual ‘benefits’ were laid out for the faithful to admire. For Garland, war itself was not the ‘sin’. Rather the transgression was the violation of the moral order to which he and most of his fellow churchmen subscribed. As he wrote in his war sermon notes: “Look first to our faults, our national sins – suffragettes and strikers; selfish lovers of ease and luxury – a distinct forgetfulness of God and consequent failure of duty”.⁷⁹ Garland’s puritanism was in conflict with apparent decadence and secular indulgence. In war lay the redemption. This was a pious crusade against the threat of national moral and spiritual degeneration, as much as it was against the Turks and the Germans.

Moses claims that Garland’s “concerns were predominantly pastoral”, yet there is little mention of consolation for the bereaved in Garland’s public utterances. If the intention was

⁷⁶ John A. Moses, “Anzac Day as Religious Revivalism: The Politics of Faith in Brisbane, 1916-1939,” in *Reviving Australia: Essays on the History and Experience of Revival and Revivalism in Australian Christianity*, ed. Mark Hutchison and Stuart Piggin (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), 170.

⁷⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 12 April 1915, 7.

⁷⁸ Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War*, 30.

⁷⁹ Garland “Sermon Notes”, OM64-14 S3 Garland Papers, Patriotic and War Sermons, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

“pastoral,” it fails by any criteria applied. If there were ‘moral’ issues at stake, they were issues around social rectitude and not a broader morality, that which questioned the issue of mankind’s capacity to descend into brutalising industrial warfare. McKernan argues that clergymen invested heavily in making vocal their concerns about intemperance, gambling and sexual ‘impurity’. They spoke as guardians of public morals with scant reference to theology.⁸⁰ Certainly, in Garland’s words, there was no acknowledgement of or reference to the massed grieving that follows in the wake of such industrial armed conflict. For him, war and ultimate victory would serve to return order to a society challenged by “internal strife” such as shifting moral standards, materialism, industrial unrest, radical politics and feminism. As women would be returned to “the true ideals of womanhood” so men would find “the true ideals of manhood” through military discipline and loyalty to Empire. Such was the image of the Anzac increasingly promoted after 25 April 1915. As one Presbyterian clergymen put in May 1915:

He [the soldier] has been seized by a purpose greater and nobler than any he ever had before. That purpose has carried him through weeks of training and endurance. That purpose has made a man of him now. It has inscribed a new name upon the white stone of his personality. He may have been something of a weakling but he is now a warrior.⁸¹

The image of the Anzac warrior, as promulgated at commemorations on 25 April, was the very consummation of this expectation. Drunkenness, gambling, lust and strikes were branded as socially corrupting and unpatriotic. In the face of social disorder, the redemptive power of sacrifice through war nonetheless remained a powerful trope in Anzac Day discourse. So too did the notion that the war, Gallipoli and Anzac commemoration united Australians more than anything that had gone before. Yet it was articulated, as will be shown, in a political and social context of division and rancour. Ironically and tragically, the war in Australia divided the nation. It precipitated such “internal strife”. It did not remediate it. Despite the assiduous moves by the Hughes government to gag debate on the war through the *War Precautions Act*, there was no “one mouth for the nation”, as Garland put it. Rather, there prevailed the dissonance of a multiplicity of voices passionately expressing a range of views. McKernan concludes that the churches’

⁸⁰ McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918*, 2.

⁸¹ Rev. William Borland, *Argus*, 10 May 1915, 10.

“shallow, emotional and eventually deeply divisive” response to the war contributed to this situation.⁸²

By the beginning of 1916, it was clear that the initial enthusiasm the nation had shown for the war, though boosted by the Gallipoli landing in April 1915, was now on the wane. Despite the spin put by journalists, politicians and the military around the retreat from Gallipoli, the withdrawal from the peninsula was a major blow to national prestige. Enlistment had peaked in July 1915. Such levels would never be attained again. In September the government responded with a war census which sought details of all “eligibles” and coordinated recruitment drives nationwide through state war councils. A subsequent “Call to Arms” questionnaire demanded that “eligibles” answer specific questions about their preparedness to enlist. Calls for conscription were increasingly voiced by bodies such as the Universal Service League, founded in September 1915. Social tensions grew as the nation began to polarise around the issue of conscription. In late November 1915 Hughes committed to providing 50,000 new recruits by June 1916.⁸³ Many who sought to vigorously prosecute the war were increasingly pessimistic, however, not least of all such clergymen as Donaldson and Garland. The organisation of Anzac Day was in part a response to their concerns about Australia’s capacity to throw itself wholeheartedly into the war.

Anzac Day’s solemn reflective elements were compromised from the beginning by the perceived need to ‘celebrate’ the AIF’s endeavours. At their 18 February meeting, the ADCC accepted an offer from Colonel Lee to organise a march of 8,000 men through the streets of Brisbane.⁸⁴ While a minority of these were returned soldiers, most were in training camps around the city. The decision to accept this offer indicates the readiness with which the Committee embraced the day’s recruiting imperative. Yet the Committee minutes suggest that the intent was to somehow avoid any sense of jubilation or anything that smacked of a display of military triumph.⁸⁵ It is difficult to see how a parade of soldiers through the streets lined with flag-waving citizens and accompanied by martial music could leaven the desired solemn, reflective character of the event – just the opposite.⁸⁶ This

⁸² McKernan, *Australian Churches at War: Attitudes and Activities of the Major Churches 1914-1918*, 3.

⁸³ *Argus*, 25 November 1915, 6.

⁸⁴ Minutes of meeting, 18 February 1916, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁸⁵ Minutes of meeting, 18 February 1916, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁸⁶ In late March the ADCC publicised a request for bands to accompany the march, *Brisbane Courier*, 31 March 1916, 7.

performance, when coupled with a flourishing mythology about the Anzacs' extraordinary martial prowess and a pedagogical narrative about national birth and realisation, meant that the solemn reflective tone to which Garland and the Committee aspired was not easily achieved at an organisational level. Indeed, during the discussion in the 18 February meeting, Merrington tellingly commented that the commemoration "would help to win the war".⁸⁷ Wars were not won by solemn reflection or by memorialisation. Rather, they were won by throwing more resources at the enemy on the battle front and maintaining morale on the home front. This antinomy in Anzac Day's 'funereal' and 'celebratory' imperatives characterised it from its inception.

Doubtless Garland and the ADCC would not have seen it that way. In his role as secretary of the Recruiting Committee, Garland announced, in early April 1916: "The committee expects that the present vigorous propaganda of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee will culminate in a rush to the colours after April 25."⁸⁸ For Garland and the like-minded, the commemoration proffered a stern galvanising pedagogy: "Recruits are still badly wanted and it is hoped that the celebration of Anzac Day will bring home to every man of military age the realisation of Australia's position in the present struggle", the Committee announced.⁸⁹ The further edification of the Anzacs, through a national commemorative public event, would doubtless boost enlistment. Eligibles would seek to emulate and avenge the 'fallen' and so give meaning to their sacrifice. The Anzac Day editorial in one Queensland newspaper put it similarly:

The history of the Australian army since the inception of the war is fraught with imperishable glory, but the call to-day is for more men. This is the lesson which Anzac Day teaches. There are many young men in Australia to-day physically fit, and who have no ties, yet they have not offered their services to their country. Surely the vitalising theme which Anzac Day brings, will guide the reflections of many to that most interesting and solemn subject – the sacrifices made by our gallant army.⁹⁰

Anzac, then, was designed to offer much more than melancholy reflection. It promoted a "vitalising theme" which would help enhance Australia's capacity to prosecute the war. It

⁸⁷ Minutes of meeting, 18 February 1916, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁸⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 7 April 1916, 7.

⁸⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 12 April 1916, 3.

⁹⁰ *Cairns Post*, 25 April 1916, 4.

was launched at a time when a major military loss had to be accounted for and negotiated on the home front and when the nation, under Hughes's guidance, demanded a renewed and intensified effort. The deaths were to be commemorated as gallant, glorious ones in a noble cause. Unlike subsequent Armistice Day commemorations, there was little space in Anzac for reflection on the horrors of war or the morality of the conflict. This was wartime and that timing inexorably shaped the character of Anzac Day commemoration. Anzac Day in Queensland had its organisational origins in recruiting. The resolutions from the 10 January 1916 meeting in the Brisbane Exhibition Hall were publicised under a Queensland Recruiting Committee letter head.⁹¹ For the duration of the war, Anzac Day organisation maintained its close connection with that endeavour, even if, as will be seen in later chapters, that association was rarely a fruitful one.

The decision to promote a recruiting march through Brisbane streets had ramifications for the organisers of regional events. In Cairns, Anzac Day coincided with the final stage of a planned march from Mooliba by the "Cane Beetles", a local recruiting drive. The march was joined by a concertina player "to add to the instruments for merry-making during camp time".⁹² The Cane Beetles led a procession through Cairns which included local school children, the fire brigade, the ambulance and the Cairns band. Other centres also had their processions but because there were few, or no, soldiers available, they inevitably comprised various local organisations and groups – the very ones who had ably contributed to patriotic events in the past. Organisational committees in regional areas typically comprised the same local government officials, Red Cross workers, clergymen and recruiting committee members who had organised patriotic events prior to April 1916. Local communities shared in the commemoration by organising along similar lines as they had done at recruiting rallies, fund-raisers and soldier farewells in the past. The message of Anzac reconfiguration desired by Garland and the ADCC was only partly heard in Queensland in 1916.

Thus by committing to recruiting and invoking war's morally redemptive powers, Garland and other members of the ADCC would bring to their work of Anzac Day organisation a disposition which celebrated the war effort and endorsed the unmediated beneficence of the Empire. The issue of acknowledging and honouring Australian war dead could never be a 'pure' commemorative endeavour. It was, during the war years, bound up with a set

⁹¹ Resolutions – Meeting Exhibition Hall, Brisbane, OM71-41, Queensland Recruiting Committee Records, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁹² *Cairns Post*, 20 April 1916, 4.

of imperatives with which it sat somewhat awkwardly, even paradoxically. Garland, for his part, acted as an agent for both the established churches and for the politicians. He brought his knowledge of liturgy to the shaping of a civic, if not a secular, event. The commemoration reflected the Christian beliefs of those who helped to shape it, yet it was largely an instrument of political rhetoric. While it purported to bind Australians together, there were signs, even by April 1916, that it failed to paper over the gaping fissures in Australian society produced by war.

Making the Plans

Under Garland's guidance, the Committee moved quickly to plan, organise and publicise the commemoration, meeting three times in February 1916.⁹³ The enlarged Committee included the premier, the archbishops of the Anglican and Catholic Churches, the state heads of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches and the Salvation Army, as well as the State Commandant, Colonel Lee, mayors and other prominent citizens. Despite some claims to the contrary, at the outset the Committee contained no members of the Returned Soldiers' Association.⁹⁴ Though an application to join had been made by the Secretary of the Returned Soldiers' Association in March 1916, it was not until a year later that two representatives were included.⁹⁵

The Committee's records are a rich source of information. Garland's hand-written annotations reveal considerably more than the printed minutes of the meetings. At their first gathering, Garland was "invited" to submit a "draft plan of observance of the day".⁹⁶ The second meeting expanded the General Committee significantly with the inclusion of, among others, the heads of all the major religious denominations. With representation widened, the subsequent meeting, on 18 February, was critical in shaping the form and tone of the commemoration. It witnessed a free-ranging discussion on the nature of commemoration based on the submission of Garland's "Draft Plan of Observance". The Committee resolved that the observation would be a day of solemn remembrance and not a fund-raising exercise and it publicised that fact. "No provision is made for anything in the

⁹³ Diddams, *Anzac Commemoration 1921: A Brief History of the Movement : Sermons and Addresses Delivered Throughout Queensland : The Immortal Story of the Landing*, 8-9.

⁹⁴ Crotty and Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," 684.

⁹⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 8 March 1916, 7; Minutes of meeting 23 March 1917, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

⁹⁶ Minutes of meeting, 3 February 1916, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

nature of rejoicing”, commented one newspaper report.⁹⁷ It recommended that religious services be held early in the day, followed by a military parade and then public meetings in the evening, with a minute’s silence to be observed at 9pm. Regional committees were to be instigated to organise the observance of the day along similar lines locally.⁹⁸

Through March and April 1916, the ADCC publicised its activities in the press and made a series of announcements about the plans for the forthcoming commemoration. There was broad acceptance of the solemn character of the commemoration from within the community at large, though it was not unanimous. In late March 1916, a citizen of Warwick, Queensland, protested to his local newspaper about Anzac Day becoming “a period of sorrow and long faces ... fearing that one of Australia’s greatest glories should be turned into a dirge when it might be made an epic”.⁹⁹ As we shall see in subsequent chapters, here was early evidence for a signal and characteristic tension in Anzac commemoration. It was rarely articulated so directly as it was by this correspondent, but it was evident in commemorations nation-wide during the war years.

Debates about whether the date should be declared a public holiday suggest similar tensions. Government offices and law courts planned to close and Premier T.J. Ryan appealed to businesses to do likewise, but no formal public holiday was declared. Rather, a patchwork of local arrangements applied across the state.¹⁰⁰ The ADCC wrote specifically to the Licensed Victuallers Association, in March 1916, requesting that they close hotels between 2pm and 4pm on 25 April, a request that was acceded to.¹⁰¹ Anzac commemoration began at a time when initiatives for temperance were prominent. Just three days before Anzac Day 1916, the Acting Premier, E.G. Theodore, had received a deputation from the Citizens’ 6 O’Clock Closing League, as well as from churches and other temperance organisations, which included Ernest Merrington from the ADCC. The deputation was lobbying to curtail the hours of hotel trading. These groups were promoting and advancing a puritan disposition as a cure for the nation’s ills. Solemn Anzac commemoration and temperance initiatives are evidence of the same trend.

Debates around Anzac Day’s status as public holiday or otherwise have a familiar flavour to them. As had occurred previously around 26 January, it was an occasion for venting views about what precisely the term ‘public holiday’ connoted. When discussing the day’s

⁹⁷ *Northern Miner*, 1 March 1916, 5.

⁹⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 March 1916, 4.

⁹⁹ Charles Martel, Letter to the Editor, *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 27 March 1916, 5.

¹⁰⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 28 March 1916, 4.

¹⁰¹ *Brisbane Courier*, 23 March 1916, 7.

arrangements in a meeting of the Southport Shire Council, its Chairman, Councillor Freeman, expressed the opinion that “there was no commemoration in ceasing work and going for a holiday”.¹⁰² Garland, for his part, did not favour the declaration of a public holiday.¹⁰³

One of the major departures from previous patriotic practice, which the ADCC sought to introduce, revolved around the issue of fund-raising. This activity had been a prominent feature of those organised patriotic ‘days’ discussed earlier. The Queensland Patriotic Fund, aware of the planning for the day going on in the ADCC, had assumed that it would be yet another fund-raiser. A letter from the administrators of the fund, requesting financial support from the proceeds of the day, was considered by the ADCC. Discussion around the issue ensued. Garland recorded that the request for assistance was denied and that “no effort be made for the raising of funds on Anzac Day”, though Garland’s original draft plan had included raising funds as an object of the day.¹⁰⁴ This was a significant departure from the imperatives of previous patriotic events, for which fund-raising had been a major focus. Notable too, was the recorded consensus about the tone of the event evidenced in Garland’s shorthand records. Archbishop Donaldson insisted that the “celebration should be without jubilation or rejoicing – should be done in a minor key – commemorating dead soldiers rather than praising living.” Duhig agreed. The former premier and prominent businessman Robert Philp concurred: “Don’t spoil solemn day by raising funds at all; ought to be spiritual day rather than jubilant,” Garland recorded. Members of the Committee, according to Garland’s notes, sought to configure a revised mode of patriotic event. In September 1915, Garland had expressed his distaste for popular ‘carnival’ fund-raising events for the war effort:

Where was there evidence of sacrifice during the past month in the city of Brisbane, when it seemed as if a carnival of pleasure, greater than ever had been put in motion under the cloak of giving money for patriotic funds? Instead of giving it straight out as a sacrifice, they demanded fun and pleasure in return.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Brisbane Courier*, 13 April 1916, 9.

¹⁰³ Wendy Merryllan Mansfield, "Anzac Day 1915-1937: Its Origins, Its Cultural and Political Mythology, a Queensland Perspective" (University of Queensland, 1979), 54.

¹⁰⁴ "Draft Plan of Observance of Anzac Day"; Garland’s notes for meeting of 18 February 1916, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

¹⁰⁵ Garland "Sermon Notes", OM64-14 S3 Garland Papers, Patriotic and War Sermons, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

Anzac Day commemoration then, was, in part, an attempt by the ADCC to shape a new mode of expression around the war. Nonetheless, its puritanical elements were entirely consistent with the discourse of spiritual renewal emanating from the established churches from August 1914. Garland later wrote privately: "There were those who wanted to turn it into a festival occasion but I blocked that".¹⁰⁶ Yet Garland's crusade was not a one-man campaign. As is evident from the minutes of the ADCC, there was broad consensus from within the Committee itself about the character of the observance.

While they inevitably borrowed freely from past practice, Garland and the ADCC sought to configure what they believed was a different model of observance. The 18 February meeting generated discussion around two key issues which have functioned as the major themes for this chapter – what I have dubbed the 'call to prayer' and the 'call to arms'. Considering the first of these themes, the Committee stressed the solemn tone of the event, rejected the idea that the day would be a fund-raiser and stressed the need to eradicate any sense of "jubilation" from the proceedings. It announced that the first two objects of the observance would be the "commemoration of our fallen heroes" and "the remembrance of our wounded".¹⁰⁷ This solemnity was not an entirely new element. As has been shown in the previous chapter, it was an aspect of commemoration in patriotic days in 1915 such as Empire Day, Violet Day and Australia Day. Anzac was not the first public 'memorial' event. Many others were conducted in churches and in civic spaces between May 1915 and April 1916. While these had not typically been badged as "days", the model of the other prominent national events was available to guide organisers. Nonetheless, with its strong clerical constituency, the ADCC, and Garland in particular, placed greater emphasis on solemn memorialisation than had the organisers of previous events.

Considering the second of the two themes, the committee organised a major military parade and emphasised the capacity for the day to stimulate recruiting. It smacked of the patriotic recruiting rallies which had gone before. The decision gave the event a paradoxical character. While acknowledging the need to respond to trauma associated with the losses at Gallipoli, the organisers were unable to divest themselves of the mindset which encouraged the struggle. Though the Anzacs were being exulted and eulogised in the British and Australian press, the war was not going well. Recruitment was down.

¹⁰⁶ Garland to Lieutenant J.A. Collum 24 April 1917, Army Service Corps, England, OM71-51 Canon David John Garland Papers 1915-1918; 1934, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

¹⁰⁷ *Capricornian*, 11 March 1916, 19.

Enthusiasm for the struggle was seemingly on the wane. Thus the needs of the state to mobilise support for the war effort were, for the organisers, equally if not more pressing, as those of the grieving kin.

Having examined in some detail both the ideological context in which Anzac Day planning took place and analysed the values and dispositions which Garland and other planners brought to the production of the commemoration, it remains to consider what actually happened on the streets of Brisbane on the afternoon of 25 April 1916. Newspaper reports of the event suggest that all did not go to plan. Overall, the commemoration reflected the multiple imperatives which impelled it. It was, in essence, divided into three parts – church services in the morning, a soldiers' parade in the afternoon and patriotic meetings at night. The church services offered an opportunity to commune around a shared faith – to gather and to grieve. The march and the subsequent patriotic meetings gave politicians and other speakers the opportunity to acknowledge and to praise the troops and also to galvanise public support for the war effort.

It was during the afternoon march that a dissonance was first evidenced. Newspapers reported that 50,000 members of the public were in attendance, many more than could be controlled by the mounted police. Crowds in some areas spilled over into the path of the marching soldiers and the cars which carried the wounded. Many of these spectators would not have attended church services, nor would they have attended the patriotic meetings in the evenings. Despite the flag-waving and the noise of marching bands, newspaper reports suggest that the mood of the crowd was melancholy, if not lachrymose. The *Brisbane Courier* noted: "A sob seemed to shake the community yesterday as it stepped forward and placed a simple flower on the graves of the gallant men slain on the heights of Gallipoli."¹⁰⁸ Many of the 50,000 who gathered were dressed in mourning, the *Daily Standard* wrote, "or wore badges or displayed some cherished relic which was associated with one or other of those now sleeping in Gallipoli".¹⁰⁹ The need for, and interest in, a public secular event was evidently high. It was this, the most public phase of the commemoration, which offered the best opportunity for many to express their grief over the casualties and to commune with the bereaved.

Confrontation with the reality of the debilitating effects of war on the returned men meant that, for many spectators, any sense of the celebratory was quickly stilled, notwithstanding the pomp and pageantry of troops marching in formation to a military beat. The *Brisbane*

¹⁰⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹⁰⁹ *Daily Standard*, 26 April 1916, 6.

Courier reported that initial cheering for the returned men was replaced by a “hush, as pathetic figures were carried or supported to seats on the platform.”¹¹⁰ The reality of war-damaged men was far removed from that idealised version of the wounded which appeared in recruiting posters – with their heads or arms neatly bound in clean bandages. As Evans points out, there are examples of dismay at the transformation in the returning soldiers which were privately expressed by nursing and other medical staff.¹¹¹ For those not yet directly affected by casualty lists, Anzac Day, for the first time, brought vividly to the home front, the horrific human impact of the battle front. Despite their preparatory work in constructing a liturgy of commemoration, Garland and the ADCC could not plan or predict the public’s response to exposure to these confronting realities. Doubtless, the vision of wounded and maimed men must have had an ambiguous, if not deleterious, effect on any willingness to rush to the colours.

There is every indication that the commemoration gave vent to powerful public expressions of unseemly passion and grief – the very antithesis of the comportment and controlled, moral behaviour to which its planners aspired. The crowd, comprised largely of women, was unruly and, in places, “almost uncontrollable”. The *Daily Standard* wrote of “aggressive spirits” among the spectators. The *Brisbane Courier* reported “the pushing, struggling mass of humanity which surged to and fro.”¹¹² Soldiers had to assist police to keep the crowd in check. Some people fainted and needed to be treated by ambulance workers. Children and others had to be rescued by police from the crush. The contingent of marchers receiving the greatest applause came from the Red Cross, “a sign”, according to the *Daily Standard* “of the growing sentiment against the war”.¹¹³ Anzac Day in Brisbane in 1916 was not the solemn reverential event envisaged by Garland and the ADCC members at their meetings. If it was a call to prayer, it had few of the hallmarks of a typical prayer meeting. The Brisbane public readily engaged with the commemoration, yet they invested it with a character and a set of meanings which met their own needs, which were not necessarily aligned with those of the planners. In effect, grieving Australians reminded the organisers that, though they had little part to play in its planning, they too were stakeholders in the event. In number, they could impose their will and their own imperatives on such an occasion, however finely-tuned the organisers believed their deliberations had been.

¹¹⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹¹¹ Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 37.

¹¹² *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹¹³ *Daily Standard*, 26 April 1916, 6.

Conclusion

At their discussions during their meetings in the premier's offices in February 1916, the ADCC challenged some assumptions about how public patriotic events 'worked'. The members were aware of the public need to honour and pay respect to 'the fallen'. Nonetheless, this was not the only imperative being addressed. The "multiple valences" of Anzac commemoration, as they have been described, derived from the fact that solemn commemoration had become fused with a burgeoning triumphalist rhetoric being touted to promote recruiting.¹¹⁴ Garland and the Committee members could not disassociate themselves from that discursive formation, even had they wanted to. They did not want to. They endorsed it because it served their needs. In a meeting in April 1916, the Committee also approved a decision to make and sell badges on the day.¹¹⁵ The emphatic commitment to the absence of fund-raising could not be sustained. The observance, as conceived in those meetings of February 1916, was compromised in its practical application. Anzac Day commemoration, in practice, was subject to a set of historical forces, dispositions and patterns of commemoration which moulded it as much, if not more, than the conceptualising of Garland and the Committee. Moreover, it was subject to public participation and hence the public mood. Clearly those Brisbanites who gathered in Queen Street on the afternoon of 25 April 1916, brought their own expectations and imperatives to Anzac Day. Newspaper reports suggest that not all were pro-war loyalists. Public support for the war was far from unanimous. Yet those who were disinclined to support all of the imperatives of the event's organisers nonetheless required public acknowledgement of their trauma and loss. In so far as it bore the imprint of a grieving population, as well as that of a set of loyalist pro-war organisers, Anzac commemoration, in practice, acquired a more complex and multi-faceted architecture than had been envisaged at the outset of deliberations in February 1916.

The events planned by clergymen and politicians failed to meet all the needs of a grieving public. While they were fully cognisant of the need to acknowledge bereavement, church leaders and spokesmen, such as Garland and his Archbishop, Donaldson, had too much invested in the military success of the British Empire to abandon those imperatives to a commemoration which focussed entirely on bringing solace to the traumatised. Instead they sought to blend that imperative with a patriotic war mobilisation, based on models of

¹¹⁴ The term is used by Crotty and Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," 680.

¹¹⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 5 April 1916, 7.

what had gone before. The response which the bereaved brought to the event could be best plotted, in Raymond Evans's words, "within a psychological context of loss".¹¹⁶ It was deeply personal and individualistic. A commemorative discourse which, as we shall see in Chapter Five, emphasised honour, loyalty, duty and sacrifice – in short, which placed the collective over the individual – could never satisfactorily meet the needs of those who grieved. Simply put, Anzac Day as performed in Queensland in 1916 was still very much a work in progress, and ran the risk of remaining so while this unique and paradoxical admixture of imperatives continued to characterise it.

¹¹⁶ Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18*, 37.

Chapter Four

“Practical patriotism” or “Holy Day”: Advocacy and Agency in the 1916 Anzac Commemoration

The observance of Anzac Day was a national issue by mid-February 1916. At the first meeting of the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee (ADCC) on 3 February 1916, Queensland Premier T.J. Ryan undertook to convey to the nation's other premiers the resolution of the January public meeting in Queensland and to invite similar action in the other states.¹ Though the committee wrote to the prime minister, other state premiers and to the mayors of capital cities advising them of Queensland's initiatives and inviting their participation, the circular from the Queensland committee did not produce a uniform national commemoration. It did, however, serve to generate substantial public discussion around the issue of Anzac Day. It was a debate not led by politicians; no evidence for it is found in *Hansard* – federal or state. Rather, it was a dialogue conducted in letters to the press, editorials and in the proceedings of the meetings of myriad local councils which set about planning commemorations in their own communities. John Robertson has noted the “public will to celebrate the anniversary” which prevailed at the time, yet political leaders did not always accurately gauge the depth or nature of Anzac sentiment.²

So how did debates around commemoration get taken up and joined within and across the states of a newly-federated Australia and with what effects? This chapter examines the organisational morphology of Anzac commemoration, nationally, in 1916, exploring its genealogy in each of the different states. Simply put, it considers five basic questions: Who advocated for Anzac Day commemoration? What did they want? Who organised it? What did they do? How well did their planned commemorations meet the needs of grieving Australians? The evidence supports a central tenet of this thesis showing that the Day was neither “invented” nor necessarily “effortlessly discovered”, to use Richard Ely's phrase. Ely's assertion that “the first celebrants had little trouble finding just what to do and say” is rendered

¹ Minutes of meeting, 3 February 1916, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

² John Robertson, *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli* (Port Melbourne: Hamlyn, 1990).

problematic by the analysis that follows.³ As Alistair Thomson points out, public interest produced considerable and often heated debate about the appropriate form of commemoration.⁴ While the cultural practices and rhetoric were available, their precise blending into a commemoration that resonated was a rather more vexed and contested process than Ely allows. Elsewhere, Bill Gammage has used the expression “spontaneous combustion” to describe the beginnings of the Anzac Day movement, connoting the public momentum and energy around the idea of commemoration. Events were planned however, and Gammage’s observation that organisers searched “earnestly but haphazardly” for the right way to mark the day is well supported by the evidence.⁵

Commemoration was not uniform across the nation in 1916. Joan Beaumont argues that Anzac Day constituted a public observance in which “government mobilisation and private grief converged”, though that convergence occurred to greater or lesser degrees in different locales.⁶ While advocates such as Garland and the New South Wales Premier, William Holman, were able to stimulate interest in and promote observance of Anzac, they were not, at the outset of 1916, able to dictate the form which it took nationally. The Anzac ‘Days’ of 1916 were subject to a range of organisational imperatives and dynamics in different parts of the country.

Moreover, it is clear that the organisers underestimated the need for public acknowledgement of the trauma and loss that Australians were experiencing by April 1916. Anzac Day’s makers sought to shore up support for, and commitment to, the war through recruiting, fund-raising, patriotic clamour and the celebratory rhetoric of national birth. In their letters to the press in the lead-up to the events, many Australians voiced their distaste for these priorities and demanded a public commemorative space which acknowledged their grief. These Australians, many of whom were women, were disempowered in the planning process. That role was the preserve of politicians, clergymen, patriotic committees and military administrators. Nonetheless, some newspaper and eyewitness accounts of Anzac Day

³ Richard Ely, “The First Anzac Day: Invented or Discovered?,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 9, no. 17 (1985): 58.

⁴ Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 129.

⁵ Bill Gammage, “Anzac Day’s Early Rituals ” in *Australian War Memorial Oration* (Canberra 2012), 1.

⁶ Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 178.

commemorations in 1916 evidence something of an unravelling of the best-laid plans of the organisers. The massed communal grief voiced at Anzac Day events often inflected them in such a way that the organisers could not have planned for. As had occurred in Brisbane, many in attendance were shocked when they witnessed first-hand the brutal effects of industrialised warfare. For members of the public on the streets of Australian cities in late April 1916, the reality of the war's toll, inscribed as it was on the bodies of so many of its veterans, stood in stark contrast with the fatuous notions of glory touted by politicians and recruiters.

Momentum towards Commemoration

There was, by April 1916, a common acceptance that the day was significant nationally. Nonetheless, correspondents to the press and speakers in public meetings regularly posed the question about the form that the commemoration should take before suggesting ideas that accorded with their own beliefs, instincts and priorities. Commemoration debates often revolved around the key imperatives of Anzac Day and their seeming mutual exclusivity. *Truth* expressed concern that the event might constitute "a picnic o'er Australia's dead".⁷ Could solemn commemoration be performed, while at the same time raising funds and canvassing for recruits? How then did those empowered to make Anzac Day happen respond to the Queensland initiatives and the other historical forces informing the Day's observance? What kind of event did people have in mind when they conceived of Anzac Day?

We have seen that Garland and the ADCC attempted to mould a particular mode of commemoration in Queensland. The analysis of that process reveals that there was no singular impulse driving commemoration. The day developed and was shaped to meet a variety of needs. Fund-raising, recruiting, grief management, promoting commitment to the war, remembrance, celebrating nationalism, reaffirming Empire and eulogising Australian military virtues were all elements in the observances being imagined and planned across the nation. Some historiography of the period has foregrounded some of these impulses more than others. For example, in her work exploring the "emotional substance" of the observance as "substitute funeral", Tanja

⁷ Cited in Carl Bridge, "Anzac Day," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed. Peter Dennis, *Oxford Reference Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Luckins has offered a psychologistic analysis of the commemoration, arguing that “patriotic rhetoric and figurative language alone cannot tell us much about the complexity of what happened that first Anzac Day on the homefront.” She draws our attention to the presence of a “collective sense of sublime mourning.”⁸ Doubtless the observance was complex psychologically. The populace needed to grieve and they wanted to do so publicly and communally. In practice, they stamped this disposition on to the commemorations which took place. Ironically though, it is doubtful whether the event would have been organised at all had it not been for the perceived need for mobilisation around recruiting, fund-raising and the war effort generally, and Gallipoli’s marriage to a mythology of national birth. These were the rhetorical markers which characterised public discourse around the observance as much, if not more, than communal grieving. They are too easily overlooked when the focus turns squarely to psychological imperatives. There is value, then, in exploring the mobilising of public discourse beyond the imperative of grief management. This rhetoric of Anzac Day – what was written and what was said – will be considered in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

There is clear evidence from the press that, by February 1916, Anzac Day had become a talking point. Shortly after the Foundation Day public holiday in January 1916, Adelaide’s *Chronicle* argued that there had been a “remarkable development of national self-consciousness” in the wake of Gallipoli. Anzac Day, it was reasoned, should replace 26 January as the national commemoration.⁹ In early February, the *Mullumbimby Star* rejected the idea of a “celebration”, noting that “the event is too fresh on the minds of the people.” On 9 February, returned soldiers met in the Central Hall in Newcastle to discuss the idea.¹⁰ By 12 February, it was an agenda item for the Sydney City Council, as it was for Lismore’s a few days later.¹¹ In late February, the Toowoomba City Council received a letter from the local branch of the Australian Natives Association (ANA) suggesting the day should be one of “public rejoicing and celebrations”.¹² “Ann Zac”, writing to the *Register* shortly after, sought to counter arguments against the commemoration: “The everlasting opposition are

⁸ Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People’s Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004), 86, 105.

⁹ *Chronicle*, 5 February 1916, 31.

¹⁰ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, 9 February 1916, 7; 21 February 1916, 5.

¹¹ *Evening News*, 12 February 1916, 5; *Northern Star*, 16 February 1916, 4.

¹² *Brisbane Courier*, 22 February 1916, 3.

ready with their objections and maintain that it is too sorrowful an occasion to commemorate. I would rather look upon it as the greatest anniversary on the Australian calendar".¹³ Apart from the initiatives being taken in Queensland, none of these suggestions were coming from government and politicians – either federal or state.

While Anzac Day was on the national public agenda, its meaning and intent was by no means set in stone, either in Queensland or in the other states. On 25 February 1916, the citizens of Geelong celebrated their own "Anzac Day" – in reality a sports carnival and button day to raise money for the Red Cross and for the Wounded Soldiers Fund.¹⁴ Subsequently, the ANA in southern Tasmania declared 29 February "Anzac Day" – a button day and social event to encourage Huon Valley fruit growers to donate a portion of their crop to raise funds to support wounded soldiers in London.¹⁵ The phrase 'Anzac Day' might still be applied at this late stage, as it had been earlier in 1915, to events which did not fall on or near 25 April. Moreover, their focus did not necessarily revolve specifically around a commemoration of the events on Gallipoli. While post-25 April 1916 saw little, if any, use of the term to describe such 'rogue' happenings, the purpose of the commemoration remained heterogeneous and subject to interpretation. Organised locally, particularly in regional Australia, it continued to be adapted to local conditions, influences and imperatives.

Even in this inchoate stage of its development, tensions between the day's status as 'holiday' and 'holy day' were never far from the surface of the debate. "Naturally citizens would like to celebrate 'Our Day' in some suitable way", wrote "Anglo-Australian" to the *Advertiser* in February 1916, "not by picnics, but by gathering together to do honor to the brave dead as well as to the living ... Let our joy be tempered with sorrow."¹⁶ The effect of casualty lists was resonating as some tried to reconceptualise patriotic events to reflect public grief acknowledgement. Others advocated for an alternative mode of commemoration. The letters from the ANA and "Ann Zac", quoted in the previous paragraph, give a clear indication of how some, at

¹³ *Register*, 22 February 1916, 6.

¹⁴ *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 February 1916, 3.

¹⁵ *Huon Times*, 25 February 1916, 2.

¹⁶ *Advertiser*, 9 February 1916, 11.

least, perceived the ideal shape of the day. “Public rejoicing and celebrations” was the phrase used. In similar mode, the returned soldiers who met in the hall in Newcastle later resolved to celebrate the day with a “sports gathering”.¹⁷

Other factors also bore on the issue of whether the day would be a ‘holy day’ or a ‘holiday’. With accounts of the January public meeting in Brisbane having been published in their newspapers, South Australians, it seems, were keen to attach the planned commemoration to an official commemoration of the nation’s birth. The notion that Anzac Day was a day worth commemorating in South Australia had been prefigured by the Governor, Sir Henry Galway, in a speech at a patriotic event in late January.¹⁸ Adelaide’s *Chronicle* took up the issue a few days later suggesting that a “yearly Anzac Day” would serve the nation’s needs for “perpetual remembrance and honour”, better than an acknowledgement of its convict foundations.¹⁹ Other South Australians were also writing to the press agitating for an Anzac Day commemoration.²⁰

Garland and his committee were endeavouring to shape the observance as a solemn day of memorial. Yet others sought to inflect the commemoration with other themes and imperatives for which patterns and scripts for performance had already been acquired, rehearsed and reinforced, through Empire Day and patriotic carnivals such as Australia Day. South Australian Chief Secretary, A.W. Styles, told a reporter from the *Mail* that the government was considering “a similar function to that held on Australia Day last year”.²¹ Planners and other citizens, who sought to describe the imagined events, reached for an available vocabulary – “like Australia Day” or “like Empire Day”. The well-established models of public patriotic performance were not about to be discarded, nor was their rhetoric to be unlearned quite so quickly. One newspaper questioned the viability of commemorating both days (Anzac and Empire Day) within a month of each other, and suggested their amalgamation.²² Another correspondent to the *Advertiser* suggested that the Anzac commemoration be

¹⁷ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, 21 February, 1916, 5.

¹⁸ *Register*, 1 February 1916, 6.

¹⁹ *Chronicle*, 5 February 1916, 31.

²⁰ *Advertiser*, 9 February, 11; 17 February 1916, 8.

²¹ *Mail* (Adelaide), 19 February 1916, 5.

²² *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 28 April 1916, 27.

postponed until Empire Day.²³ Questions about the significance of Anzac Day and its place in a hierarchy and order of commemoration were thus being raised and remained unresolved.

The Federal government was not taking any firm initiatives around Anzac Day but was, rather, taking something of a 'watch and wait' position. On 25 February acting Prime Minister George Pearce (Hughes was in Britain) announced that, while his government was "thoroughly in accord" with the initiatives to celebrate the day, he was powerless to declare a national public holiday. It was a state and local prerogative. All he could do was to declare the day a holiday for commonwealth public servants, a relatively small percentage of the population at the time, most of whom would have been domiciled in Melbourne.²⁴ Privately, Pearce was less enthusiastic about the initiatives.²⁵ John Connor reasons that Pearce saw Gallipoli as a military defeat and wanted to delay memorialisation until the Australians had a victory worth commemorating.²⁶ Clearly the notion that the day should be triumphal underwrote his thinking and that of many others. Conscious of the mood of the nation however, Pearce did not demur in endorsing and participating in the commemoration on the date itself. Vaughan later reported that the idea of Anzac Day was discussed in Melbourne at a conference of 18 February 1916, but that "no definite understanding was reached about the commemoration". Commemoration was, however, "considered undesirable while the war was in progress." Nonetheless, it was suggested that local organisations were free to make their own arrangements.²⁷

Other influential Australians also believed commemoration should be delayed until an appropriate victory had been won. Some saw Anzac Day as an interim event, but continued to look to Britain to decide on an appropriate Empire commemoration after the war had been won.²⁸ The Western Australian Premier, John Scaddan, defended

²³ *Advertiser*, 7 March 1916, 7; another South Australian correspondent suggested the day be combined with St Patrick's Day, *Daily Herald*, 7 March 1916, 7.

²⁴ *Advertiser*, 25 February 1916, 7.

²⁵ Cited in John Connor, *Anzac and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 62.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁷ *Daily Herald*, 2 March 1916, 4; Neither Ryan nor Holman nor Scaddan attended this conference. John Earle (Tas.) had been due to attend but news of a rail disaster on the Hobart Launceston line meant that he returned immediately after arriving in Melbourne.

²⁸ See the comments of Alderman T.H. Kelly's (Sydney City Council), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9.

his government's decision not to declare the day a public holiday by claiming that such a decision was "premature" and that "other events of equal, or possibly greater, importance may yet come into evidence before the war closes".²⁹ Scaddan was not alone in this view. The Anglican Archbishop of Perth, Charles Riley, had also voiced his reluctance about the establishment of a permanent commemoration, suggesting that such a move was premature. The day in the future when peace was declared would be more appropriate, he believed.³⁰ In early April 1916, Victorian Premier Sir Alexander Peacock declared that there would be no "official" celebration of the day in that state. His reasons were twofold: it would be more appropriate to wait until peace was concluded "before indulging in rejoicing", and Australians may yet perform deeds of valour which would surpass their efforts at Gallipoli.³¹

Such calls for the postponement of the decision for a national day of Anzac commemoration were apparently out of step with growing popular support and the opinions voiced in many quarters of the press. The *Argus* took Peacock to task for his decision.³² Such calls were out of step, too, with the imperatives of those who sought to promote national commitment to the war effort by linking recruiting, fund-raising and home front mobilisation to public memorialisation of the war dead from Gallipoli. Others referred to an Anzac Day event as if it were a *fait accompli*, despite the fact that no formal organisation was happening. For example, one correspondent to the *Register* referred to the "large gatherings that will no doubt meet on that day [Anzac Day]."³³

Developments in Britain also played a part in raising the profile of the event. On 24 March, in very brief announcements, some Australian newspapers noted that plans were afoot to stage an Anzac Day commemoration in London.³⁴ The announcement and subsequent details reported from London doubtless provided a major fillip to commemorative activity in Australia and gave what Richard Ely has called "ultimate cachet" to the Anzac legend.³⁵

²⁹ *Daily News* (Perth), 23 March 1916, 5.

³⁰ *Daily News* (Perth), 23 March 1916, 5.

³¹ *Argus*, 5 April 1916, 8.

³² *Argus*, 5 April 1916, 8.

³³ *Register*, 3 March 1916, 7.

³⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1916, 9; *Brisbane Courier*, 24 March 1916, 6; *Mercury*, 24 March 1916, 5.

³⁵ Ely, "The First Anzac Day: Invented or Discovered?," 58.

Yet state governments across Australia were neither prompt nor united in terms of progressing this agenda, as the analysis below demonstrates. Unlike the work of the ADCC in Queensland, there was no organisational fusing of the imperatives of state and church. An examination of Anzac Day planning and commemoration in each of the states in turn, shows that New South Wales (along with Queensland) took the lead in the promotion of the event. Governments in South Australia and to a lesser extent Western Australia, misread the tenor of the times. Yet they were, by the arrival of the anniversary day itself, trying to catch up and looking to play a central a role in the organisation of Anzac Day events. In mid-March 1916 there was no concerted effort on the part of the state governments in Victoria or Tasmania to organise or promote a civic commemoration. Yet local government officials, Red Cross committees, returned services associations, churches and education departments, what Alistair Thomson calls “the same loyalist worthies who dominated war effort committees”, were more likely to begin organising Anzac Day events than were state premiers.³⁶ At that level, much of the planning and organisation was carried out by the same committees that had organised previous patriotic events. Inevitably then, Anzac commemorations were heavily influenced by past examples.

“What is this day to be?”: Commemoration in New South Wales

The nation’s ties to Britain, reinforced by the war effort, meant that for many it was difficult to discern exactly what a distinctively Australian observance might look like. On 24 February 1916 Sydneysiders received news that Anzac Day would be celebrated in that city as a “double celebration” with the “tercentenary of the death of Shakespeare”. It was thus described as an “Australian Empire Day”.³⁷ An invitation to American theatrical entrepreneur Hugh Ward to organise a “monster matinee” for the day suggests little of the solemn character that Garland was encouraging. Fund-raising was still the goal. After a meeting on 16 March, the Honorary Secretary of the Returned Soldiers’ Association (RSA), George F. Davis, announced that the RSA would cooperate with the New South Wales Shakespeare Society to stage a joint event.³⁸

³⁶ Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* 130.

³⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 February 1916, 9.

³⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 March 1916, 18.

Anzac Day commemoration during the war was as much about reaffirming the nation's ties to Britain as it was about celebrating a distinctive version of 'Australianism'. As is demonstrated in the Sydney announcement, this 'Australianism' was defined, or at best compromised, by its imperial framework. Most Australians saw little paradox in this state of affairs. Like the ADCC, Anzac Day organisers across the country were almost, to a man (there are no references to women organising events), pro-war imperialists who sought to reinforce a mythology of Anzac that emphasised its racial and political solidarity with Britain. The Sydney alderman who initiated discussion of the matter in council, James Joynton Smith, (later of *Smith's Weekly* fame) told his fellow councillors that the day would become "one of the great days in the calendar of the British Empire".³⁹ Momentum for the Anzac commemoration grew, however, such that in early April, the Shakespeare Society quietly announced that it would be excising and postponing its part of the celebration.⁴⁰

Public debates about what constituted a commemoration "befitting the occasion" were particularly prevalent in New South Wales. On 8 April, the Sydney newspaper, *Mirror of Australia*, produced a full page headed: "How Shall We Pay Tribute to the Dead Heroes of Anzac?" on which were published multiple letters on the topic.⁴¹ The paper continued to invite opinion with another page on 22 April entitled "Anzac Day: What it Stands for and How it Should be Celebrated".⁴² On more than one occasion correspondents wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and other papers posing similar questions and providing their own answers.⁴³ In her analysis, Luckins has pointed out the significance of these letters and rightly emphasises their capacity to provide insights for historians about private thinking around Anzac Day.⁴⁴ It was a day, announced the *Sunday Times*, on which "we, as a nation, are to record our feelings."⁴⁵ Yet the organisers of these events had their own imperatives which were

³⁹ *Farmer and Settler*, 25 February 1916, 3.

⁴⁰ *Evening News*, 5 April 1916, 7.

⁴¹ *Mirror of Australia*, 8 April 1916, 5.

⁴² *Mirror of Australia*, 22 April 1916, 5.

⁴³ *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga), 5 April 1916, 3.

⁴⁴ Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* 87.

⁴⁵ *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 16 April 1916, 8.

less about “feelings” than they were about mobilising around a set of prescribed war aims.

Much of the public debate in Sydney centred around an announcement on 27 March by the Lord Mayor, Richard Meagher, to “electrically illuminate” the Town Hall and to decorate, in conjunction with the event, the Queen Victoria Markets Building – at a cost of £1000. It was not a unanimous decision and was opposed by some councillors on the grounds that the money would be better spent elsewhere to support the war effort. The Lord Mayor responded by claiming that “if they did not properly mark the occasion they would be regarded as guilty of pessimism”.⁴⁶ By the following Tuesday, irate correspondents were already writing to the *Sydney Morning Herald* voicing their objections to the plan. Some, like the opposition in council, objected to the profligacy of the decision at a time when discipline and economy were watchwords on the home front and rising rents and prices had placed greater economic pressure on the less privileged.⁴⁷ More letters flowed in over the following days. Many now expressed concerns about the inappropriateness of the gesture. “It is all so shallow and unsuited to the pressure of the time – the stern grim time of war” wrote C.L. Doherty. “Elspeth”, on the same day, called for a day of “humiliation and prayer”.⁴⁸ Davis, the secretary of the RSA, wrote in defence of the decision and tried to explain the reasoning behind it, reiterating that a “solemn commemoration” was being planned and the illuminations were to aid the recruiting drive to accompany the event. He also expressed his distaste for the “irresponsible newspaper correspondents” who were inflaming the issue.⁴⁹

While some wrote in support of the plan, the *Sydney Morning Herald* continued to publish letters opposing the lord mayor’s actions. “What is this day to be? [wrote] C.E.F. ... a day for rejoicing and holiday-making, cheering and ‘flag-wagging’ by the careless ... [or] one on which the people should study the feelings of those bereaved and afflicted.”⁵⁰ The *Sydney Morning Herald* reflected, in the following week, that: “Any rejoicing on April 25 will jar and hurt the mourners who are amongst us in thousands. It is simply silly to say that rejoicing is not contemplated, for if illuminating

⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 March 1916, 10.

⁴⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 March 1916, 10. – 4 separate letters published on that page.

⁴⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 March 1916, 13.

⁴⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 March 1916, 12.

⁵⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 March 1916, 12.

public buildings does not imply rejoicing what does it imply?”⁵¹ Those who sought to ‘celebrate’ on Anzac Day were subject to critique on the grounds of being insensitive, while those who sought a more intimate, respectful register for the day were viewed as “pessimistic” – to use Meagher’s word.

On 8 April, the *Sydney Morning Herald* set out the main imperatives in the debate and called for agreement. It likewise noted a shift in public thinking from that around the patriotic events of 1915: “Time has brought home to us more forcibly the real meaning of war and lights and crowds and fireworks no longer satisfy our needs”.⁵² Luckins’s analysis of the development of the commemoration in New South Wales holds that it constituted a public expression of grieving and collective loss.⁵³ It was not a black and white issue, however. There are indications that organisers were conscious of a public need for such an expression and that they sought to shape the commemoration accordingly. In early April, the New South Wales government invited the heads of churches to hold services on the day and produced a circular letter to municipal and shire councils proposing commemorations across the state (though many had already begun planning locally). Plans were later announced for a “drumhead service” in the Domain in Sydney and a request was made to observe one minute’s silence at midday.⁵⁴ Yet there was an element of compromise inherent in the concept. The imperative to maintain enthusiasm and commitment to the struggle could not be disavowed. William Brooks, the acting President of the RSA, commented of the planned commemoration: “The war is still going on. The spirit of military ardour must be fostered and maintained amongst the Australian people.”⁵⁵

Thus, in New South Wales, the question of the Town Hall illuminations became a focus for public debate around the issue of the appropriate tone for Anzac Day. It was a debate which was actively sustained in the press, in particular in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Nonetheless, it is likely that the public expressions of the need for a day focussed on grief acknowledgement influenced the decision of the day’s planners. A triumphal recruiting and fund-raising march, which made no reference to

⁵¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 April 1916, 4.

⁵² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 1916, 16.

⁵³ Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* 87-92.

⁵⁴ *Urana Independent and Clear Hills Standard*, 21 April 1916, 5.

⁵⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 April 1916, 11.

the needs of the grieving, was seemingly no longer possible in New South Wales by 25 April 1916.

In its 8 April analysis of Anzac Day planning, the *Sydney Morning Herald* also brought attention to differences of opinion around fund-raising.⁵⁶ Holman's circular requested that funds raised at these events should go towards the construction of an Anzac Memorial Hall in Sydney. The suggestion was unpopular with many local councils which insisted that any funds raised should stay in their own communities to assist in the repatriation of local returned servicemen and to support their families.⁵⁷ Some argued that the practice of collecting funds jarred with the commemorative intent of the day.⁵⁸ Some asked if the donations could be made tax deductible.⁵⁹ In reality, the tensions between the day's solemn commemorative intent and its fund-raising objectives could largely be solved by direct donation, rather than the sale of goods at a fair. After all, churches collected donations at services without compromising their solemnity. In reality though, the amount of money raised on Anzac Day, approximately £6,000, was considerably less than the £100,000 that had been hoped for.⁶⁰ Controversies around the use of funds collected at the Australia Day event in July 1915 probably dampened enthusiasm for donating.⁶¹ As a fund-raising exercise then, Anzac Day in New South Wales was less than fulfilling.

The issue of both promoting recruiting and maintaining a reverential tone for the day was rather more vexed than the accommodation of fund-raising into a solemn commemoration. The City Hall "illuminations" which created such a public outcry were designed to assist in a "gigantic recruiting effort" planned for the afternoon and evening of 25 April. The organisers hoped to add 5,000 men from New South Wales to the expeditionary force as a result of Anzac Day, with nine separate recruiting points across Sydney alone.⁶² Each of the returned soldiers marching on the day was supposed to bring in one new recruit. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted the

⁵⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 1916, 16.

⁵⁷ *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 5 April 1916, 5; *Grenfell Record*, 7 April 1916, 2; *Singleton Argus*, 8 April 1916, 8.

⁵⁸ *Construction and Local Government Journal*, 7 April 1916, 6.

⁵⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April 1916, 4.

⁶⁰ *Gippsland Mercury*, 9 May 1916, 3.

⁶¹ *Truth* (Brisbane), 7 May 1916, 7.

⁶² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 1916, 12.

pathos around one armless Gallipoli veteran's appeal for someone to replace him.⁶³ The psychology of using a disfigured veteran to encourage the able-bodied 'shirker' to rush to the colours was dubious at best and may well have been counter-productive. By 26 April, only 270 new recruits had been accepted for enlistment, figures which the *Sydney Morning Herald* concluded were "far from satisfactory".⁶⁴ Ostensibly then, Anzac Day in New South Wales failed as a great recruiting initiative. It arrived at a time when recruitment was already on the wane and its message was not sufficiently bracing or uni-dimensional to reverse that trend.

Anzac Day commemorations took place in many, if not most, regional centres in New South Wales in 1916. Organisers tended to follow the guidelines laid out in a series of circulars from the Holman government and arranged church services and patriotic public meetings where donations were collected. These gatherings combined elements of an ecumenical (yet Protestant) service with those of a recruiting rally. Places of business tended to close and a minute's silence was typically observed at midday. There were few carnivals, but some military parades did take place, despite the fact that many of the returned men were gathered in Sydney for a march and ceremony in the Domain.

The Sydney commemoration was doubtless the centrepiece of Anzac observance in 1916. Four thousand returned soldiers marched through the city and then gathered at a united commemorative service in the Domain attended by sixty thousand and led by the Anglican primate, Archbishop John Wright. The *Sydney Morning Herald's* report of the event focused on the uplifting aspects of the gathering but also made mention of the palpable grief that was evident.⁶⁵ Other newspapers also sought to present an image of "grief and grandeur". "The people were at a nation-making religious service" wrote one, "and a sense of sadness and reverence filled the air." That account went on to describe a "silent melancholy" which hung over the crowd.⁶⁶ Chief Secretary George Black's account in parliament years later suggests that the grieving was hardly silent: "The emotion was such that I shall never forget it. It was as though the crowd was swayed by a great wind, and sobs and sighs went up on

⁶³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1916, 11.

⁶⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1916, 10; 1 May 1916, 10.

⁶⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1916, 11.

⁶⁶ *Newsletter: an Australian Paper for Australian People*, 29 April 1916, 6.

every hand.”⁶⁷ Luckins carefully analyses this event and concludes that it constituted an act of collective grief-sharing which “transcended doctrine, ideology and social status”.⁶⁸ As occurred in Brisbane, those who attended the commemoration shaped it as much as did the organisers. They were there for a purpose which had little or nothing to do with recruiting or war-promotion. Yet Anzac Day was not, in any sense, an unmediated plaintive space. Recruiting and war-promotion were signal features of the commemoration. They became increasingly married to an ideological pro-war loyalist stance in the face of profound social division on the home front, such that Anzac Day was to become increasingly ‘unavailable’ to those who did not accept and support its official pedagogy and rhetorical package.

“A Red-Letter Day”: the 1916 Commemoration in South Australia and Western Australia

In a noteworthy shift from an equivocal position about the observation of the day, as voiced in early March, South Australia’s Vaughan government announced on 5 April that it had authorised a commemoration in the schools and that the government was “considering what other steps may be taken for a celebration on the actual day, but no public holiday will be observed”. As in other states, the South Australian State War Council was on alert for a recruiting push around the day and directed local recruiting committees to organise commemorations.⁶⁹ In February, it declared its intentions to link the day’s intent to recruitment, issuing a pamphlet, with a foreword by Vaughan, entitled *An Appeal to the Manhood of Australia to Enlist*, bearing the caption “Remember Anzac Day” on the cover.⁷⁰ In his 5 April announcement Vaughan also extended an invitation to churches to conduct appropriate services on the day.⁷¹ The next day, the Church of England announced plans for a military parade and public memorial service at St Peter’s Cathedral, at which Governor Galway and the military commandant would be in attendance. The bishop also instructed local Anglican parishes to conduct services.⁷² The Council of Churches subsequently announced plans for a united service with a “national character”, to be

⁶⁷ Cited in Robertson, *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli*, 247.

⁶⁸ Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* 104.

⁶⁹ *Advertiser*, 6 April 1916, 4.

⁷⁰ *Ballarat Courier*, 8 March 1916, 3; *Register*, 24 February 1916, 6.

⁷¹ *Advertiser*, 6 April 1916, 4.

⁷² *Daily Herald*, 7 April 1916, 4.

conducted in the Town Hall on Anzac Day.⁷³ The Australian Catholic Federation announced that it would conduct requiem masses on Sunday 30 April.⁷⁴ Thus, with the exception of the Catholic Church, the forms and patterns of Christian rite and liturgy were shifted to the civic space in Anzac commemoration, as the South Australian government ceded responsibility to the churches for the organisation of public memorials.

On 19 April 1916 Vaughan announced that civil servants would be given time off on 25 April to assemble at the Queen's Statue in the central square for a demonstration there, and that railways and tramways would stop for two minutes at 9am that day – not, significantly, for a reverential silence in this case, but to give cheers to the “King, to the British Empire and to the Anzac heroes”.⁷⁵ On 25 April thousands gathered at Queen Victoria Square to hear rousing speeches from the governor, the premier, the leader of the opposition, Archibald Peake, and the Mayor of Adelaide, Isaac Isaacs.⁷⁶ Yet, despite the fanfare and clamour, grieving relatives chose to hang wreaths on the pickets of a nearby fence. The *Daily Herald* commented on the sombre and lachrymose nature of the assembly, which both of the more conservative papers, the *Advertiser* and the *Register*, failed to note in their reportage.⁷⁷ Peake, like Liberals in Victoria, raised the spectre of conscription in his address. Isaacs noted that “on that memorable day the young nation of theirs was born again”.⁷⁸ While the liturgies of the commemoration itself varied, there had developed, by April 1916, a multi-faceted yet consistent rhetoric of Anzac, which will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter. At the close of the ceremony, veterans marched with new recruits to a luncheon hosted by the Cheer Up Society (which had sponsored Violet Day). In South Australia the government combined forces with the churches and patriotic organisations to produce the commemoration, even if the organisational locus of that activity was not contained within one organisation like the ADCC. Janice Pavils suggests that the Cheer Up Society and the Wattle Day League were now prepared to permit the shift of focus from other events to Anzac Day, yet Violet Day and Wattle

⁷³ *Daily Herald*, 17 April 1916, 4.

⁷⁴ *Kapunda Herald*, 21 April 1916, 2.

⁷⁵ *Advertiser*, 19 April 1916, 7.

⁷⁶ Not the same person as the Chief Justice and Governor General.

⁷⁷ *Daily Herald*, 26 April 1916, 5; *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 7-8; *Register*, 26 April 1916, 4-7.

⁷⁸ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 8.

Day continued to be commemorated in South Australia and continued to be a focus for commemoration around war dead.⁷⁹

There were many such civic gatherings across South Australia, though, as elsewhere, the observance was neither unanimous nor uniform. The *Naracoorte Herald* regretted that it was “an inopportune time to make any arrangements, being Easter week when a number of people are holidaying.”⁸⁰ Yet such was the impetus around the idea of commemoration that planning took place all the same, often at the last minute. It was done by recruiting committees, clergymen, Cheer Up societies, and local government officials. Some towns in the southwest of the state chose to rearrange the commemoration to coincide with the arrival of the recruiting train. However, in contrast with Victoria and Tasmania, most communities chose to organise a commemoration for 25 April itself. Fund-raising was a much less dominant imperative than elsewhere, but mayors and clergymen often shared the speaker’s platform to deliver a rhetoric consistent with that delivered elsewhere in the nation on that day.

In the wake of the Anzac commemoration, the South Australian government produced a handsome and lengthy (forty-seven pages) souvenir booklet as an official *Record of the Celebrations*.⁸¹ The proceeds from sales went to the Australian soldiers. In summary then, in South Australia the shift from an equivocal endorsement of the notion of commemoration in February to a major investment in Anzac was complete and rapid. The commemorative publication was evidence that the state’s administration wished to place itself front and centre in commemorative initiatives and was a message to its citizens about the lasting significance of the Anzac story.

As in other parts of the country, Western Australia also produced local initiatives around the celebration of Anzac Day. In early February 1916, residents of Katanning were planning an “Anzac Day” as the culmination of their fund-raising “Queen Carnival”.⁸² Kalgoorlie, too, planned to run its Queen Carnival on Anzac Day.⁸³ In Perth, Councillor Sid Gibson announced his “Anzac Cottage” memorial building

⁷⁹ Janice Pavils, *Anzac Day: The Undying Debt* (Adelaide: Lythrum Press, 2007), 11.

⁸⁰ *Naracoorte Herald*, 21 April 1916, 2.

⁸¹ South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir* (Adelaide: Govt. Printer, 1916).

⁸² *Great Southern Herald*, 2 February 1916, 2.

⁸³ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 8 March 1916, 4.

project around which an annual commemoration was planned on 25 April.⁸⁴ Inspired in part by Garland's publicity for the Queensland commemoration, the Perth City Council discussed the possibility of a commemorative event at a meeting on 13 March.⁸⁵ Garland's letter was read at a subsequent meeting at Perth Town Hall on 22 March, where citizens discussed the form that the commemoration might take. Scaddan was notably absent and demurred on behalf of his government in taking initiatives around the observance. The meeting resolved nonetheless to commemorate the day as one of solemnity, to approach the military authorities about the possibility of a review of troops on the Esplanade where "suitable addresses" should be delivered and to require that members of the council attend a memorial service at St George's (Anglican) Cathedral.⁸⁶

On the same day, more than fifty residents from the Boulder/Kalgoorlie region met to discuss the same issue. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* reported a dialogue characteristic of those taking place around the nation in relation to Anzac commemoration. The Mayor's proposal for a "fund-raising fete" was not endorsed by all in attendance. Most were not averse to fund-raising, but suggested that it be made through "straight out giving" and be instituted through a collection. Mirroring similar debates in New South Wales, one speaker noted that "Anzac Day should be more one of solemnity than witnessing a sports meeting". Another asserted "that any show of jollification on the anniversary of the landing would be out of place. There were six thousand young Australians buried there and these facts could not disassociate themselves from the public mind."⁸⁷ In lieu of a carnival on the day, the meeting proposed a patriotic fund-raising concert in the evening.

Yet there was fallout in the wake of that resolution and ongoing contestation on the Goldfields around the imperatives of the day. One correspondent wrote to the *Kalgoorlie Miner* in early April insisting that:

Weeping and wailing and hymns and prayers were never suggested as being necessary to honour our dead, but I will say that those who cannot devote one day out of the 365 to seriously

⁸⁴ *Sunday Times*, 30 January 1916, 11.

⁸⁵ *West Australian*, 14 March 1916, 7.

⁸⁶ *West Australian*, 23 March 1916, 5.

⁸⁷ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 23 March 1916, 4.

reverence the fallen, have not risen to a full understanding of what the war means. There are 364 days left for money raising, and if necessary the note triumphant of Anzac can be carried on for several weeks as Anzac celebrations, to continue the raising of funds, but the first anniversary at least should have the note reverential for the dead.⁸⁸

As elsewhere in the nation, Anzac Day would be an event which acknowledged varying, sometimes competing, imperatives. Newspaper editorials and letter writers regularly expressed the need for organisers to celebrate Anzac Day in “a manner befitting the occasion”.⁸⁹ Did that mean sounding “the note reverential” or “the note triumphant”, to use the phrases of the correspondent above? Could a celebration of Australian military achievement that inspired the nation on to new heights of commitment also incorporate an intimate register which acknowledged grief and loss? The focus remained contested and elusive, in part because of the multiple imperatives which impelled the observance. Moreover, the rhetoric of the day tended to blur the distinctions between grieving and rejoicing, incorporating the former emotion into the latter. As one correspondent put it in a letter to the *Daily News*, “while many of us have parted with loved ones at Anzac, we rejoice rather than mourn that they took part in an event which has won for Australia such imperishable glory in the cause of Empire and freedom.”⁹⁰ Thus consolation was offered for the bereaved in the assertion that their loved one(s) had died in a righteous cause. There was consolation also in the idea that others would step forward to avenge that death and to continue the work as yet unfinished.

An interrogation of events surrounding the Perth commemoration suggests the same tensions between the imperatives of the organisers and those of the populace as elsewhere. In perfect weather, thousands of Perth citizens lined the streets for the military parade that took place on 25 April. Six hundred Gallipoli veterans marched or were driven in motor vehicles, joined by close to 2,000 other military personnel.⁹¹ Despite his early diffidence about the occasion, Premier Scaddan was present, along

⁸⁸ *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 3 April 1916, 6.

⁸⁹ *Western Mail*, 28 April 1916, 31.

⁹⁰ *Daily News*, 14 April 1916, 8.

⁹¹ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7.

with the governor, to take the salute at the review on the Esplanade. One report later described the onlookers in these terms: "It was an emotional crowd though there were no hysterical outbursts. The emotion was deep and thoughtful and poignant".⁹² The Perth crowd, like those in other cities, brought their own disposition to the commemoration. Had there been "hysterical outbursts", the conservative press would have been unlikely to have reported them, for most newspapers were complicit in the promotion of a 'reflective but respectful' aura around Anzac Day. Unseemly outbursts of emotion challenged the image of a people 'girding their loins' for war.

In contrast to the tone at the public march, a luncheon at the Town Hall, organised by the Soldiers' Welcome Committee, provided an opportunity for soldiers to celebrate their new-found fame and for politicians to beat the war drum. There had been grumblings when invitations were extended only to those who had landed on the beach on the 25th itself and last minute rearrangements were hastily made to cater for all Gallipoli veterans.⁹³ After announcing the presence of recently-returned Victoria Cross winner, Hugo Throssell, at the event, Scaddan insisted that the best way to honour the Anzacs was to make greater sacrifices for the war effort. Another of the speakers repeated the line from the well-known song "Are we downhearted?" and, according to the report, "the roof was raised by the soldiers' response of no".⁹⁴ Doubtless though, many of those citizens who attended the march, those who were suffering the pain of loss, would have had difficulty in mustering the energy for such a display of blindly optimistic jingoism. While newspapers stressed the solemn aspect of the commemoration in their editorials, events like this one had rather more of the flavour of a soldiers' celebration or a recruiting rally than they did of a requiem service.

"Anzac Weeks": Victoria and Tasmania

By early April, some local patriotic committees in Victoria had begun, despite the lack of formal sanction of the premier, organising commemorations around Anzac Day. Consequently the form of these commemorations did not depart significantly from

⁹² *Sunday Times*, 30 April 1916, 11.

⁹³ *West Australian*, 19 April 1916, 7; 20 April 1916, 7; 24 April 1916, 4.

⁹⁴ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 8.

that which had gone before in previous patriotic events – street carnivals, sports days, markets, concerts and fetes. Others left such preparations to the eleventh hour. Indeed, some commemorations, such as that at Orbost, were acknowledged by the local press as having been cobbled together at the last minute in the expectation that something needed to be done, even if no one knew quite what.⁹⁵ In his study of the north-eastern shires of Victoria during the war, John McQuilton argues that Anzac Day “meant little” in those districts. “The observation of the first Anzac Day was lukewarm ... regional councils ignored the day”.⁹⁶ A theme of McQuilton’s study is that regional responses to the war did not always match metropolitan ones. Empire Day was more enthusiastically supported, McQuilton notes, claiming that was not until 1918 that Anzac Day began to “move beyond the schoolyard.”⁹⁷

The reality of Victorian regional commemoration was that it often centred on churches and schools. Bendigo’s Anzac Day was somewhat overshadowed, it was reported, by the town’s Easter Fair festivities.⁹⁸ Geelong had conducted an ‘Anzac Day and Sports Carnival’ in February and there is no evidence in the press of a civic event there in April 1916, although schools commemorated the day and memorial church services were held. Nonetheless, some centres did conduct public civic events. In addition to church services and school events, Ballarat organised a “citizen’s service” at the Soldier’s Statue on 25 April.⁹⁹ To conclude a fund-raising button day in Ararat on 28 April, Protestant clergymen joined local dignitaries and returned soldiers in the town hall to conduct a combined service honouring the Anzacs.¹⁰⁰ Public meetings were held in Bairnsdale and Castlemaine on the Wednesday.¹⁰¹ Thus commemorative events in regional Victoria were far from uniform in 1916. The idea of commemoration was popular, though not universally so, but the reality was a patchwork of arrangements, as local organising committees

⁹⁵ *Snowy River Mail*, 28 April 1916, 3.

⁹⁶ John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 112-13.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁹⁸ *Bendigo Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 3.

⁹⁹ *Ballarat Courier*, 26 April 1916, 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Ararat Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

¹⁰¹ *Argus*, 27 April 1916, 6.

attempted to respond to a growing national conviction around Anzac commemoration.

When civic planning initiatives were taken, they were not always greeted with acclaim. The familiar tensions around the day's avowed purpose were also evident in Victoria. Responding to advertised arrangements for a "monster demonstration" at Eaglehawk, near Bendigo, a local Methodist clergyman remonstrated that the staging of the event as planned was "ill-advised and has in it features of serious moral hurt to the community."¹⁰² Likewise, the *Mildura Cultivator* encouraged "a day of national solemnity ... we do not mean a ghastly long-faced solemnity, rather that the comparative silence observed in our streets shall be as is the silent toast drunk to 'Our Bravest and the Fallen' by those who understand to the full the greater worth of silence".¹⁰³ Much like the minute's silence promoted by Garland at the Queensland commemorations, a culturally appropriate form of acknowledgement was being proposed. It was, nonetheless, hard to find space for it in the carnival atmosphere of fund-raising which, despite such protestations, remained an imperative.

While most citizens and many organisers acknowledged the occasion's respectful and solemn elements, it was a disposition that was often difficult to put into practice and to sustain in the effective delivery of a boisterous fund-raising event. In March, Melbourne's Lord Mayor, Sir David Hennessy, noted that he was considering the possibility of a function to commemorate the day, reiterating that "it would not be a day for jollification."¹⁰⁴ Hennessy extended an invitation to Peacock to speak at this event but the premier did not attend as he was travelling on the parliamentary "recruiting train" through regional Victoria. Peacock had devolved much commemorative planning to the Department of Education in 1916, suggesting that local councils and mayors cooperate with school administrators. Hennessy was the president of the Commonwealth Button Fund which, despite its name, was a Victorian-based network, active from April 1915 in organising successful fund-raising events such as "Allies Day", "Lady Hennessy's Day" and an earlier "Anzac Remembrance Day" in December 1915.

¹⁰² *Bendigo Advertiser*, 20 April 1916, 7.

¹⁰³ *Mildura Cultivator*, 8 April 1916, 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Argus*, 8 April 1916, 17.

The multiple imperatives of Anzac were no better articulated than in the organisation of the Melbourne commemorations. Rather than attempting to combine solemn observance with patriotic enthusiasm and fund-raising, organisers arranged different events on separate days. On 25 April, the Church of England, in conjunction with the Victorian Returned Soldiers' Association, held a special service at St Paul's Cathedral. Other churches followed suit. It was one of the few occasions on which a newspaper reported frankly on the condition of the veterans who attended. The *Age* offered a graphic insight into the reality of a wartime Anzac event, noting the "many women in the deep black of mourning" in the pews at the St Paul's service and observing that:

There was hardly one man of the 500 Anzacs who paraded for the service who did not bear the pathetic mark of wounds or illness. There were sightless men led by their comrades, men all hunched and with trembling limbs that could but shuffle along, men on crutches, men with empty sleeves or useless arms, and almost every face was drawn and haggard, as if even twelve months had not effaced the terrible memories of Anzac. There were too, men who had to be carried into the service. They were laid in invalids' chairs at the steps of the chancel beneath the pulpit.¹⁰⁵

Tellingly, the more conservative *Argus* reported the same event without mention of the grieving women or of the damaged condition of the returned men – merely noting the presence of the soldiers.¹⁰⁶ Doubtless the *Age*'s reporting accurately reflected the condition of other veterans paraded on Anzac Days across Australia during the war. Some newspapers were clearly self-censoring. The tragedy and horrific personal cost of war, as manifested in microcosm at St Paul's, Melbourne that morning, was not something to which the reader's attention should be drawn and certainly not an issue on which to dwell. In short, reportage at the time served only to maintain the significant disparity between the high-blown rhetoric of Anzac Day commemoration and the reality of the experience for those in attendance.

¹⁰⁵ *Age*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7.

One correspondent described the day as one of “solemnity more than show.”¹⁰⁷ Yet “show” was to come. The Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Button Fund organised Anzac Button Day in Melbourne for Friday 28 April and the “carnival” featured, amongst others, actors, musicians, “a pageant of the allies” and other street performers. Recruiting was never far from the mindset of the day’s organisers, Commenting on a procession of one thousand soldiers who marched through Melbourne streets,¹⁰⁸ the *Argus* noted that “each such soldier was a standing reproach to the single men who cheered him”.¹⁰⁹ The event was, according to that same newspaper, “a joyous and patriotic expression of Australia’s thanks and admiration ... if there was cause for mourning there was cause for pride”.¹¹⁰ The Friday was selected to create a space between the commemoration and Easter but also because, being pay day, it offered the best opportunity for successful fund-raising.¹¹¹

The following Sunday, 30 April, also witnessed organised church services and another parade of troops organised by the RSA. Six hundred Anzacs were joined by veterans of other wars, cheered by crowds as they assembled on the Treasury steps before dividing and marching to different denominational services. A short meeting on the Domain then followed. There the acting Prime Minister, Pearce, addressed the crowd. He repeated his call for more volunteers and moral mobilisation on the home front around the war effort. The *Argus* told readers that the crowd of 20,000 was subdued and that “cheers were checked in the utterance”.¹¹² Given the *Argus*’s record of tendentious reporting of such events, one might reasonably suspect that, like Anzac Day crowds across the rest of Australia, those Melbournites in attendance were in no mood for displays of jingoistic breast-beating and braggadocio.

Similar services took place in other parts of Victoria. Protestant churches in particular were at the forefront in organising Anzac-related memorial services which typically included a detailed narrative of Gallipoli events along with reassurances of the righteousness of the cause. Thus ‘Anzac Week’ or even ‘Anzac Fortnight’ in

¹⁰⁷ *Table Talk*, 27 April 1916, 8.

¹⁰⁸ *Argus*, 20 April 1916, 7.

¹⁰⁹ *Argus*, 29 April 1916, 19.

¹¹⁰ *Argus*, 29 April 1916, 19.

¹¹¹ *Kerang New Times*, 28 April 1916, 2.

¹¹² *Argus*, 1 May 1916, 6.

Melbourne, was enacted as a protracted series of public events whose varied iterations fell short, it seems, of capturing the public imagination in the way that one focussed occasion might have.

By early April, Tasmanians, like other Australians, were writing to their local papers urging the organisation of Anzac Day events.¹¹³ The frequency with which the letters were published suggests that significant quarters of the press contributed to the public groundswell of support for the idea. A state election on 26 March, which produced a change of government, along with a referendum around early closing on the same date, tended to occupy both the energies of politicians and the column space in the press rather more than did preparations for Anzac commemoration. Local Red Cross societies and patriotic committees noted the call to action, however, and went about planning events along the lines of those which had been successfully produced in the past. The Zeehan branch of the Red Cross organised a combination church service, fete and picture show planned for 3 May – the first date that the venue (the somewhat infelicitously named “Gaiety Hall”) became available. At Mole Creek there was to be a picnic followed by a musical evening.¹¹⁴ At Wynyard, the Table Creek Patriotic Committee planned a “monster demonstration” featuring “musical items by a special choir and patriotic speeches”. It was an opportunity, readers of the local press were told, for the community to demonstrate its “practical patriotism”.¹¹⁵ In other communities, such as Ulverstone, it was business as usual, with no special public commemorations organised.¹¹⁶ Elsewhere, organisers noted the need to inject into the commemoration a new tone, little-practised in the past. Clergymen could often, though not always, be relied upon to influence events in the direction of reverence and solemnity.¹¹⁷ Clearly then, Tasmanian Anzac Days in 1916 were not uniform in nature. It is more likely that they reflected the individual responses by key members of the organisational committees to the widely-articulated need for commemoration and the broad set of imperatives which underwrote it.

¹¹³ *Examiner*, 7 April 1916, 3.

¹¹⁴ *Examiner*, 5 May 1916, 2.

¹¹⁵ *North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times*, 11 April 1916, 2.

¹¹⁶ *North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times*, 25 April 1916, 2.

¹¹⁷ *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 19 April 1916, 4.

These “multiple valences” of Anzac Day were also evident in the lead up to the event in Hobart.¹¹⁸ There a committee, chaired by the Mayor, L.H. McLeod, made the decision to celebrate the event on Friday 28 April. The object was “two-fold” as the *Mercury* described it, “to give the citizens an opportunity of giving honour to those brave sons of Tasmania” and in addition a “practical aspect ... an appeal to the public to provide funds”.¹¹⁹ As elsewhere though, these stated imperatives failed to satisfy the needs of many who resented the festive tone of the commemoration. One correspondent called for a “united public meeting of remembrance, thanksgiving and prayer”.¹²⁰ Another called the day “one of Australia’s holy days”.¹²¹ “A Soldier’s Mother” wrote to the press condemning the “rejoicing and merriment” and the “sideshow on the Domain for some of the soldiers” that was scheduled. “I wish some of those who were keen for Friday’s pleasures could talk to those in mourning for the ones they had lost. It would make them feel how inappropriate Friday is.”¹²² The grieving family would have found little consolation in the triumphalist tone of the poem that was published in the *Mercury* at the head of its editorial on Anzac:

Fill up your bumpers, Australia the fair!
Charge them with wine, the most luscious and rare;
Wine of your heart (what a vintage is there);
Pour it out freely to-day.
Stand to the toast, "Anzacs absent and here"
Clink, as we name them with laughter and tear,
Sons of Australia, well nigh without peer,
Search through the world as we may.¹²³

The feckless juxtaposition of “laughter and tear”, did a grave disservice to the emotional reality of those whose loved ones would never return from the battlefields

¹¹⁸ The phrase belongs to Martin Crotty and Craig Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 96, no. 393 (2007): 680.

¹¹⁹ *Mercury*, 29 April 1916, 9.

¹²⁰ *Mercury*, 18 April 1916, 7.

¹²¹ *Mercury*, 25 April 1916, 2.

¹²² *Mercury*, 25 April 1916, 8.

¹²³ C.H. Coutts in *Mercury*, 28 April 1916, 4.

or would return irreparably damaged. Given the opportunity on Anzac Day, a grieving public was insisting on inflecting the commemoration in such a way as matched with their needs. It was a message that organisers only half-heard, preoccupied as they were with their own crusade for unapologetic militarism and total commitment to the war effort.

The *Mercury* expressed mild disappointment that the actual date of the landing was passed over somewhat, but was consoled by the fact that “doubtless the object of raising money for the Returned Soldiers’ Club will be better served by the holding on that day – pay day – instead of Easter Tuesday”.¹²⁴ Others insisted that the day should be utilised as a stimulus to recruiting.¹²⁵ “Australia did not attain manhood a year ago to play the poltroon and the coward,” wrote the *Mercury*.¹²⁶ Organisers were thus faced with the challenge of shaping a commemoration which met a variety of needs – shifting and seemingly competing needs at that. As the war dragged on, Anzac rhetoric would need to reconcile with thousands more grieving “soldier’s mothers”, yet the other imperatives did not disappear. Demands for recruits and funds to care for soldiers and veterans, were unceasing and indeed escalated as the war persisted.

Climatic conditions in Tasmania at that time were not conducive to outdoor events. Despite inclement weather, however, thousands watched soldiers parade through the streets of Hobart on 28 April and then attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the South African Soldiers’ Memorial. Fund-raising was a major priority and the streets were described by Hobart’s daily newspaper as “a huge bazaar ... a regular Paddy’s market.”¹²⁷ Once again, not all were engaged by the event as staged. There were murmurings of discontent in some quarters. “Some could not help thinking that the decorated motor cars and the young lady collectors and some other features were a little out of harmony with the grim and bloody happenings which the day commemorates”, wrote the Launceston *Examiner*.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ *Mercury*, 13 April 1916, 4.

¹²⁵ *Mercury*, 22 April 1916, 8.

¹²⁶ *Mercury*, 28 April 1916, 4.

¹²⁷ *Mercury*, 29 April 1916, 9.

¹²⁸ *Examiner*, 6 May 1916, 3.

Marilyn Lake claims that the event was one of the more popular fund-raisers of the year, yet at £500, takings from the day were modest at best.¹²⁹ Doubtless, previous patriotic fund-raising days had already drained the largesse of the population. On the following Sunday there was a voluntary church parade for soldiers. Launceston churches had followed Victoria's lead in organising special church services on the Tuesday itself. A similar event to that in Hobart was staged on the Friday – a fundraiser for a local soldiers' club.

The tone of the commemoration varied considerably throughout Tasmania. Some areas reported that "there had been a general desire to spend Anzac Day more as a memorial day than as a day of pleasure ... the many fatalities connected herewith were too recent to permit of anything approaching a junketing on this, the first anniversary of a great day".¹³⁰ There was a disparity also between the solemn tone aspired to in letters and editorials and the reality of public patriotic performance. Organisers struggled to produce a commemoration which somehow celebrated and reconciled what one Tasmanian speaker called, "these glorious and wonderful deeds", with their "dark background which impressed itself on the mind".¹³¹

The failure to sound the appropriate tone required by those traumatised by the tragic death of loved ones was, as has been shown above, publicly noted in letters to the newspapers. Yet despite the efforts of Garland's committee in Brisbane to publicise their model, clearly it had little impact in far-off Tasmania in 1916. Notwithstanding the fact that the *Age* in Melbourne had cautioned that now "was no time to estimate the import of Anzac to the issue of the war", such ideas swam against the current.¹³² A message about Gallipoli's import to the nation, if not to the outcome of the war, had been made loud and clear. Local organisers believed that the day was significant. The question remained for them of how to 'perform' and recognise that significance in an appropriate way. They often resorted to the tried and tested forms of patriotic event which promoted fund-raising, recruiting and community enthusiasm and support for the war. The occasion was also freighted with the rhetoric of national birth married with national swagger and self-congratulation around the military

¹²⁹ Marilyn Lake, *A Divided Society: Tasmania During World War I* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1975), 56.; *Mercury*, 29 April 1916, 6.

¹³⁰ *Mercury*, 29 April 1916, 10.

¹³¹ *North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times*, 27 April 1916, 3.

¹³² *Age*, 26 April 1916, 7.

achievements of the Anzacs. As with organisers elsewhere in the nation, it remained challenging to mix this diverse and febrile set of cultural, political, religious and psychological ingredients into an appropriate formula to render a meaningful and enduring public commemoration. The indications are clear that, in many cases, Anzac Day's organisers were yet to find that tone which matched the needs of the populace.

It is clear that support for the commemoration was broad-based and popular, rather than formulaic and imposed from above. In part, it was popular because it was so multi-faceted. Pro-war loyalists could invest in it, as could grieving kin. Its organisation in Australia was in the hands of loyalist elites, though not driven by federal government policy. As evidenced from the above state-by-state analysis of the responses to the call for Anzac commemoration in the early days of 1916, state governments and local councils took initiatives in response to a variety of imperatives, some of which appear to have been directly at odds with each other and at a distance from developments elsewhere in the country. It seems that the burgeoning number of suggestions and debates bubbling up across the length and breadth of Australia gave to Anzac Day's initiation a quality of apparent messiness, clutter and confusion. It is perhaps the unsurprising effect of so many of its advocates seeking to reconcile recruitment with remembrance, holiday with holy day, and practicality with patriotism. Moreover, these advocates were out of step with the needs of a grieving populace who, nonetheless, were able to influence public commemoration by their very presence, even if in 1916, they had little say in the organisation.

Chapter Five

“Too solemn for rejoicing and too grand for grief”: The Rhetoric of Commemoration in 1916

On or around 25 April 1916, many Australian newspapers editorialised on Anzac Day and its significance. These editorials appeared between accounts of planned local events and details of commemorations in other parts of the country and in London. In the following days, newspapers reported on these same events and gave detailed accounts of the speeches and sermons. They also published large numbers of poems which explored Anzac-related themes. This chapter analyses these editorials, speeches, sermons and poems, interrogating the rhetorical markers which defined Anzac discourse at the point of the first anniversary of the landings. Chapters One and Two have shown that planners and speakers had both models of commemorative practice on which to build, and a rudimentary discourse of Anzac to be honed and readily deployed in their writing and speeches. Chapters Three and Four have focussed on what was ‘done’ around Anzac commemoration in Australia in 1916 and by whom.

Having established that the organisation of the commemoration was in the hands of pro-war elites, it remains in this chapter to analyse more fully the rhetoric deployed to influence and persuade audiences towards a particular interpretation of the significance of the Gallipoli campaign. That rhetoric sought to instil a mythology of national birth around Gallipoli, to valorise the achievements of the AIF, to promote recruiting and to increasingly mobilise the home front to a war footing. The intent was to focus national energies on the war effort and to contain and manage the public grief such that it did not compromise Australians’ commitment to the struggle. Rather, by attempting to assure Australians that the sacrifice of their loved ones was in a noble cause, it sought to channel that grief in such a way as to serve quite specific political and military ends. Grief and bereavement might logically be the touchstones for articulating opposition to, or disillusion with, the war. The voices of Anzac, however, sought to recuperate that pain and loss into a pro-war rhetoric.

As journalists prepared their columns and as politicians, clergymen, teachers, returned soldiers, Red Cross organisers and others their talks, they inevitably drew on rhetorical figures which were already available within their cultural heritage. They

took phrases, lines of poetry, accounts from history books, speeches from the past, quotes from other newspapers, snippets of conversations they had partaken in or had overheard, the comments of military figures and lines from the classics. Some quoted sections of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address or the poetry of Macaulay or Tennyson.¹ As evidenced in Chapter Two, the writings of Ashmead-Bartlett, Hogue, Skeyhill, Buley, Bean and others offered a rich source. The voices of Anzac Day quoted, misquoted, adorned and blended these cultural fragments with more contemporary ideas. Their rhetoric was designed to engage and influence their audience to particular ends and to support and accommodate the rituals of the day.

Contextualising the commemoration

To analyse the discourse of Anzac 1916, it is instructive to first understand the historical context which produced it. By December 1915, the might of the British Empire (Australia included) had suffered defeat at Gallipoli and had, in essence, withdrawn to Egypt with its tail between its legs. It was already acknowledged publicly that the campaign had been flawed in both conception and execution. Ironically, the act of withdrawal from the peninsula was earmarked as the episode's military highlight. Moreover, in France, Belgium and Italy, as well as on the Eastern Front, the Allies had suffered significant military reverses or were locked in costly stalemates with few indications of strategic gain. Bulgaria had joined the war on the side of the Central Powers. Despite the tendentious reporting in the Australian press, many members of the public – not just the politicians and generals – would have recognised that the military situation was grim and the prognosis pessimistic. The AIF, for its part, had yet to face the might of the German army. Instead, Australian military ambitions had been checked by the rather less-fêted Turks.

By the early months of 1916 the facade of unanimity and national cohesion around the war effort was starting to show significant cracks. In September 1915 the Universal Service League (USL) was formed and began lobbying nationally for conscription. Meanwhile, despite Hughes's November 1915 offer of a further 50,000 troops to the cause, enlistments had, since January 1916, started to fall at a steady

¹ Archbishop Donaldson, *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1916, 8; Crawford Vaughan, *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 8.

rate nationally.² The government's "Call to Arms", a personal letter from Hughes addressed to all potential recruits in December 1915, created widespread distrust and criticism in an atmosphere where demands from Liberals and pro-war lobbyists to abandon the voluntary principle in recruiting were already being challenged publicly by labour spokespersons and others. Trade unions widely criticised the "Call to Arms" for being inquisitorial and an invasion of privacy. In January 1916, the British Government passed legislation conscripting single men. Many expected Australia to follow suit.³ Other loyalist organisations, such as the Australian Natives Association and the Australian Women's National League, were increasingly vocal in their support for conscription.

By April 1916 divisions along class, religious, ethnic and ideological lines were increasingly evident on the home front. The industrial wing of the labour movement, in particular the powerful Australian Workers Union, expressed mounting opposition to calls for conscription as well as general dissatisfaction with the actions of the Hughes administration. Shortly after the launch of the USL, some Sydney-based trade unions created an Anti-Conscription League. By the end of 1915, the labour press was regularly launching vitriolic attacks against Hughes and his administration. In March 1916, the Queensland Labor-in-Politics Convention passed a resolution opposing conscription. At the same time, the increasingly militant Brisbane Industrial Council sought to distance itself from the views expressed by their Labor prime minister in London.⁴ Rents and prices rose sharply, yet the Hughes government had repudiated its commitment to a long-promised referendum on price control. Meanwhile, despite government surveillance and controls, militant opponents of the war, such as the Industrial Workers of the World, continued to voice pacifist and anti-war sentiments that resonated increasingly with elements of a public growing weary of war. The loyalty of Irish Australians was called into question in the prime minister's tirades against Sinn Fein's ambitions for home rule in Ireland.

In addition to these political, social, industrial and economic tensions, many in Australia were grieving. After eight months of battle, the nation counted more than

² Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, ed. Robert O'Neill, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press in association with The Australian War Memorial, 1989), 871.

³ Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 148.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 144-47; 220.

8,000 killed and 14,000 wounded, yet there were neither funerals for families to attend nor graves at which to mourn. The implications of this fact were “profound”, as Bart Ziino notes, insofar as the absence of bodies served to redefine bereavement, much more widely than it had been in the past, as a shared public experience. The war deaths reinforced a public sense of community among mourners.⁵ In many cases, moreover, details of the deaths were sketchy or non-existent.⁶ As Tanja Luckins points out, the heroic abstraction of death in battle was increasingly replaced by the stark reality of loss and mourning.⁷ The visible, repatriated wounded were yet another marker of the horror of war. Martin Crotty notes that the “suffering of returned soldiers was often visited upon those who waited for them at home”.⁸ It was the painful absence of the dead, along with the very presence of damaged veterans in their midst, which together brought the trauma of the war front experience directly into so many Australian homes.

The Contours of Anzac Rhetoric

It is this context of tension and trauma that frames the characteristic elements of Anzac rhetoric and their function – the joint themes of this chapter. Anzac commemoration began in a home front pessimistic about the war’s progress, increasingly dissatisfied with the Hughes-led government’s messianic fervour for the struggle and also feeling the psychological pain of trauma and loss. Conscious of this state of affairs, the day’s spokespersons sought to mobilise and assemble a rhetoric to address the full gamut of these issues and steel the populace for ongoing struggle. The result was an often confusing and paradoxical mixture of obscurantist, metaphoric and hyperbolic language which sent mixed messages to readers and listeners.

Though multiple imperatives jostled for space in the emergent Anzac discourse, there remained little possibility of endorsing one particular aspect of the

⁵ Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Crawley, W.A.: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), 4.

⁶ Patricia Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 41.

⁷ Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004), 57.

⁸ Martin Crotty, "25 April 1915 Australian Troops Land at Gallipoli: Trial, Trauma and the 'Birth of the Nation'," in *Turning Points in Australian History*, ed. Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 104.

commemoration and rejecting another. The nation was told that the day was highly significant, though precisely why was not always agreed upon. By 1916, it was, for many, already the “one day of the year”. John Sandes used that phrase in his poem “Landing in the Dawn”, which was published in a number of newspapers in April 1916 and also read at commemorations:

Not forgotten, nor forsaken.
Are the lads no longer here;
I shall call – and you will waken
On this one day of the year.⁹

In Anzac discourse, the significance of Gallipoli transcended that of any other event in Australia’s history. What had been a military sideshow within the context of the grand strategic designs being played out in Europe quickly came to occupy a mythological space far exceeding its strategic significance. For many Australians, Gallipoli itself became holy ground, a shrine, a consecrated space. The 25th of April was a “day akin to sacred days” the *Cairns Post* told its readers.¹⁰

Many newspaper editorials chose to define the meaning of the day by what it was not. “It is not a time for feasting or merrymaking” wrote the *Cairns Post*.¹¹ “This much is certain,” the *Sydney Morning Herald* editorialised, “to-day is not a fit occasion for anything in the nature of mafficking”.¹² That message was clear. There was no space in Anzac discourse for levity. The rhetoric was anchored with the kind of puritan gravitas worthy of the times and appropriate for galvanising the nation around the war effort.

The figurative language of Anzac Day regularly featured binary opposition between the celebratory and the funereal. Anzac Day was marked as a “celebration of deeds”.¹³ “It is a glorious day and worth celebrating because of the glory of it”, the *Sydney Morning Herald* told its readers.¹⁴ Yet such celebratory tone was usually

⁹ *Argus*, 29 April 1916, 8 (reprinted from Daily Telegraph); Read at a commemoration in Colac, *Colac Reformer*, 2 May 1916, 3.

¹⁰ *Cairns Post*, 25 April 1916, 4.

¹¹ *Cairns Post*, 25 April 1916, 4.

¹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 8.

¹³ *Age*, 25 April 1916, 4.

¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 5.

qualified with reference to the grim consequences of the engagement. Gallipoli was “a place of a million sorrows” and “a place of imperishable pride” the *Northern Miner* told its readers on 25 April 1916.¹⁵ Speakers reached for a variety of turns of phrase to send their message. “Too solemn for rejoicing and too grand for grief”, were the words used by the Victorian Liberal MHR, and former Deputy Prime Minister, William Watt, at the St Kilda Town Hall event in 1916.¹⁶ “Sorrow and pride ... are strangely intermingled”, the *Brisbane Courier* reflected.¹⁷ “We grieve with those who loved them, but glory in the manner of their death,” wrote Hughes in his message to the people of Australia.¹⁸ The South Australian Opposition Leader, A.H. Peake, spoke of “April smiles and April tears” at the Adelaide event.¹⁹ These figures of speech articulated the multiple imperatives of the day. They putatively acknowledged the grieving, yet they also sought to boost morale by accommodating the celebration of military achievement, nationhood and empire as well as allowing for stirring calls for greater mobilisation around the war effort. This was no pure, plaintive space. Grieving was rhetorically bound up with national glory through the puritan virtues of sacrifice and endurance.

The words that recur in the written and spoken word around Anzac also seem, from this historical distance, to be devoid of the emotional intimacy one might have anticipated in such circumstances. Their appeal is to a generic and undifferentiated audience of Australians, applying, as anthropologist Piers Vitebsky has observed in another context, “to everyone and no-one, everywhere and no-where”.²⁰ Read one hundred years later, as texts frozen on a page, there is a quality in the words themselves that lends them the hollow ring of platitudes, with little or no evidence of anything approaching an intimate register. The net effect, an “eerily de-peopled” discourse around the commemoration of Anzac Day, begs the question of whether speakers are repeating what is expected of them in these circumstances rather than

¹⁵ *Northern Miner*, 25 April 1916, 3.

¹⁶ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 8.

¹⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 April, 1916, 6.

¹⁸ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹⁹ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 7.

²⁰ Piers Vitebsky, “Is Death the Same Everywhere?: Contexts of Knowing and Doubting,” in *An Anthropological Critique of Development*, ed. Mark Hobart (London: Routledge, 1993), 109.

responding with any real empathy.²¹ Certainly there are few signs of empathy as it is understood a century on.

Anzac commemoration was organised by those who actively pursued the nation's and the Empire's war aims. When Garland's committee drafted four resolutions to be moved at the Queensland commemorations, the first was a pledge of loyalty to the King and to maintain the struggle; the second was an acknowledgement of the "magnificent heroism" and "self-sacrifice" of the Anzacs; the third voiced "heartfelt sympathy with those whose loved ones laid down their lives for the Empire" and the fourth urged "all who are eligible the imperative duty" of following the Anzac's example and enlisting.²² For the day's organisers these resolutions and Anzac rhetoric generally came as a package. It did not allow for the possibility that some Australians might wish to acknowledge the death and to sympathise with the grieving but not pledge undying loyalty to the Crown. Little discursive space was given to acknowledging and embracing those who might be ambivalent about committing to the nation's war aims or even hostile to them. While they could, as we have seen, influence and inflect the public commemoration by their sheer presence and mood, they had no place on the speaker's platform and no voice in the oratory that accompanied that commemoration. There is no evidence of the bereaved being invited to address Anzac Day gatherings. Others spoke on their behalf, seeking to define and prescribe what the bereaved *ought* to feel and believe in order to remain loyal to the cause of war.

Anzac rhetoric was replete with metaphors of transcendence. Readers and listeners were often told that the sense of pride in achievement would, if it had not already done so, come to transcend the pain of loss. As the *Brisbane Courier* put it, "above the dull sense of individual grief, rises the general thought that our men, whether they fell or returned unscathed, proved themselves true to a sacred trust."²³ The *Sydney Morning Herald* opened its 1916 Anzac Day editorial with: "Australia's great heart is throbbing to-day, as it has never throbbed before".²⁴ Hearts could be

²¹ The phrase is used by Erica McWilliam, "The Future Is Not What It Used to Be," in Richard Selby-Smith Oration (Australian College of Educators) (Brisbane 2015), 3.

²² Anzac Day Commemoration Committee, *Citizens' Celebration, Exhibition Hall, Tuesday, April 25, 1916, Programme* ([Brisbane]: Government Printer, 1916), 4-5.

²³ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 April 1916, 6.

²⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 5.

throbbing with pain or with pride or with both, according to Anzac Day rhetoric. Recent research by a number of historians has demonstrated that the trauma of loss was profound and, for many, it was permanent. They expose such speechifying for what it was – hollow rhetoric. For most mourners, a range of emotions no doubt existed side by side, yet there is little doubt that for many, the loss was psychologically crippling, so ‘transcendence’ was impossible.²⁵

What place did such rhetoric have in an event with the putative intention of acknowledging and commemorating the casualties of Gallipoli and giving comfort to those who suffered loss? Some speakers and writers resisted the trend by placing their emphases on the need to mourn.²⁶ Yet the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted:

For the great mass of people, it is perhaps not well to over-emphasise either the side of sadness or of joy, but rather to point out that it should be a time for clenching our teeth further and with grimmer determination realising that there is still much to be accomplished.²⁷

Anzac Day was to be an outlet for mourning, but mourning alone was not enough. The day also encompassed a pedagogy which served to contain and control this grief so as not to compromise or hinder the ongoing pursuit of the war effort. Lessons were to be learnt about the importance of remembering the Anzacs as a spur to comparable or even greater achievement. Kipling’s phrase “Lest we forget” had already been pressed into service around remembrance of Gallipoli war dead. The hymn “The Recessional”, from which the phrase derives, had been sung at memorial services; the phrase was inserted into family memoriam notices, and was in common usage around the Australia Day events in July 1915, appearing on honour rolls, with the hymn itself sung at Anzac Day services in 1916. Yet, as was shown in Chapter One, Kipling’s poem was a warning against imperial hubris. The phrase was sufficiently capacious to apply to Anzac remembrance in all its iterations. It was part of a rhetoric that masked horror and tragedy. There could be no talk of

²⁵ Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War*; Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*; Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War*.

²⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April, 1916, 7.

²⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 8.

futility, alienation or waste and certainly none of peace. Such transgressive language could not be aired at any event endorsed by Anzac Day's promoters.

The public was enjoined not to forget, but what exactly was supposed to be remembered here? Not all agreed as to the imperatives of the day. Indeed, mixed messages were sent by newspaper editors and speakers, who, without the guidance of an unequivocal message from the nation's leaders, sought to invest the commemoration with a variety of meanings or to characterise it with reference to patriotic events which pre-dated it. For the *Sydney Morning Herald* the observance was "three-sided" – mourning, the promotion of recruiting and fund-raising.²⁸ In describing the proceedings of the day in Sydney, that paper acknowledged a genealogy via earlier patriotic events: "Yesterday the heart of Australia was beating with a patriotic fervour. It was another 'Australia Day' in many ways, but there was less display about it."²⁹ The Hobart *Mercury* contended that "The great purpose of today is the raising of funds in aid of the soldiers who have come, and will be coming, home wounded from the war."³⁰ Doubtless Garland would have balked, and probably fumed, at the *Mercury's* message. Despite the fact that the commemoration was organised by pro-war elites, 1916 events were, as has been shown, disjointed. Nor did organisers provide a united discursive front or a single clear message to Australians.

We have seen that Anzac speakers and writers were inconsistent in their representations of the event. Some defined it by what it was not. Most deployed paradoxical and obscurantist metaphors in their notation of Anzac in seeking to explain its significance. A range of imperatives were bundled in such a way as not to allow for differentiated unpacking. While the themes in Anzac writing and speeches were not clearly and consistently delineated, it is evident that the day was destined never to be simply a national day of mourning. That idiom satisfied only one of the imperatives which drove it. The Gallipoli landing had been hailed as the birth of the nation. Its significance transcended that of any military operation which had gone before. The Christian memorialisation of the death of the Anzacs stressed the biblical sacrificial element, which was in turn incorporated into the already flourishing secular

²⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 8.

²⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1916, 11.

³⁰ *Mercury*, 28 April 1916, 4.

discourse around national birth and life cycles. The Anzacs sacrificed themselves in order that the nation could be born, or at least reborn with glory and honour.

The idea that the nation was 'born' from the events at Gallipoli was inextricably linked, in commemoration discourse, to the eulogising of the efforts of the Anzacs, and the imperative to mobilisation around the war effort, in particular through encouraging recruiting. As Jay Winter points out, these central themes of commemoration, expressed in romanticised form, were hardly unique to Australia. They were characteristic of commemoration in most combatant countries.³¹ Here was an occasion to reiterate the threat posed by the nation's enemies externally and, in the guise of a discourse about national cohesion, to stigmatise those who expressed ambivalence about, or hostility to, the nation's war efforts as disloyal and untrustworthy. Simply put, Anzac Day was the commemorative centrepiece of a crusade, both military and moral.

Some historians have pointed out that a version of the Gallipoli narrative was manufactured by the powers prevailing at the time to serve the specific interests of furthering the nation's war effort. John Williams, for example, notes that the "socially conservative and imperial origins" of the event are "plain to see".³² In 1965, Geoffrey Serle proposed that the "digger legend" was appropriated, in the inter-war period, by the "conservative classes."³³ Yet a closer examination indicates that the process was, in fact, well under way by the first Anzac Day commemoration in 1916. Humphrey McQueen certainly argues to that effect.³⁴ According to Martin Crotty, a mythology of national birth at Gallipoli served a powerful purpose in that it "eased doubts, salved consciences and consoled the hurt."³⁵ Indeed, the same might be said of any of the other tropes in Anzac rhetoric. Joan Beaumont notes that the Australian government appropriated the Anzac legend "for its own purposes of

³¹ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 85.

³² John F. Williams, *Anzacs, the Media and the Great War* (Kensington, N.S.W.: UNSW Press, 1999), 98.

³³ Geoffrey Serle, "The Digger Tradition and Australian Nationalism " *Meanjin Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1965): 156.

³⁴ Humphrey McQueen, *Gallipoli to Petrov: Arguing with Australian History* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 5.

³⁵ Crotty, "25 April 1915 Australian Troops Land at Gallipoli: Trial, Trauma and the 'Birth of the Nation'," 109.

ideological hegemony”.³⁶ Such assertions as those by Williams, McQueen, Crotty and Beaumont are not disputed here. Rather, this chapter seeks to tease out in more detail precisely how this process happened and how it was manifested on Anzac Day, 1916.

“The Birth of a Nation?”

The notion that Gallipoli constituted a seminal event in Australia’s national development was consistently articulated around Anzac commemoration in 1916. Indeed it remains a key element in the Anzac legend to this day. Anzac Day’s spokesmen did not ‘invent’ the idea that the nation had been ‘born’ at Gallipoli. Chapters One and Two have traced the lineage and trajectory of this idea. Yet the day now witnessed its full flowering. The rhetorical figuring of Anzac, rather than 26 January, as constituting the “birth” of the nation, was ubiquitous in what was delivered from the press, the pulpit and the politicians’ platform.³⁷ Charles Bean closed the second volume of his *magnum opus* on the war with the famous declaration that at Gallipoli, the “consciousness of Australian nationhood was born”.³⁸ By 1941, the date of that book’s publication, such a proposition was neither new nor originally worded.³⁹ At the first Anzac Day service at St John’s Anglican Church, Launceston, the Rector told his congregation that the “real significance” of Gallipoli “lay deeper than tactics. It meant the birth of Australian national consciousness”.⁴⁰ Mr Frank Rea, Mayor of Perth, told the gathering at the Soldiers’ Welcome Committee Luncheon that, to his mind, 25 April was the day “the Australian nation was born”.⁴¹ Sydney’s *Freeman’s Journal*, a mouthpiece for Irish Catholic Australia, headed its 27 April 1916 editorial: “Anzac Day: the Birth of a Nation”. “We are at last a nation,” it avowed, “with one heart, one soul, and one thrilling

³⁶ Joan Beaumont, “The Anzac Legend,” in *Australia’s War, 1914-18*, ed. Joan Beaumont (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 151.

³⁷ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 8; *Register*, 26 April 1916, 7; *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7.

³⁸ C.E.W. Bean, *The Story of Anzac from 4 May, 1915, to the Evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula*, 11th ed., Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941), 910.

³⁹ Dudley McCarthy, *Gallipoli to the Somme: The Story of C.E.W. Bean* (Sydney: John Ferguson, 1983), 382.

⁴⁰ *Examiner* (Launceston), 26 April 1916, 6.

⁴¹ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7.

aspiration".⁴² Gone, it seems, was the sectarian jostling for position over rights to the national commemorative calendar as witnessed in the tensions between Empire Day and the Catholic-inspired 'Australia Day' of 24 May. By April 1916, the rhetoric of national consciousness and cohesiveness was, it seems, immutable.

Many claimed that Australia's history had started at Gallipoli. The day represented "the introduction of a new calendar", as one clergyman put it.⁴³ For others, the "splendid achievements of our men created a new era in our history". 'History' here was something that was 'made' by a nation 'performing great deeds', and military deeds at that. Such a myopic view was reinforced by accounts such as those in the *Mercury*, which itemised notable episodes in Australia's past – the arrival of white settlers, the discovery of gold and federation – only in order to argue that their significance was dwarfed by the military achievements of the Anzacs at Gallipoli.⁴⁴ War, in this view, had 'made' Australia. The nation's history was being reconceived in such a way as to focus all attention on a military imperative. 'Peaceful' gains, such as the rise of democratic institutions, the development of industry, improved social and working conditions and cultural achievements did not figure in this reckoning. Moreover, any political dynamic which sought to shift this focus away from military imperatives, and to place under the microscope issues such as wage and social justice, or freedom of thought and speech, was now construed as disloyal. Likewise, trends towards gender equality and the growth of sectional representation and voice were deemed deeply threatening to the kind of home front cohesion which a war footing apparently demanded.

By denying a particular rendering of the national past, or by diminishing its significance and inserting another in its place, Anzac rhetoric was instrumental in refocusing the national perspective on a particular sort of future – one involving an immediate struggle ahead and an aspiration to a more glorious long-term future for the nation and the Empire. One newspaper in Orange, New South Wales, asserted that: "As a people we had lived in prosperity and peace, and thoughtful observers outside ourselves saw in us more than a suggestion of carelessness and indifference

⁴² Cited in K. S. Inglis, "The Australians at Gallipoli - 2," *Australian Historical Studies* 14, no. 55 (1970): 374.

⁴³ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

⁴⁴ *Mercury*, 29 April 1916, 9.

which characterises nations still in their infancy. But the war has altered all that, and has put the iron into our blood.”⁴⁵ Anzac rhetoric served to reinscribe Australian character as warlike, as having “iron in the blood”. It told Australians that the achievements of the AIF at Gallipoli had proven that they possessed the qualities and national character necessary to win the war and motivated – indeed implored them – to fight on. Moreover, grieving loved ones could be consoled by the knowledge that their dead sons, husbands, brothers and lovers were honoured and remembered, not just in the present generation, but for all time. Thus Anzac rhetoric sought to console the hurt at home, and at the front too, by gifting immortality to those who fought there.

For many, Anzac’s significance was so transcendent as to require religious metaphors to describe it. One correspondent to the *Mercury* insisted that it was “one of Australia’s holy days”.⁴⁶ Public speeches were replete with talk of spirits and souls.⁴⁷ In that sense then, this was a “spiritual” birth. Unsurprisingly, the belief that Anzac was sanctified by a higher power was frequently voiced from pulpits. Moreover, the significance of the Gallipoli narrative could be endorsed and consecrated in scripture. “It had been said in Holy Writ that a nation shall be born in a day and on Anzac Day Australia was born,” the Rev A.C. Plane told his congregation at the Albert Street Methodist Church in Brisbane. Preachers and politicians combined to deliver the same message. Each borrowed from the language of the other in the rhetorical assemblage that came to constitute Anzac. While politicians spoke of the “soul of the nation”, preachers reminded their congregations of the *realpolitik* benefits of enlisting and mobilising around its war aims.

For Anzac’s speechmakers this “birth” came at a cost. The notion that Gallipoli casualties constituted a sacrifice for the good of the nation and the Empire was a dominant trope of Anzac rhetoric. For the *Age*, the day was “a tender and beautiful commentary on the truth of sacrifice and vicarious suffering”.⁴⁸ For the *Queenslander*, Gallipoli was the “blood-altar of Australian nationhood”.⁴⁹ Anzac

⁴⁵ *Leader* (Orange, N.S.W.), 26 April 1916, 4.

⁴⁶ *Mercury*, 25 April 1916, 2.

⁴⁷ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7.

⁴⁸ *Age*, 27 April 1916, 13.

⁴⁹ *Queenslander*, 22 April 1916, 20.

rhetoric couched war deaths in terms of honourable sacrifice in a just and noble cause. Other speakers sought to deny the loss and the death by insisting on the heroism and glory of the sacrifice: “The glory of their death was such that, had they the power, they would hardly care to waken them to life again”, claimed Perth’s Catholic Archbishop, Patrick Clune.⁵⁰ Such claims served to conflate Anzac rhetoric with a Christian message of salvation, eternal life and redemption through moral rectitude and good deeds.

Such assertions probably resonated with some of the bereaved, many of whom were Christians who looked to their preachers for succour and to provide meaning around the loss of their loved ones. Any number of grieving families would have found it affirming. Pat Jalland notes that “In Memoriam” notices in newspapers provide “illuminating commentary” on personal responses to bereavement, by giving expression to values of patriotism and heroism.⁵¹ Joy Damousi argues that euphemism and heroic language obscured grief, yet expressions like “hero”, “valour”, “honour” and “duty” were not just platitudes for the grieving. Jalland suggests that they were “the most important consolation available”.⁵² “In Memoriam” notices frequently quoted the words of the Latin poet Horace, “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” (It is sweet and honourable to die for your country) well before the same phrase had been used ironically in the Wilfred Owen poem of 1917.⁵³ There was a circularity in the comforting abstractions of this consolatory language, as private individuals drew on it to express and assuage their grief. Anzac Day perpetuated these private messages of consolation by returning them to the pens and tongues of newspaper editors and community leaders who, in turn, delivered them from the speaker’s platform. Anzac rhetoric acknowledged the sacrifice and gave a particular approved meaning to it. “Through self-sacrifice alone can men or nations be saved,”

⁵⁰ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7.

⁵¹ Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 52-53.

⁵² Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, ed. Jay Winter, *Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 15; Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 53.

⁵³ E.g. Wellisch, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 1915, 12; Seinor, *West Australian*, 14 September 1915, 1; Rathbone, *North Western Advocate and Emu Bay Times*, 18 October 1915, 2.

Hughes declaimed at the Hotel Cecil.⁵⁴ In the mouths of leaders like Hughes, Anzac rhetoric would go further, venerating the sacrifice as an example that the living should emulate – especially those who were eligible to enlist.

While metaphors of ‘national birth’ were ubiquitous, a “confusion of life-cycle metaphors” prevailed, peddled by speechmakers and journalists.⁵⁵ Some individuals chose to describe it as a different rite of passage. For example, Anzac was, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, “not so much the birth of a nation as the coming of age of our people in riper period of full nationhood.”⁵⁶ New-born nations were subject to the vicissitudes of external force and required nurturing and the protection of a parent. But mature ones could rally, take responsibility for their own fates and be mobilised around a cause. The nation now assumed a ‘maturity’ that was not available through mere Federation. And with that maturity came responsibilities to “fight and die in the Empire’s need”, as the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney told his flock on Anzac Day.⁵⁷

In the search for appropriate metaphors, many speakers described Gallipoli as a baptism – of fire certainly, but in some cases, also of blood.⁵⁸ “Before that time [25 April 1915], they did not count amongst the great nations”, the Rev A.E. Henry told those gathered at the Roma commemoration. Yet this “baptism of blood”, brought with it “new life.”⁵⁹ Paradoxically, the Gallipoli casualties were not crippling or enervating for the troops or for the nation. On the contrary, in the Rev Henry’s world view, they were enabling and energising, in so far as they epitomised all that was worthy in a citizen and set examples and standards for others to follow. While these metaphors differed in their emphases, they all conveyed a sense of national gravitas and import around the day which both justified and transcended individual loss and trauma.

The act of assuming adulthood was also highly gendered. “Anzac will go down in posterity as the day in which Australia cast on one side the ideas and ideals of youth

⁵⁴ William Morris Hughes, *'The Day' and After: War Speeches of Rt. Hon. W.M. Hughes*, ed. Keith A. Murdoch (London: Cassell, [1916]), 70.

⁵⁵ Marilyn Lake, "Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation- Nationalism, Gender and Other Seminal Acts," *Gender & History* 4, no. 3 (1992): 310.

⁵⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 8.

⁵⁷ Archbishop Wright, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1916, 11.

⁵⁸ Archbishop Wright, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1916, 11.

⁵⁹ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

and assumed the more serious responsibilities of a man's estate," the *Sydney Morning Herald* proclaimed.⁶⁰ At Gallipoli, insisted Hughes, Australia had "put on the toga of manhood".⁶¹ Richard White has analysed the conventional and popular images used to depict Australia in the pre-war period, finding that the two most prevalent are of the nation as young woman, or as a boy, in particular, Livingston Hopkins's "Little Boy from Manly".⁶² Anzac sent the message that such images of the nation were no longer appropriate. Here was a shift from emblems which depicted immaturity and vulnerability to a discourse which emphasised mature, masculine virtues.

Australian women comprised a significant number of those gathered at Anzac Day commemorations even if they never appeared on the speaker's platform. If, however, the nation was now 'male', how were they to position themselves? On the one hand, it was pointed out that Australian soldiers had sacrificed themselves in the protection of the virtue of all women. Australian troops had died, in the words of the Brisbane Methodist clergyman, A.C. Plane, "in the cause of humanity – in the defence of outraged women and helpless children".⁶³ So the invitation to women was to be the custodians of the legend and the vector through which the tales of Anzac heroism would be perpetuated through the generations. The Mayor of Port Adelaide told his listeners: "Mothers of to-day would tell their children of great deeds then performed, and right down the ages, as long as the British Empire lasted, the story would be repeated."⁶⁴ Anzac Day speakers in turn encouraged women to emulate the 'masculine' qualities of their men. They did so by praising them for the demonstrations of discipline, stoicism and their sense of loyalty to the cause. "Unhesitatingly the womanhood of the land has responded to the clarion call of duty, as splendidly as has their manhood," South Australian Premier, Crawford Vaughan, told his audience.⁶⁵ The image of the stoic, sacrificial mother had already been

⁶⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 8.

⁶¹ Hughes, *'The Day' and After: War Speeches of Rt. Hon. W.M. Hughes*, 71.

⁶² Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*, The Australian Experience (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 120-21.

⁶³ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1916, 6.

⁶⁴ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 8.

⁶⁵ Cited in South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir* (Adelaide: Govt. Printer, 1916), 17-18.

venerated in the press prior to the first Anzac Day.⁶⁶ As bearers of the burden of loss, and tellers of the tale of glorious sacrifice, they would occupy the high moral ground that befitted the traditional role of wife and mother.

One of the reasons for the multiplicity and confusion of metaphors was that many of Anzac Day's promoters were not prepared to make an unequivocal statement about the 'birth' of Australia. Rather, they needed to recuperate that rite of passage into an imperial framework. This was not necessarily Australia's arrival as a distinct political entity *per se*, but rather its "coming of age" as a productive member of the Empire. Stephen Garton points out that, at the outset, Gallipoli was viewed as a "triumph of race and manhood" as much as a triumph of nation, if not more so, but that the "balance of imagining began to shift from Empire to nation".⁶⁷ Signs of the shift are evident during Anzac Day 1916, yet empire continued to dominate the perspective of many of those who organised and spoke at the commemoration.⁶⁸

While many Anzac orators were content to proffer maxims about nation and empire, others took Anzac Day as an occasion for Australia to shrug off the imperial cloak and to step out into the limelight on its own terms. Such sentiments were rarely voiced in the conservative press but did appear, for example, in Sydney's Catholic mouthpiece, the *Freeman's Journal*.⁶⁹ In one sense then, the message of Anzac Day was sufficiently open-ended and ill-defined for Australians to make of it what they would. The day could 'belong' to all in one sense, but old sectarian, political and ethnic divisions were only papered over. Polarising tensions around conscription would see Irish Catholic Australians increasingly vilified from the speaker's platform and the pulpit in 1917 and 1918. Consequently they became increasingly disenfranchised from the commemoration once it came to be assembled around a fortified and entrenched loyalist, Protestant, conservative position.

Anzac Day's "national birth" rhetoric thus sent a number of confusing and even contradictory messages to Australians living in 1916 about the significance of the

⁶⁶ Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, 32-34; Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 75.

⁶⁷ Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 39.

⁶⁸ *Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle*, 29 April 1916, 2.

⁶⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 27 April 1916, 22.

day. While it was infused with religious metaphors, it nonetheless served political ends in seeking to assure Australians that the struggle in which they were engaged was both righteous and winnable. It tacitly acknowledged the bereaved, especially women, yet it also sought to obfuscate and even deny them the fullness of their grief with its rhetoric. Anzac Day 1916 was, on the one hand, a celebration of Australia's national arrival and on the other, a reaffirmation of the bonds of empire. Moreover, the rhetoric of national self-realisation masked the horror and tragedy and sought to justify the burgeoning casualty list by manufacturing a set of "benefits" that war brought – the birth of the nation, a history, a coming of age, a new spirit of patriotism, a mythology of national cohesion. "What a wonderful thing war was", declaimed Melbourne's Anglican Archbishop Clarke, without a hint of irony, "not alone on the battlefield, but in the personal and national service and sacrifice, the acts of tenderness and kindness towards the soldiers."⁷⁰ Clarke, like many Anzac Day speakers, pontificated from such a position of venerated authority that none in his congregation would have dared called him to account for such statement, even had they disagreed with it.

"The Bravest Thing that God Ever Made": Veneration of soldiers

One of the dominant rhetorical markers evident during Anzac Day 1916 was the eulogising of the efforts of the Australian troops at Gallipoli. It is not surprising that, in the mood of the time, when displays of robust, not to say pugnacious, chauvinism were the order of the day, such performances would incorporate the exaltation and hyperbolising of the nation's soldiery. Robin Gerster argues that in Australia's case, such "self-advertisement" is particularly noteworthy for its enduring discursive power in the national self-perception.⁷¹ The trumpeting of Australian military virtue in 1916 led directly to a generalisation about national character that proved to be as strong as it was sustainable. The 'nation' had not only passed the test of war, it had topped the class. Anzac Day 1916 is noteworthy, then, as a seminal stage in the genealogy of that cultural phenomenon often referred to as the 'Anzac legend'.

⁷⁰ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7.

⁷¹ Robin Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1987), 2.

There was no limit to the hyperbolising of Australian military achievements at Gallipoli. Newspaper editorials and reports of the day are rich with orotund rhetorical flourishes from which to choose. Australia's prime minister told his audience of Gallipoli veterans at the Hotel Cecil: "As a military operation the Anzacs had achieved the impossible. It was feat of arms almost unparalleled in the history of war ... Soldiers your deeds have won you a place in the Temple of Immortals".⁷² "The landing was one of the grandest things ever recorded in the annals of warfare", Archbishop Clune told his Perth listeners.⁷³ Anzacs were "supermen in war" Galway announced in Adelaide.⁷⁴ Speakers and writers outdid each other in the extravagance of their accolades, such that the soldiers came to embody all that was virtuous in the nation.

Much of the detail of these exploits revolved around two particular episodes in the campaign – the landing itself and the withdrawal in December. The landing and charge up the cliffs on 25 April epitomised all that was glorious in the heroic tradition as the Anzacs "leapt unheralded into the arena of war [with] a display of courage, dash, endurance and unquenchable spirit," to quote Hughes.⁷⁵ On more than one occasion Anzac Day speakers, appropriately in one sense, evoked the words of Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade', seemingly ignorant of the futility and hapless military mismanagement of that episode.⁷⁶ Anzac's publicists needed to deal with the fact that the Australians had acquired a reputation for ill-discipline. While this was later remoulded in the Anzac legend into the somewhat more benign quality of 'irreverence for authority', the imperative at the time was to reassure Australians that their soldiers had not failed through any fault of their own. There was little talk of ill-discipline and irreverence at Anzac Day 1916. Indeed, in the governor-general's message the quality of discipline was emphasised.⁷⁷

It was typically the success of the withdrawal during December which highlighted the effective discipline of the troops.⁷⁸ For the Western Australian Governor, Sir Harry Barron, it was the "evacuation" from Gallipoli which was "one of the finest things ever

⁷² Hughes, *'The Day' and After: War Speeches of Rt. Hon. W.M. Hughes*, 68-69.

⁷³ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7.

⁷⁴ South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 16.

⁷⁵ Hughes, *'The Day' and After: War Speeches of Rt. Hon. W.M. Hughes*, 68.

⁷⁶ *Western Grazier*, 29 April 1916, 2; *Burra Record*, 3 May 1916, 5.

⁷⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 April 1916, 6.

⁷⁸ South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 23.

known in history. It was marvellous.”⁷⁹ Doubtless many readers and listeners were swept up in the patriotic fervour of the occasion and the cadence of the high diction of Anzac resonated with and reassured them. Others though, must have heard the rhetoric for what it was; they would have had much more difficulty accepting that the defeat and withdrawal of a British military force might be ranked as such a superlative achievement.

The mythology constructed around the Australian troops’ achievements framed them as more remarkable by virtue of their having been performed by men from a democratic “land of peace”. This was an important way to distinguish their own martial prowess from the militaristic savagery of the enemy, in particular, the Germans. The only battle faced by the forebears of the Anzacs had been, according to one source, with the “new conditions of life and the adverse forces of nature”.⁸⁰ It was this struggle which had, in part, forged their character. Here was a foretaste of Bean’s theories around the significance of the bush in shaping the character of the Anzac. Yet Anzac Day speakers in 1916 seemed more preoccupied with disassociating the nation’s soldiery from any natural predisposition toward violent activity than with attempting to reaffirm their rural origins. One speaker at Roma reassured the audience that Australia “had been peopled by peaceful occupation, and not by conquest. There had never been rapine or destruction in the land and please God, there never would be”.⁸¹ Clearly the frontier wars did not figure in this reckoning. Similarly, in Brisbane, acting Queensland Premier, E.G. Theodore, reminded the gathering that “we [are] ... not a warlike people”.⁸² Elsewhere, Australian soldiers were lauded for their martial achievements and the population was enjoined to mobilise around the struggle. Nevertheless some speakers, after asserting the righteousness of the cause, did find it important to play down any sense that Australians actually *enjoyed* fighting.

Anzac Day writers and speakers gave voice to the belief that the ‘success’ of the Australians at Gallipoli put paid to fears of racial degeneration in the Antipodes. A

⁷⁹ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7.

⁸⁰ *Kerang New Times*, 28 April 1916, 2.

⁸¹ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

⁸² *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1916, 7.

poem of Dorothy McCrae's, entitled "Australian Soldiers in Anzac", reproduced in the Sydney commemorative publication, *Anzac Memorial*, included the following stanza:

Sons of our Pioneers
Greeting to you and cheers!
You who have proved your strain
Come to your own again,
Crowned among peers.⁸³

Likewise Sydney's Anglican Archbishop Wright told his congregation at St Stephen's that, on 25 April 1915, "it had been shown that the old stock was still the same under new skies, though perhaps with a new vigour and keenness born under Australia's sun and skies."⁸⁴ The fact that the Australians were fighting on territory associated with the battles of classical antiquity also induced a range of Homeric metaphors which made allusions to a 'new race' fighting in an 'old' world. As noted in Chapter One, clergymen, medical practitioners and other social commentators had regularly voiced concerns about the deleterious effects of urban life on 'national character', warning of the dangers of a 'decadent' modernist lifestyle. Australian military endeavours at Gallipoli were trumpeted as the very repudiation of such influences. Gallipoli 'proved' that the character of the AIF was unimpeachable. Moreover, it demonstrated to those who had yet to enlist, the regenerative, transformative powers of military service in forging a robust masculinity.

Anzac Day speakers were as likely to refer to Gallipoli as a triumph of racial achievement as they were to call it a national one. For South Australian Premier Crawford Vaughan, the day was "amongst the treasured memories of their race".⁸⁵ It was an occasion to reinforce the prevailing sense of 'Britishness'. Paradoxically perhaps, the rhetoric reaffirmed the bonds of empire at the same time as it celebrated national achievement. The efforts of the Australian troops were arrayed glowingly against British military endeavours of the past – Wolfe at Quebec, Nelson at Trafalgar, Wellington at Waterloo.⁸⁶ In this case, however, there was little mention

⁸³ A.G. Stephens, ed. *Anzac Memorial*, 1st ed. (Sydney: Returned Soldiers Association, 1916), 66.

⁸⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1916, 11.

⁸⁵ South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 17.

⁸⁶ *Kerang New Times*, 28 April 1916, 2.

of a singular heroic figure. The speechmakers applied that epithet to all who took part in the military operation. The Anzacs therefore were “worthy of the best traditions of the British race” and “worthy sons of the grand old British Empire”.⁸⁷ Yet more than twenty percent of Australians came from Irish Catholic background. While the events of the Easter Rising in Dublin were taking place simultaneously with the 1916 commemorations and reportage of that event would not appear in the Australian press until later, there were many Australians who sympathised with Irish nationalist aspirations. Obsequious deference to the Union Jack was not a feature of their outlook. Significant parts of the labour movement also voiced its cynicism about the unmediated beneficence of the British Empire. Doubtless then, some grieving parents were less than consoled by the claim that their son had died a “worthy son of the grand old British Empire”.

On Anzac Day, Australians told themselves that the achievements of their soldiers had won them international plaudits. To evoke Lyn Spillman’s thesis, as elaborated in my Introduction, these actions, it seems, had placed the nation directly under what she has called the “international gaze”.⁸⁸ Hughes told the troops gathered at the Hotel Cecil that: “the world stood thrilled in wonder at the men of Anzac ... The world has hailed you as heroes.”⁸⁹ In New South Wales, the souvenir programme declared that “the whole world rings to-day with a universal paen of praise for Australian valor and the glories of Australian manhood”.⁹⁰ In Adelaide, Galway told his audience that the Anzacs “had made the name of Australia echo throughout the world”.⁹¹

Just how accurate were such claims? Robin Gerster has elaborated on the tendency towards “big-noting” and self-applause around the performance of the AIF.⁹² Certainly Australians could be excused a little parochialism considering the losses they had suffered. Any talk of “world recognition” needs to be debunked, however, for the fanfaronade that it was. For example, accounts of the Dardanelles campaign which were regularly published in the *New York Times* make little mention of Australian achievements. On the one occasion that Australian efforts are noted, that

⁸⁷ *West Australian*, 26 April 1916, 7; *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 26 April 1916, 3.

⁸⁸ Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 92-93.

⁸⁹ Hughes, *'The Day' and After: War Speeches of Rt. Hon. W.M. Hughes*, 69.

⁹⁰ Anzac Day Committee, *Anzac Memorial Day* (Sydney: RSA New South Wales, [1916]), 3.

⁹¹ South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 15.

⁹² Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, 1-20.

newspaper chose to reprint one of Bean's despatches. Indeed the presence of Australians at Gallipoli would have been hardly known to American readers, as the *New York Times*' readers read only of 'British' campaigning.⁹³ The same could be said of France. Of the major French newspapers produced in 1915, only *Le Figaro* published despatches from Commander Sir Ian Hamilton, that mentioned Australians, and then, on only two occasions. *Le Temps* mentioned Australians once in relation to fighting in the Dardanelles.⁹⁴ Most French people could be excused for not knowing, nor caring, that Australians were even fighting on Gallipoli. They had more pressing matters to attend to.

If Anzac Day was of little import to the Americans or the French, it was nevertheless an opportunity to revisit and re-assemble British accolades which had been regularly forthcoming since early May 1915. When Australian speechmakers said 'the world' therefore, they meant Britain. For any Australian triumph to be complete, it required British endorsement. As Gerster points out, the British were often generous in their applause of the fighting capacity of the Australians.⁹⁵ It suited their needs. There was no point alienating the dominion with anything less than the most lavish praise. A recent study points out that, as early as the Boer War, British military commanders sensed the colonials' need for reassurance about their martial prowess and duly obliged. It was small price to pay for the assistance of the troops.⁹⁶ Personal tributes by leading British military figures were enthusiastically noted and subsequently reproduced in Anzac Day commemorative publications, as were what Geoffrey Serle has termed the "fulsome, cloying eulogies" of prominent British literary figures such as John Masefield and Compton Mackenzie.⁹⁷

For Australians, the acclaim of the British carried more gravitas and circulated further than any home-grown accolades. The phrase, "The bravest thing God ever made" had appeared in a Will Ogilvie poem entitled "The Australian", first published in March 1916. It was purported to have derived from a statement made by a British

⁹³ *New York Times*, 5 July 1915, 3. I was able to search the *New York Times* digital index to establish these details.

⁹⁴ *Figaro*, 2 July 1915, 4; 19 August 1915, 6; *Temps*, 8 August 1915, 6. In addition to these, a search of the following newspapers was conducted on the *Gallica* database: *L'Aurore*; *Croix*; *Matin*.

⁹⁵ Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, 13.

⁹⁶ Carolyn Holbrook, *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney: New South, 2014), 21.

⁹⁷ Serle, "The Digger Tradition and Australian Nationalism": 151; South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 11.

officer about Australian troops.⁹⁸ The phrase had wide currency in the Australian press from the date of its publication and was frequently referred to at Anzac Day events.⁹⁹ Tellingly, Ogilvie subtitled his poem “A British Officer’s Opinion” to add to the epithet’s cachet and to deflect accusations that such assessment was merely home-grown.

If there were doubters in terms of the motives behind the superlatives of British reportage, they remained out of mind and out of print. Richard Ely has suggested that some on the home front may well have had doubts over the credibility of all this praise as it clearly served British interests to maintain Australian enthusiasm for the war.¹⁰⁰ If so, keeping one’s own counsel was a wise course of action given the negative emotionality that such sentiments would arouse. Thus the acknowledgement of the martial prowess of Australia’s troops and its ‘arrival’ on the ‘world’ stage would be a recurrent figure in Anzac mythology, a figure relatively untroubled by deeper concerns about motivation and trustworthiness.

Within the context of defeat, it was essential to keep the Anzac escutcheon blemish-free. The rhetorical response to this conundrum came in the form of justifications and consolations. In his Anzac Day address, Pearce claimed that strategic benefits had flowed from the commitment of significant Turkish resources to the long engagement at Gallipoli, such that the Russians were able to make significant gains on the Caucasus frontier, in particular the capture of the Turkish stronghold Erzerum. Other sources produced the same account, noting in particular Hamilton’s advice to the troops before the landing that what they were being asked to attempt was “considered impossible”.¹⁰¹

Anzac Day’s proponents were in something of a predicament. If the calibre of AIF soldiers was as high as the politicians, preachers and pressman claimed, why did the Australians fail? It was an issue which was sometimes overtly acknowledged.¹⁰² Anzac Day was not, typically, an occasion for recriminations over British strategic

⁹⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, 1 March 1916, 9.

⁹⁹ E.g. *Morning Bulletin*, 25 April 1916, 6; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 April 1916, 5; *Burrowa News*, 28 April 1916, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Ely, "The First Anzac Day: Invented or Discovered?," *Journal of Australian Studies* 9, no. 17 (1985): 48.

¹⁰¹ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7; *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 7; *Queenslander*, 22 April 1916, 20; *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 4.

¹⁰² *Northern Miner*, 25 April 1916, 3.

and military decision-making. That would come later. Nonetheless, speaking at St Kilda, Liberal MLA R.G. McCutcheon demanded a full inquiry into the decisions regarding the deployment of Australian troops.¹⁰³ The *Queenslander* announced its endorsement of the “expert military advice” of the British High Command but assigned the “partial failure” to the “gambling spirit of certain politicians”.¹⁰⁴ More commonly however, this was an occasion to reinforce a sense of empire solidarity. “It was no time to criticise,” Brigadier-General Frederic Hughes told his St Kilda audience.¹⁰⁵

One way to ‘explain’ the outcome of the campaign was to deny it. “It was not a victory, but it was not a defeat”, the *Newcastle Morning Herald* told its readers.¹⁰⁶ What was achieved, according to Galway in South Australia, was something much higher and more noble than military success. “Their valor and services were crowned with a garland of suffering gallantly borne with a fortitude which was greater than any victory,” he told his audience.¹⁰⁷ In reinscribing Gallipoli as a moral tale, it was possible to claim victory of a more lofty sort, or at least mitigate somewhat the discourse of military defeat.

Others acknowledged the military ‘failure’ but insisted on its transcendent success because it resulted in the “birth” or “coming of age” of the nation.¹⁰⁸ Thus Gallipoli succeeded in providing an uplifting narrative which could help galvanise the nation around the war and console the loved ones of those who would not return. The hyperbolic justifications and consolations given by so many, in the context of such a limited space for contestation, would carry the day, as bedevilled as they were by the fraught issues arising from claims of Australia’s superior military prowess set against the historical reality of slaughter and defeat.

¹⁰³ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 8.

¹⁰⁴ *Queenslander*, 22 April 1916, 20.

¹⁰⁵ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 8; Hughes, the husband of prominent Australian Women’s League Campaigner, Eva Hughes, would not have welcomed any inquiry into his handling of the Australian troops at The Nek in August 1915.

¹⁰⁶ *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 4.

¹⁰⁷ South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 16.

¹⁰⁸ *Northern Miner*, 25 April 1916, 3.

“The soul of the nation”: mobilisation on the home front

The hyperbolising war reportage which flowed from the pens of Ashmead-Bartlett, Bean and others boosted recruitment and focussed the nation’s attention on the war. Thus it served a valuable purpose in helping Anzac Day’s organisers rekindle the kind of patriotic fervour which had greeted the news of the landing at Gallipoli. By April 1916, it had coalesced into a powerful narrative to be re-deployed in the hope of achieving the same effect.

Anzac Day events were frequently indistinguishable from recruiting and conscription rallies, with issues around manpower for the war effort prioritised by organisers and speakers. Hughes eulogised the Anzacs’ achievements and enjoined the nation to “answer their mute appeal”.¹⁰⁹ In the lead up to the commemoration, Victorian (and later federal) Director of Recruiting, Donald McKinnon, drawing attention to developments in Queensland and New South Wales, called for a renewed recruiting effort around Anzac Day.¹¹⁰ One of the resolutions drawn up by Garland and moved at the Queensland meetings also drove home the recruiting message: “This meeting urges upon all who are eligible the imperative duty of following the example of those heroes whose names will be honoured as long as history endures”.¹¹¹ Many Anzac Day newspaper editorials similarly urged recruits to step forward and “fill the empty saddle” vacated by the “fallen”.¹¹²

Speeches and editorials were an opportunity to reiterate the threat posed by the armies of the Central Powers to the survival of Australia. Recruits were urged to partake in the ‘glory’ and to protect Australia and the Empire from its enemies. Clergymen joined in the demonization of the enemy. Momentarily forgetful that Australian troops had died fighting the Turks, Reverend Father John Hennessy told his Roma audience that the Anzacs had “gone forth to fight a spirit of mad ambition masquerading in the guise of ‘kultur’ ... They went to crush a spirit that had committed crimes against priests and women and children which were unmentionable. The men were going on a mission that was holy”.¹¹³ Despite the

¹⁰⁹ Hughes cited in South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 5.

¹¹⁰ *Age*, 15 April 1916, 12.

¹¹¹ Committee, *Citizens’ Celebration, Exhibition Hall, Tuesday, April 25, 1916, Programme*, 5.

¹¹² *Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle*, 29 April 1916, 2; *Ballarat Courier*, 26 April 1916, 2; *Casterton News and the Merino and Sandford Record*, 20 April 1916, 4.

¹¹³ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

caveat that the *Brisbane Courier* gave, that “no one would suggest that these solemn celebrations should be regarded as mere aids to recruiting”, recruitment was a signal feature of the 1916 commemoration speechifying.¹¹⁴ Reiterating the extent of the threat was the necessary ‘prequel’ to appealing for more men to volunteer for the cause – “this is the lesson that Anzac Day teaches” reported the *Cairns Post*. The commemoration brought with it a “vitalising theme” destined to “inspire the young men of Australia to don khaki”.¹¹⁵ As had happened at previous patriotic events, the threat to the nation’s security and way of life was highlighted. Moreover, the spectre of defeat was more readily mobilised in the light of a loss to Turkey, the supposed “Sick Man of Europe”, and the other military gains of the Central Powers increasingly evident in the early months of 1916.

According to many contributors to the mythology building so rapidly around Anzac, the campaign had been lost because of lack of reinforcements. The *Cairns Post* told its readers on Anzac Day: “One thing which can never be effaced from history is the fact that more men were badly needed when the assault on Gallipoli was made”.¹¹⁶ The day’s orators reinforced the same message. Victorian Liberal MLC, Sir Arthur Robinson, speaking in the Premier’s absence, told his audience in Melbourne Town Hall: “We recognise now that our shortage was men – and again men. If we had had sufficient men to fight against the Turks, our troops would have got through to Constantinople and nothing would have stopped them”.¹¹⁷ At the same event, the lack of reinforcements story was lent greater authority when acting Prime Minister, George Pearce, insisted that the failure of the Gallipoli campaign was directly attributable to that cause.¹¹⁸ Speaking at the St Kilda Anzac Day event, Brigadier General Hughes, whose mismanagement of the disastrous assault at the Nek on 7 August 1915 was later the subject of much critique, gave this fantasy the stamp of military authority.¹¹⁹ The facts belie Robinson’s, Pearce’s and Hughes’s assertions. By mid-September 1915, 125,000 Allied troops were on the peninsula. A further 75,000 were based in Egypt or at other Mediterranean bases. After the failure of the August offensive, pessimism about the success of the campaign was increasingly

¹¹⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 April, 1916, 6.

¹¹⁵ *Cairns Post*, 25 April 1916, 4.

¹¹⁶ *Cairns Post*, 25 April 1916, 4.

¹¹⁷ *Age*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹¹⁸ *Age*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹¹⁹ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 8.

evident in London. The Dardanelles Committee was losing confidence in Hamilton as a commander and becoming increasingly convinced that no more men should be wasted on what was looking increasingly like a failed venture.¹²⁰ Had more divisions of Australians been trained and available, they would most likely have been diverted to the Western Front.

Anzac Day's orators were not content with espousing the cause of voluntary enlistment. Many used the privilege of the speaker's platform to actively promote conscription as the only feasible remedy to stem the fall in recruiting numbers. William Irvine argued that "the only way to effectually do honour to the memory of those who had fallen was to strengthen and support those who still lived". "The system, so called voluntary", he insisted, "stood that day condemned as insufficient, and also as being an injustice". Irvine's call was for the immediate adoption of conscription.¹²¹ Other speakers, not just conservative politicians, echoed his message. In his 25 April sermon to the congregation at the Wesley Church that morning, the Rev W.R. Hodge attacked the voluntary system, failing to see "why he should be called upon to send three lads while his fellow citizen with four sons of military age had not sent one."¹²² In Adelaide, the Presbyterian Minister, Henry Howard, told his Anzac Day congregation that "conscription had not come, but it ought to come. It would make the great sacrifice far more evenly distributed than it was to-day, and would settle the question for a great many men who did not seem able to settle it for themselves."¹²³ Newspaper editors also joined the call.¹²⁴

Thus one side of the battle lines in the as-yet-undeclared 'civil war' around conscription was being drawn that Anzac Day on the speakers' platform, from the pulpit and in the press. While some prominent Labor politicians joined their political enemies on the dais, endorsing their proclamations and echoing their stance on the war, the conservative press nonetheless took the opportunity to charge large swathes of the labour movement with disloyalty and a failure to commit to the nation's and the Empire's war aims. The *Sydney Morning Herald* countered any

¹²⁰ John Robertson, *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli* (Port Melbourne: Hamlyn, 1990), 152.

¹²¹ *Age*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹²² *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 6.

¹²³ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹²⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 8.

carping on the left by insisting that “this is not a war of classes, but a war of liberty”.¹²⁵ The commemoration was entirely in the hands of the pro-war elite who readily mobilised Anzac in its endeavours to galvanise the nation around the war effort and to call for more troops. They did so by emphasising the threat posed to Australia by its enemies and insisting that the failure of the campaign at Gallipoli would have been reversed had more men volunteered for the task. The example of the Anzacs was invoked in exhortations to greater urgency in the pursuit of victory. Indeed, more than any other single theme, this was the central message of Anzac Day 1916 and would continue to be for the duration of the war.

Mobilisation for the war was more than simply arming more men. The articulated threat demanded unity and the galvanising of the home front around the war effort. Anzac, as inspiring as it was, was unfinished work. It was a call to all citizens, Robinson told the gathering at the Melbourne Town Hall. “The soul of the nation must be thrown into the balance” he declaimed. Moreover, he asserted, the deaths of the Gallipoli heroes could only be “avenged by a complete and crushing victory.”¹²⁶ In a sense, this call to arms is an oblique acknowledgement that the country was now being urged to dig even more deeply into its human and psychological resources, its “soul”, in the hope of turning short-term defeat at Gallipoli into long-term victory, an outcome by no means guaranteed at this time. There is desperation here, not just motivation, given the losses already inflicted and the growing anti-conscription mood in some quarters.

Part of the work done by such speakers was that of promoting the illusion of national political cohesion. “Party politics during the war was dead”, Irvine told his audience in Melbourne.¹²⁷ Yet this was a ‘cohesion’ based not on mutual consent but rather on the assertion of one political position over all others. Anzac commemoration was never a political battle-ground during the war years because there was no discursive space for dissenting voices to be heard at Anzac Day events. Anything that implied dissent or opposition to the nation’s stated war aims could be, and was, vilified from the speaker’s platform. “The preservation of liberty was involved in this war,” Robinson insisted, “it could not be secured by carping criticism and the splitting of

¹²⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1916, 8.

¹²⁶ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹²⁷ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7.

our ranks at home”.¹²⁸ A clear binary opposition marked conservative pro-war loyalists as ‘other than political’, a domain that was the preserve of militant unionists, socialists and pacifists. Anzac Day therefore was already a weapon in a burgeoning polemic which was to engulf Australian society in the subsequent years.

Anzac was the centrepiece of a moral crusade as much as a military one. War was a trial by fire for the nation and the Empire which tested more than physical strength and resources. The Reverend Lynch told his Anzac Day congregation at the Holy Trinity Church in Williamstown (Victoria): “In this conflict the British Empire is on its trial. It is going to be tested as to whether it is decadent or not decadent”.¹²⁹ Meanwhile, Sydney’s Catholic mouthpiece, the *Freeman’s Journal*, insisted that “there is still far too much pleasure in our midst. We cannot be faithful to our new ideals and yet pass our lives as though our sons and brothers were not fighting on foreign shores for all that makes a nation glorious.”¹³⁰ This was a version of the same pious puritan message which Garland had espoused from Anglican pulpits in the middle of 1915 and which he had brought to the organisation of the Queensland commemorations. Little more than a year earlier, Charles Bean’s account of AIF misdemeanours in the brothels of Egypt had resonated in Australia.¹³¹ Anzac Day was an opportunity to repair any damage done to the reputation of the nation’s fighting forces. Some, like the Mayor of Roma (Queensland), Dr Merrilees, chose the occasion to go on record to dispel these accounts. Fearing that some parents were reluctant to allow their sons to join the colours because of concerns about their moral welfare, Merrilees sought to assure the citizens of Roma that, according to a letter from a medical colleague, reports of “licentiousness” in the camps of Egypt were grossly exaggerated.¹³²

According to the rhetoric, the Anzacs themselves had been morally uplifted by the experience of battle. The Rev A.E. Henry, speaking at the Roma commemoration, told his audience that Australian soldiers were now “ten times the men they were morally because they are prepared to keep aloft the standard of truth and

¹²⁸ *Argus*, 26 April 1916, 7.

¹²⁹ *Williamstown Chronicle*, 29 April 1916, 2.

¹³⁰ *Freeman’s Journal*, 27 April 1916, 22.

¹³¹ Williams, *Anzacs, the Media and the Great War*, 58-60.

¹³² *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

righteousness in the world.”¹³³ At the “daybreak service” in Rockhampton, the Rev J. Walker, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, avowed that “those who would come back would return better men”.¹³⁴ Those who had returned by April 1916 had done so because they had suffered crippling disease and injuries. Their misfortune was paraded on Anzac Day. Yet it was important to maintain the pretence that such physical disabilities paled into insignificance when compared with the moral redemption and purification which fighting for the nation and the Empire had brought.

Thus Anzacs came to represent all that was morally uplifting. It was not only clergymen who espoused this position. In his address to the troops gathered at the Hotel Cecil in London on Anzac Day, Hughes invested their “deeds” with a lofty moral significance: “On its shining wings we were lifted up to heights we had never seen; you taught us truths we never knew; you inspired us to a newer and better and nobler concept of life.”¹³⁵ According to the rhetoric, the actions of the AIF at Gallipoli had set a benchmark to which the home front and future generations must aspire. It was essential that Australians, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, should “live lives that are worthy of that great sacrifice”.¹³⁶ Their achievements, it appeared, required emulation on every front. Politicians and preachers insisted that the nation must follow their example – either by enlisting or by committing to the war effort politically and ‘spiritually’. The *West Australian* told readers that the Dardanelles campaign was “more to Australia than a military exploit; it is the proving of a nation's soul.”¹³⁷ Thus “proven”, the nation’s “soul” could be increasingly dedicated to the military struggle ahead.

Such was the relentless and lofty rhetoric of Anzac Day 1916. Politicians borrowed from the language of preachers. Preachers took an unequivocal ‘political’ stance. The Reverend A.E. Henry invoked the tale of Spartan mothers in enjoining women to support enlistment. “The mothers gave the sons their shields and told them to bring them back or die on them,” he reminded the mothers of Roma.¹³⁸ Preachers and

¹³³ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

¹³⁴ *Morning Bulletin*, 26 April 1916, 4.

¹³⁵ Hughes, *'The Day' and After: War Speeches of Rt. Hon. W.M. Hughes*, 69.

¹³⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1916, 11.

¹³⁷ *West Australian*, 24 April, 4.

¹³⁸ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 April 1916, 3.

politicians in turn sought to transcend the quotidian reality of military failure and personal grief by investing Anzac with a character designed to galvanise and mobilise the nation around the war effort. In that rhetoric of course, are many of the rudimentary discursive figures which later coalesced into what has become known as the “Anzac legend”. Thus Anzac’s moral imperatives dovetailed with its political ones. The home front could be mobilised by reiterating the threat posed by the nation’s enemies, by asserting that the military failure at Gallipoli was caused by lack of reinforcements and by insisting that any ambivalence about the nation’s commitment to the struggle threatened a putative political and social unity. Moreover, potential recruits could be enticed with the mythology that the war would make them heroes and thus “better” men. The grieving were reassured that, despite their own personal loss, the sacrifice of their loved ones had benefited the nation by lifting it to a higher moral plane.

Preachers reaffirmed the bonds of empire and made calls for greater commitment to, and moral courage around, the struggle. “The Anzacs living and dead are calling to every Australian soldier to step into the place they filled and stand beside them,” Canon Colebrook told the congregation at St Paul’s, Ballarat East. Moreover Colebrook declared that there was “a new religion before us. That is why we continue the Anzac memorial on this day of worship. The new religion ... is to make ourselves worthy of the deeds of a year ago”.¹³⁹ Clergymen frequently viewed the war as energising and responsible for great revival in the fortune of the churches. Yet for Colebrook it was more. Anzac was a “new religion”. Such was the reverence and efficacy of Anzac that such a challenging and doctrinally unorthodox, even transgressive, claim could be made, it seems, without fear of censure.

Conclusion

Anzac Day did more than just commemorate the dead. It worshipped them, in what Ziino has called “a developing public cult of the dead.”¹⁴⁰ Forged with an uplifting narrative about exceptional military and personal qualities and married to a mythology which stressed the agency of the Gallipoli heroes in giving birth to the nation, Anzac rhetoric was triumphalist, despite the assertions to the contrary made

¹³⁹ *Ballarat Courier*, 1 May 1916, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War*, 2.

by the members of the ADCC in their meetings.¹⁴¹ Moreover, it had all the hallmarks of a stoic puritanism. Australians were told that they exhibited these qualities: “No murmur has been heard to pass the lips of the loved ones of the departed heroes” noted one commemorative souvenir.¹⁴² Pat Jalland has asserted that overt expressions of individual grieving were re-framed as self-indulgent in the face of death on such a scale.¹⁴³ In commemorating the dead *en masse*, as was done on Anzac Day, individual grief might be seen to be controlled, suppressed or reduced in significance.

What was being mobilised through Anzac discourse then, was not remembrance of the war but a specific idealised notion of its conduct and import. As Alistair Thomson points out, the remit of Anzac Day’s organisers was the “institutionalisation of a particular version of the war”.¹⁴⁴ It was a version which sought to inspire confidence, emphasise optimism and consecrate the virtues of sacrifice, courage, honour and duty. Anzac Day, therefore, had a blatantly didactic purpose. Clearly the intent of assertions about national realisation and military prowess was to stir a sense of national pride in readers and listeners. Yet was there a space here for any who may have remained sceptical about the grandiloquence of the praise and about the motives behind such endeavours? If grieving kin cared not whether their loved ones were “supermen in war”, were ambivalent about the war, or indeed had lost all enthusiasm for the Empire and its struggle, the rhetoric was barren and could offer little consolation even if the liturgy in the ceremonies themselves had meaning.

Anzac discourse also mobilised a preferred version of womanhood. Jalland has pointed out that in colonial Australia women had played a vital role in memorialisation and the supervision of mourning rituals.¹⁴⁵ Yet for Anzac Day there were no women on the organisational committees, nor on the podium. The conduct of Anzac Day, like the war itself, was ‘men’s business’. Memorialisation was, if not yet the work of the state *per se*, at least the work of men who wielded much of the

¹⁴¹ Minutes of meeting, 18 February 1916, OMHA1/1 Anzac Day Commemoration Committee Records, 1916-1974 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Australia.

¹⁴² South Australia State War Council, *Anzac Souvenir*, 7.

¹⁴³ Patricia Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History, 1840-1918* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002), 309.

¹⁴⁴ Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 129.

¹⁴⁵ Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 12.

power in it. On Anzac Day women (and men) were instructed on how to grieve. More than forty percent of the bereaved never knew details of the deaths of their loved ones – where they were buried or whether they were buried at all.¹⁴⁶ The records show that the bereaved persisted long and hard in their search for details of how their kin died and where they were buried.¹⁴⁷ Doubtless, they did so to help them come to terms with their grief. As Damousi suggests, it was rather as if, in the “elusive details” of the death, that the “riddle of the meaning” of the death would be resolved.¹⁴⁸ In place of those details, came hollow assertions that death in war was glorious. The bereaved were expected to honour the Anzac code of courage, duty and self-sacrifice. Individual grief was to be restrained. Some managed to do it. Many failed, as evidence of ongoing trauma, and even suicides by parents because of a son’s death, so vividly illustrates. Many, too, did not have the dignity and finality of death acknowledged and knew only that their loved one was missing. This brought with it anxieties and uncertainties which made ‘normal’ grieving impossible.¹⁴⁹ The chivalric notion of a “glorious death” was of limited consolation, particularly if no such death could be confirmed.

As has been noted, Anzac Day’s makers sought to design rituals and commemorative practices which performed a variety of functions. While these practices might be public and inclusive in one respect, the design of the events was such that there was no space on the speaker’s platform or in the editor’s column for anything other than a very limited and tightly governed range of voices. While, as we have seen, the messages that were sent were not singular in their focus, they were often confused and paradoxical. Yet their heterogeneity extended only so far. Anzac Day was never a place for those who might question the motives and reasoning behind the war and the nation’s commitment to it.

If Anzac Day represented a collective communal expression of loss, to what extent did its rhetoric help the bereaved address their trauma? Jalland concludes that it “is impossible to know”.¹⁵⁰ Insofar as it signalled public recognition and framed rituals

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 41-42.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 64.

¹⁴⁸ Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, 50.

¹⁴⁹ Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History, 1840-1918*, 322-23.

¹⁵⁰ Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 97.

through which death and grief could be mediated, it likely did help. It certainly sought to reassure people that the lives of the loved ones had not been wasted and that their deaths had meaning. Simple patriotism was typically evoked as the principal consoling message. People were told by their politicians and their clergymen that their dead loved ones were heroes of the Empire and martyrs. Through “imperishable deeds” and sacrifice to nation and to empire, the dead underwent a moral transformation and achieved immortality. Damousi suggests that the pain of the bereaved was, in fact, “denied” by rebadging it as “glory and honour”.¹⁵¹ Yet if the bereaved accepted this proposition without reservation and bonded with others of similar disposition, then belief that such sacrifice was revered and honoured by the nation and/or empire, could be affirming. Anzac Day proffered a catechism for the gospel of redemptive, sacrificial heroism which inevitably provided, for the ‘true believers’, a set of comforting symbols on which to anchor grief. The language of chivalry therefore did not merely obscure trauma and death. For some, it helped to make it more palatable.

Participants in these events brought their own dispositions and perspectives to them. Jalland argues that in the conflict between public patriotism and private sorrow, the behaviour prescribed at events such as Anzac Day, “usually won the day”.¹⁵² Yet there is clear evidence that the oratory of Anzac did not necessarily create the effect for which it was designed. As Damousi notes, “The enunciation of civic pride and patriotism could not allow for the disarray of emotions.”¹⁵³ Yet, as Luckins has pointed out, the sources say rather more about the rhetoric of Anzac Day than they do about how it was absorbed.¹⁵⁴ We can readily learn what was said. It is indeed more difficult to discern what was heard.

In 1916 Anzac Day was a commemoration of the war more than it was a commemoration of the deaths of those who fought in it. The day, therefore, was something of a ‘curate’s egg’. It had all the markings of nationalist military pageant boosted with the appropriate oratory. Trumpeting their martial prowess, the day

¹⁵¹ Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, 27.

¹⁵² Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War Medicine and the Funeral Business*, 76.

¹⁵³ Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, 33.

¹⁵⁴ Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People’s Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* 86.

elevated the prestige of the nation's soldiers to the lofty heights of consecration. While it did not prepare them for the brutality of what was ahead, doubtless the language of Anzac, as trumpeted in newspaper reports, encouraged and inspired those who were still at the front, taking part in the next phase of the struggle which was just beginning in France and Belgium. It may also have, in part, addressed the legacy of trauma for those soldiers who had returned. The rhetoric insisted that the soldiers' actions had been responsible for a new national self-realisation and could (and should) be emulated by any eligible male who had not, as yet, signed up for the colours.

Chapter Six

“The Tragic Pageant of War”: Anzac Commemoration 1917-1918

The preceding chapters have traced the development of Anzac commemoration from its discursive origins in the decades prior to the war through its development in the wake of the landing in April 1915 and its first anniversary in April 1916. This chapter explores more fully how Anzac commemoration was influenced by, and in turn influenced, the profound changes wrought on Australian society in the last two years of the war. The imperatives which drove the commemoration – ongoing bereavement and the desire to memorialise the war dead, recruiting, fund-raising, and galvanising the nation around the struggle – remained in these latter years. Indeed, these pressures magnified in intensity as the war’s toll mounted.

Yet public sensibilities were changing and social divisions were widening, especially in the wake of the conscription debates. As one newspaper noted in April 1918, the nation’s attitudes to war were no longer as they had been in early 1915 when “the public mind ... was not ...[yet]... dulled by the endless impressions of the tragic pageant of war.”¹ The loyalist rhetoric that was so central to commemoration in 1915 and 1916 was losing its power to engage the broad sweep of the Australian public, with the effect of ‘un-fixing’ Anzac as a discursive space. Thus Anzac Day in 1917 and 1918 was less a salve to the wounds which fractured Australia than it was a symptom of them. While the commemoration was rarely, if ever, critiqued, it lost meaning for that significant portion of the population who did not endorse conscription, resisted enlistment and who felt increasingly disillusioned, exhausted and ambivalent, not to say hostile, to the nation’s war effort and its effects. Anzac Day, despite the rhetoric which surrounded it, lost impetus as a genuinely national civic commemoration through 1917 and 1918 as it struggled to meet the demands placed upon it by the mounting stresses of war.

This loss of impetus is evident in two key themes of the newspaper reports which document Anzac Day events in 1917 and 1918.. Firstly, Anzac Day was still bedevilled by its multiple and often inherently contradictory imperatives. It struggled to accommodate the range of increasingly disparate and irreconcilable voices which

¹ *Leader* (Melbourne), 27 April 1918, 33.

characterised Australian politics and society during this period, including those of returned soldiers. Secondly, in a nation riven by deep social and political divisions, commemoration failed to unify Australians. Rather, it became symptomatic of those divisions, providing an outlet for the rhetoric of loyalist pro-war conservatives increasingly embittered by the defeat of the conscription plebiscites in 1916 and 1917 and the virtual collapse of voluntary recruiting. While the pews at Anzac Day church services remained filled to overflowing, the attendance at civic commemorations fell in comparison with 1916. By 1917, a significant portion of the population felt alienated from Anzac Day events. Far from being a unifying force, Anzac Day had increasingly become a political instrument in the hands of a sectional interest – loyalist pro-conscription conservatives who promoted the war effort at the expense of all else.

This situation was exacerbated by invectives launched against those who chose not to fight and were pilloried as disloyal, selfish and cowardly. Even when parliamentary Labor sought to connect with the increasingly powerful national commemoration discourse to improve its standing at the polls, the industrial wing of the party largely eschewed it. It follows that commemorations in Australia were often under-attended in these years, taking on the character of evangelical gatherings of the loyalist party faithful rather than being socially inclusive.

It is not surprising that historians have given more critical attention to the first Anzac Day than to the second or the third. This absence of analysis of these events implies that the commemoration just subsequently grew ‘organically’ from its roots. For example, despite focussing heavily on Garland’s role in shaping and influencing the public form of the event, John Moses says little about what happened at the 1917 and 1918 commemorations, other than to note that the Queensland Committee continued to make recommendations and to record the conduct of the ceremonies.² Eric Andrews tells us that no royal messages of support were received for the 1917 and 1918 commemorations and that “as the years went by, the official version became ingrained”, such that Anzac Day “was taken out of the hands of the

² John A. Moses and George F. Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon D J Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration* (Canberra: Barton Books, 2013), 177.

opponents of war”.³ Andrews is partly right, but the commemoration was never within the grasp of those who opposed the war, nor did the dissidents have such aspirations. Moreover, by 1918, there was still no “official” version of Anzac Day as commemorative practices varied widely in their execution and intent.

The idea that continuity of commemorative practices was a feature of the last two years of war is also evident elsewhere. John Robertson, while outlining some features of the 1917 and 1918 commemorations, emphasises their continuity of purpose with the inaugural one, noting the “momentum” which the commemoration acquired, while asserting that its “pre-eminence as a national event had yet to be charted”.⁴ Tanja Luckins, too, has addressed the psycho-social aspects of the 1917 and 1918 commemorations, focussing on the events as occasions for the expression of public grief and arguing that “mourning continued to be the dominant tone of the day”.⁵ Most recently, Joan Beaumont has widened the focus, examining both Anzac rhetoric and rites in 1917 to conclude that the former was “a similar mix to 1916: triumphalism and exhortations to the population for ongoing sacrifice, intertwined with individual grief”, while the latter “seem still to have been fluid and improvised at the local level.” Beaumont then emphasises recruiting initiatives at the 1918 event, going on to describe that commemoration as “especially sober because of events on the Western front”.⁶ As noted in Chapter Four, John McQuilton’s study of North East Victoria concludes that Anzac Day “meant little” in that region throughout the war years, though he does note that by 1918 there were signs that civic (and not just school) commemorations were more common.⁷

Other studies, by contrast, have suggested that the dynamics of Anzac commemoration did shift in significant ways after 1916. Stephen Garton, for example, notes that enthusiasm for Anzac Day waned after the Armistice.⁸ Alistair

³ Eric Andrews, “25 April 1916: First Anzac Day in Australia and Britain” *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 23(1993).

⁴ John Robertson, *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli* (Port Melbourne: Hamlyn, 1990), 248.

⁵ Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People’s Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004), 95.

⁶ Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 307-08, 421.

⁷ John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 112-13.

⁸ Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 67.

Thomson makes a similar point, arguing that it was not until the mid-1920s that the commemoration began to re-establish itself and regain national prominence.⁹ It is Raymond Evans's study of the Queensland home front however, which most clearly asserts that it was not simply a case of 'business as usual' in 1917 and 1918. Evans notes waning enthusiasm for Anzac Day earlier than Garton or Thomson suggest – in the remaining war years in fact, citing an eye-witness account of the 1918 Toowoomba commemoration and noting that "loyalist enthusiasm had fallen to the level of mere pantomime."¹⁰ The evidence here supports his conclusions, not just for Queensland, but elsewhere in the nation. An analysis of regional commemorations shows that public engagement with Anzac Day, as 'the' national day, declined after 1916. While it may have been, as Luckins argues, an occasion for the public acknowledgement of grief and loss, it was viewed by many as just another in a range of patriotic commemorations organised by those who sought to promote the war.¹¹

'Unfixing' Anzac Day

In 1917 and 1918, Anzac Day was being played out against a background of mass trauma on a scale far beyond anything conceivable at the outset of the fighting. Gallipoli had merely been a foretaste of the unabated slaughter and horror of the Western Front. In July 1916 the AIF was thrown into what Beaumont has called "haemorrhaging warfare" at Fromelles, and later at Pozières and Moquet Farm. In September the Australians were taken out of the line, exhausted and mauled by the onslaught, with over 24,000 casualties in less than three months of fighting and very little to show for it. Further fighting on the Somme in October and November, and into the bitter winter, drove the troops' morale to its lowest ebb of the war.¹² The carnage continued at the two battles of Bullecourt in April and May 1917 and the third Ypres offensive.

Between the first Anzac Day and the second, the AIF suffered more than 120,000 casualties on the Western Front alone. Of these, more than 15,000 were fatalities.

⁹ Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend*, New ed ed. (Clayton, Vic: Monash University Publishing, 2013), 150.

¹⁰ Raymond Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 40, 143.

¹¹ Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War*, 98.

¹² Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 253.

From April 1917 to April 1918, the casualties increased to more than 157,000, of which 19,000 were fatalities.¹³ These figures do not include the missing, nor do they illustrate the brutality and in some cases anonymity of such death. It has been estimated that every second Australian family was bereaved by the war.¹⁴ This was a trauma exacerbated by the lack of knowledge about the circumstances under which the death occurred, and without traditional family mourning rituals, funerals, graves and coffins.¹⁵ Moreover, the anticipation of mourning carried with it its own apprehensions and dislocation, as Joy Damousi notes.¹⁶ In this atmosphere, it was inevitable that doubts would arise and questions be asked about how long the carnage might go on and about the meaning and value of the sacrifice. Some who had initially endorsed the war effort became increasingly embittered by the tragic reality which now engulfed them.¹⁷ Thus tensions around conscription, religion, ethnicity and political affiliations were further fuelled by long-term anxiety and grief.

An analysis of Anzac commemorations during 1917 indicates that, on the whole, the numbers attending fell in comparison with 1916. Not surprisingly, crowds tended to be less enthusiastic about the patriotic pomp and ceremony and more reflective. Anzac Day did not attain a primacy on the commemorative calendar nationally, nor did governments endorse it as a public holiday. Moreover, many sought their own smaller memorial observances away from the dither of heavily-orchestrated official pro-war civic events. Thus Anzac Day witnessed other forms of commemoration and memorialising of the war dead in which loyalist pro-war oratory was conspicuously absent.

The conservative press tended to wax enthusiastic about the public commemorations in 1917 and 1918. Yet, reading between the lines of the reportage, there is evidence that, despite attending Anzac Day church services in large numbers, fewer Australians gathered at civic commemorations than in 1916. In

¹³ Extracted from Arthur Graham Butler, *The Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918* vol. 3 Special Problems and Services (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1940), 911. Table 40

¹⁴ K. S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1998), 97.

¹⁵ Patricia Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social and Cultural History, 1840-1918* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002), 305.

¹⁶ Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, ed. Jay Winter, *Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25.

¹⁷ Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 215.

Brisbane, the *Daily Standard* recorded that people gathered to watch a markedly smaller procession to the saluting base in Albert Square in 1917, but there is no indication of anything like the “50,000” that attended the 1916 event.¹⁸ The *Brisbane Courier* also noted of the same event: “Though the numbers participating were small compared with last Anzac Day, the display had equal significance and impressiveness ... there was none of the unseemly jostling and crowding that marred the proceedings last year.”¹⁹ The *National Leader* passed adverse comment on the crowd’s spirit as well as its numbers:

The crowd in the square was not over-enthusiastic when the returned men marched past in column of [sic] route; nor was much enthusiasm displayed as the troops marched down Queen-street. The procession was not so long as last year, and the comparative paucity of numbers was a serious reflection on the attitude of a certain section of the people towards recruiting.²⁰

The relatively large attendance at church services that morning, especially by women, compared with the relative paucity of numbers at the march, suggests that fewer citizens were in a mood for something that might look and feel like a patriotic, military recruiting exercise.²¹

It was a pattern echoed in the 1918 commemoration in Brisbane. Once again churches were packed in the morning, yet numbers were clearly down for the rain-affected march along Queen Street to Albert Square.²² A photo in the *Queenslander* shows crowds only three or four deep at the saluting base, while individuals behind them appear to be going about their daily business.²³ According to one report:

Though the activities of the city were largely pursued, a spirit of deep significance permeated everywhere ... Those who could not participate in the commemoration and other services by day in their thousands were in spirit with those who were doing so and at night they too, all paid their tributes of appreciation and of loyalty

¹⁸ *Daily Standard*, 26 April 1917, 8.

¹⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1917, 9.

²⁰ *National Leader*, 27 April 1917, 1.

²¹ On church attendance see *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1917, 11; *Daily Standard*, 25 April 1917, 5.

²² *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1918, 6.

²³ *Queenslander*, 4 May 1918, 23.

... An order had gone out that the trains should also stop for one minute but it would appear that it was not generally carried out.²⁴

This *Brisbane Courier* account of the day suggests that, rather than being Australia's foremost national celebration, Anzac Day rather had the feel of a 'business as usual' day.

Similar patterns were evident in some, though not all, other capital cities in 1917. Sydney reported larger crowds than in 1916.²⁵ As in Brisbane however, many reports noted that fewer recruits were available to march. The *Mercury* reported a more low-key commemoration in Hobart in 1917.²⁶ Moreover, a correspondent subsequently voiced his disappointment at the lack of enthusiasm in the crowd: "I called for three cheers for the returned soldiers as they passed, and led off, and later on another gentleman did the same, but both calls met with no response."²⁷ Inclement weather in Hobart on 25 April 1918 meant that significant parts of the programme had to be cancelled, yet the *Mercury* reported large numbers at a military display and wreath-laying ceremony in the Domain.²⁸ Crowds were also down in Adelaide and the *Advertiser* reported that event was "not as spectacular as others held on previous patriotic occasions."²⁹ This may also have been a result of unfavourable weather and the scheduling of a fund-raising "pageant", carnival and soldiers' parade for the following day.³⁰

Perth commemorations, too, evidence shifting patterns and emphases. In 1917, the *Daily News* reported that the half-day holiday which had been declared brought people onto the streets in the afternoon, though it did not state that they were there specifically to partake in Anzac commemoration.³¹ The *West Australian* made no reference to crowd numbers at all, merely noting that: "The procession, which was the central idea of the commemoration scheme, was in reality a triumphal march [and]... business houses, offices and schools were closed during the afternoon,

²⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1918, 7.

²⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1917.

²⁶ *Mercury*, 23 April 1917, 3.

²⁷ *Mercury*, 28 April 1917, 5.

²⁸ *Mercury*, 26 April 1918, 7.

²⁹ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1917, 7.

³⁰ *Advertiser*, 27 April 1918, 9.

³¹ *Daily News* (Perth), 25 April 1917, 8.

patriotic colours were worn by many people and children waved flags.”³² Yet in 1918 the tone of the Perth commemoration shifted. There was no military procession on the day itself. Rather, the observation emphasised solemn commemoration and remembrance.³³ On the following Sunday, there was a military march and a sports afternoon on Claremont Oval.³⁴ The growing pattern of ‘unfixing’ the day – separating the solemn aspect of the commemoration from the celebratory one, was evident here, as elsewhere.

Despite there being larger numbers of returned men available to march, these commemorations seem to have been characterised by smaller attendances and less enthusiastic, more reflective attendees. Doubtless they wished to honour and pay their respects to those who had died, returned or were still fighting on the battle fields. By 1918, however, many had lost enthusiasm for the version of Anzac Day which was delivered at the march and at night-time patriotic meetings. With the need to gather and grieve stronger than ever, church seemed to believers to be a more appropriate form of commemoration than any other on offer. This was so notwithstanding the fact that they continued to be subject to much of the same patriotic rhetoric from the pulpits, especially the Protestant ones.

In some regional centres Anzac Day in 1917 and 1918 was still something of a non-event. As noted above, McQuilton records that in the north-east part of Victoria the day meant little and was largely confined to schools.³⁵ In Braidwood, New South Wales, the local paper acknowledged that:

This day was allowed to pass over with but slight recognition. There was no public civic function of any kind to revive memories of the glorious deeds of our Australian soldier boys at the Gallipoli landing. In fact, but for a solitary Australian flag which flew from Mr. Dowell's store balcony, there was nothing to distinguish Anzac Day in Braidwood from any other day in the calendar.³⁶

³² *West Australian*, 26 April 1917, 7.

³³ *Daily News* (Perth), 25 April 1918, 4.

³⁴ *Sunday Times*, 28 April 1918, 1.

³⁵ McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga*, 112-13.

³⁶ *Braidwood Dispatch and Mining Journal*, 27 April 1917, 2.

Planning for the day obviously relied on a quorum of local citizens prepared to rally to the cause. That motivation clearly did not exist in some towns. Some newspapers reported very moderate attendance at planning meetings.³⁷ While it is easier for the historian searching databases of digitised newspapers to find evidence for the *presence* of commemoration of Anzac Day, than it is to find evidence for the *absence* of it, nevertheless for an event which now purported to be Australia's primary national occasion, the commemoration of Anzac Day was clearly not as universally mobilising across the nation as its advocates wished during the later war years.

Throughout 1917 and 1918, many insisted that Anzac Day was now the most significant date on the nation's commemorative calendar. It had now "grown in to Australia's great national day" reported the *Register* in 1917.³⁸ "The war, which has done so many other things, has also provided a National Day, which is likely to be set aside as long as Australia has a history," noted the *Mercury* in 1918.³⁹ Yet 25 April was not the only date on the calendar which witnessed patriotic celebration and memorialisation. "Australia Day" commemorations occurred annually and typically drew larger crowds in Sydney and throughout South Australia than did Anzac Day.⁴⁰ "Violet Day" continued to be commemorated in Adelaide. Across the nation, citizens organised and partook in commemorations on "Anniversary of the War Day", "Wattle Day", "AIF Memorial Day", "Win-the-War Day", "Memorial Day" and a variety of national days of prayer. In 1917 the *Mercury* commented on the proliferation of 'days': "The list of days is growing. Anzac Day is booked as a permanent institution. Australia Day and Labour Day are others. The difficulty with most people is to remember all the dates."⁴¹

In regional areas local events, concerns and imperatives sometimes served to outweigh the day's significance. In Northampton, Western Australia, it was reported that Anzac Day 1917 had been "crowded out by events of importance and interest, which took place on previous and succeeding days" – notably the local miners' "Eight Hours Day sports meeting and dance" and the Anglican Church "children's fancy

³⁷ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 21 April 1917, 4.

³⁸ *Register*, 24 April 1917, 4.

³⁹ *Mercury*, 24 April 1918, 4.

⁴⁰ *Register*, 29 July 1916, 7.

⁴¹ *Mercury*, 25 May 1917, 4.

dress ball”!⁴² In Orange, New South Wales, the commemoration was shifted because it clashed with the local show day.⁴³ While Anzac Day had seemingly achieved iconic national status in the minds of newspaper editors and politicians, this perspective did not always permeate local parochial imperatives and dispositions.

Alongside competition from local events, attendances may have fallen short of some expectations in 1917 and 1918 due to the lack of confirmation of the day’s status as a public holiday. There were certainly calls to governments, both federal and state, to gazette the day’s status thus.⁴⁴ As one correspondent put it: “In our schools we celebrate Saints Patrick, George, Andrew and David in honour of the patron saints of our home lands, and why should Australia not honour the greatest of all days in its existence – Anzac Day the same way?”⁴⁵ Such pleas usually met with resistance, however. Justifications given were similar to those offered in 1916 – that an Empire-wide commemorative day would be agreed upon when the war had finished and that the declaration of a public holiday would encourage “picnics and sports gatherings” rather than “sober and serious ceremonies”.⁴⁶ The result was a patchwork set of arrangements whereby public holidays, or part holidays, were declared in some districts. In Cairns there was controversy when the local Chamber of Commerce decided to observe a holiday on St George’s Day (23 April) instead of Anzac Day.⁴⁷ For some, old world ties counted as much, if not more, than any burgeoning sense of national realisation of the sort encompassed by Anzac.

Recruiters were often in the vanguard of those who lobbied for Anzac Day to be declared a public holiday. In Perth, in 1917, a deputation consisting of the members of the State Recruiting Committee, Frank Rea (Mayor of Perth), Charles Riley (Anglican Archbishop) and Lieutenant George Burkett (Returned Soldiers’ Association) approached the Premier, Frank Wilson, encouraging him to gazette the day as a public holiday. The deputation was unsuccessful. Wilson justified his denial of the request by stating that it was in accord with practice in the eastern states. He also reiterated the belief that, when the war was concluded, Britain would decide

⁴² *Geraldton Guardian*, 28 April 1917, 2.

⁴³ *Leader* (Orange), 26 April 1918, 6.

⁴⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 5 May 1917, 4; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 1918, 5.

⁴⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 17 April 1918, 9.

⁴⁶ *Daily News*, 11 April 1917, 8; *Mercury*, 24 April 1917, 4.

⁴⁷ *Cairns Post*, 22 April 1918, 4.

which holiday would be observed by the whole empire.⁴⁸ There were clear advantages for recruiters in getting eligible men out of their work places and in attendance at what these recruiters were calling their Anzac Day “pageant”. Yet, by the same token, the likelihood of being ‘named and shamed’ at recruiting rallies was hardly an incentive to those who had made their decision not to enlist, on whatever grounds.⁴⁹ They were pilloried in absentia at these events. As one Anzac Day speaker put it: “Someday Australia will mete out to her sons, who were blind when their eyes should have clearly seen the way they should go, the ostracism they merit.”⁵⁰ While public holidays were sometimes declared for the returned soldiers themselves, the uniform gazetting of Anzac Day as a public holiday in all states was not achieved until 1927.

Anzac Day observance in 1917 and 1918 took place as a set of small events rather than being consolidated into a one-size-fits-all commemoration. Locally nuanced events were better suited to the imperatives of those it served – especially the bereaved. Recruitment efforts drove away the mourners, who chose instead to memorialise and to pay tribute in smaller private ceremonies which eschewed the trappings of official recruiting marches, patriotic gatherings and, in some cases, Christian services. For example, in 1918, at Wattle Grove, a memorial space in the Adelaide parklands established in September 1915, individuals undertook their own private memorialisation simultaneously with the patriotic gathering in the Exhibition Hall. The *Register* recorded: “From early morning until late in the afternoon friends and relatives of soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice brought tokens of love and remembrance, in the form of beautiful wreaths and flower emblems, each bearing an inscription.”⁵¹ These were reflective, personal tributes. The Memorial acted as a shrine and as a surrogate grave-site for the bereaved. Clearly, many, especially women, took the day as an opportunity to remember and to pay their respects, but in such a way that dispensed with the patriotic brouhaha which accompanied the orchestrated official events.

⁴⁸ *Daily News* (Perth), 11 April 1917, 8.

⁴⁹ *Daily News* (Perth), 19 April 1917, 7.

⁵⁰ *Daily News* (Perth), 25 April 1917, 3.

⁵¹ *Register*, 26 April 1918, 9.

In Sydney, too, there were wreath-laying ceremonies and services which took place apart from the main commemoration. The Joan of Arc committee, an organisation set up by women to help the bereaved, hosted a luncheon event for women and children as it had done in 1917. Meanwhile, at noon, a group of “soldiers' wives, mothers and sweet hearts” gathered at the Lower Domain Gates to hear a short service by a military chaplain. According to one eyewitness:

The service was most simple, but it brought back to so many of us one of those cold mornings years ago, when we stood at the side of the barrier and whispered the last good bye, watching with an aching-heart our loved ones climbing up the sides of the great troopship.⁵²

Luckins’s research suggests that by 1918 there were a host of memorial gatherings in civic spaces such as parks, gardens, domains and sports grounds. These were unconsecrated spaces, yet there was, according to Luckins, “a sacredness in the shared sense of loss they created.”⁵³ Doubtless, some of those who undertook this private memorialising also attended church and/or the march and the patriotic meetings, given that such commemorations were not necessarily mutually exclusive. It seems clear, though, that recruiting marches and the patriotic rhetoric delivered at the meetings did not meet the needs of all. For many, Anzac Day was a day for mourning and reflection and the rhetoric of loyalist pro-war enthusiasts which accompanied its official iterations now brought little consolation.

A further fragmenting dynamic in Anzac commemoration was the trend to treat different facets of the commemoration over different days. As in 1916, in Melbourne, well-attended church services took place on the morning of 25 April itself, accompanied by a patriotic meeting which nearly filled the Town Hall. In cold, wet weather, on Friday 27 April, “Anzac Button Day” consisted of soldiers, both returned and new recruits, on a recruiting march through the streets, attended by more than 700 women and girls selling buttons and souvenirs.⁵⁴ As in some other states, this march/fund-raising event appears not to have been heavily subscribed by Melbourne

⁵² *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga Wagga), 3 May 1918, 3.

⁵³ Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss in the Great War* 96.

⁵⁴ *Argus*, 28 April 1917, 18.

residents, though the weather was doubtless a factor in this case. A similar programme of commemoration took place in Melbourne in 1918, with the morning church services supplemented by an over-subscribed combined service of prayer and intercession organised by the Day of Prayer Council in the Town Hall. This was to take the place of the patriotic public meetings which had occurred in previous years. Yet crowds also assembled for the fund-raising carnival and soldiers' parade on 26 April. In 1918, Sydney took a leaf from Melbourne's book and commemorated the event over a number of days. On 25 April itself, soldiers marched through the streets. On Friday 26 April there was a fund-raising "Red Cross Day" and 28 April was declared "Anzac Sunday".⁵⁵

When taken together, the sources cited above underline the point that the commemoration, as performed in patriotic marches and meetings, had less appeal than in 1916. Anzac Day failed to consolidate its early hold on Australians. Numbers fell and, not surprisingly, more people sought a reflective commemorative space on 25 April than in the previous year. Moreover, the commemoration started to subdivide. Sydney and Perth mimicked Melbourne and Hobart's decision to split the programme of the event over a number of different days. One day was for solemn reflective commemoration and the other (or sometimes others) for recruiting rallies and fund-raising. This splitting of the observance is evidence for its loss of efficacy. The day's organisers failed to reach a consensus about its core message. In short, Anzac as a unified 'centre' could not hold such contrary sets of purposes and sentiments that had been held together in earlier, headier times.

"Dancing on the graves of the heroes"?: the dissonant voices of Anzac

The fact that Anzac Day commemoration became increasingly disarticulated reinforces the idea that the respective imperatives which drove it – what Martin Crotty and Craig Melrose have called its "multiple valences" – were unable to be reconciled during the war years.⁵⁶ On the contrary, the imperatives to publicly acknowledge grief and also to galvanise the nation around the war effort became increasingly mutually exclusive. Yet, public iterations of Anzac Day commemoration

⁵⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1918, 12.

⁵⁶ Martin Crotty and Craig Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 96, no. 393 (2007): 680.

in 1917 and 1918 varied widely in their emphases, ranging from solemn funereal rituals to carnivals, pageants and sports days. What follows in this section is an analysis of debates and tensions around the most appropriate form that commemoration should take. Sometimes these issues were discussed peaceably and with mutual respect. On other occasions they generated deep indignation, rancour and anger, sentiments that were sharpened by the mounting influence of returned soldiers on the dynamics of commemorative organisation.

Planning committees often wrestled with these competing imperatives at a most basic organisational level. Fortunately for our historical records, in some regional centres, newspaper reporters were on hand to note the ebb and flow of the debates which occurred around 'what to do' on Anzac Day. For example, on the night of Monday 15 April 1918, a group of citizens gathered in the council chambers of Geraldton (Western Australia) to discuss plans for their forthcoming Anzac commemoration. The relatively comprehensive record of their discussion is both germane and instructive as an exemplar of the way in which multiple imperatives on Anzac commemoration jostled for space.

The evening's proceedings appear not to have been overly heated or vexatious in any way. It was simply documented as an occasion when various citizens had an opportunity to express their opinions on what should be emphasised on the day. The Mayor, Frank Green, began proceedings by arguing that the day should be devoted to fund-raising for the Red Cross. Any proceedings that supported that aim were most worthy. He made reference to Andrew Fisher's comment in August 1914, believing that they should "try to get as near as possible to the last shilling they had promised". The next speaker, Mr Thomas, believed that there should be no fund-raising but that day should revolve around patriotic addresses, both to school children and later to adult citizens in the Town Hall. The third speaker, Sergeant Odam, a returned soldier, told the meeting that the soldiers wanted to have a parade in the morning and a sports gathering in the afternoon. Returned soldiers, it seems, had no more need for patriotic speeches. Subsequently, Mr Mountain told the gathering that he believed that fund-raising and troop marches were incidental to proceedings and asked that the local ministers of religion be organised to give Anzac services, including a combined service in the Town Hall. The pragmatic Mr Fallowfield, perhaps keen to draw proceedings to an end, believed that they should

just do what they did last year. Mr Sinclair believed that the town band should get an opportunity to play, but also insisted: "To my mind on this particular day, it should not be composed of any individuals who should be, in my opinion, at the front. (Hear, hear.) ... The only band we should have on that day is one in which there are no shirkers. (Hear, hear.)". Mr Lupp sought to refute any implication of disloyalty among band members and reminded the meeting of the large number of volunteers to the AIF supplied by that august musical troupe. Next, the Reverend E.F. Cameron averred that "they should endeavour to make the celebration something in the nature of a revival of the war spirit, so that they could help the Old Country, which had done so much." Sergeant Pomeroy said that they should be making a determined effort to secure more recruits – he thought the best way would be to "enlist the help of the ladies."⁵⁷ And so on it went.

Here, in the council chambers of Geraldton in mid-April 1918, the gamut of competing imperatives of Anzac Day was articulated by citizens committed to planning an appropriate commemoration and who had clear ideas on what it was supposed to achieve – fund-raising, patriotic speeches designed to re-infuse listeners with spirit for the struggle, recruiting, solemn acknowledgement of the dead through religious services, street parades with a marching band and recreation through sports and games. To cater for all in one commemoration was challenging, not to say inherently paradoxical. Inevitably the programme that was agreed upon, like many Anzac Day programmes in 1918, consisted of a combination of events. The band played. The soldiers marched to the Town Hall, joined by the school children. There patriotic addresses were delivered, before a combined church service was held. What the returned soldiers did after the event was not reported.⁵⁸

By the close of 1916, there were more than 23,000 returned men in Australia.⁵⁹ As more men returned and organised over the following years they demanded a greater voice in the planning of the commemoration. As was evidenced at the Geraldton meeting, representation of returned men on committees meant that new and often competing imperatives were now brought to the organising table. While the Returned Soldiers' Association in New South Wales had nominally taken responsibility for the

⁵⁷ All the details of the debate are taken from, *Geraldton Guardian*, 13 April 1918, 2.

⁵⁸ *Geraldton Guardian*, 25 April 1918, 2.

⁵⁹ Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 237.

organisation of Anzac Day in 1916, it was a function that was performed in close liaison with government and ecclesiastical figures. In northern Tasmania in 1917 however, the event was organised autonomously by the local Returned Soldiers' Association itself. As a local newspaper commented, theirs was an "indisputable claim to make the arrangements for it".⁶⁰ In Newcastle in 1918, there were tensions between the local sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers' Association and local clergymen about who should conduct the ceremony from the balcony of the local Anzac Memorial Institute. One spokesperson for the soldiers, Mr Dark, noted:

The boys are deeply resentful ... and making no secret of the fact. Owing to the shabby treatment we received in former years, we (I say we, because I have always been of the boys) decided on this occasion to conduct a civic service on our own. But we had not gone far when evidences of ecclesiastical opposition obtruded. So we immediately switched off the churches and arranged for addresses from returned soldiers. The spirit of the day is already possessed by the boys, who will appreciate a heart-to-heart talk from their comrades.⁶¹

In Newcastle in 1918 then, Anzac Day was marred by disputes over 'turf'. With growing numbers, organisation and a sense of inalienable right earned by their service, soldiers, should they choose, could challenge the domain of churches and other organisers and look to assert their influence on commemorative practices.

Yet returned soldiers by no means spoke with one voice. Behind the firing line in Europe, Egypt and Palestine, Anzac Day had often been a time to 'let the hair down'. Sports events and concerts were common. Soldiers did not need to be reminded about death or duty. They dealt with its reality and consequences daily. In Narrandera (New South Wales) in 1917 two returned soldiers, Lieutenant Campbell and Mr Jack Culley, clashed with local organisers, including clergymen, when they set about attempting to organise a sports meeting and horse races on Anzac Day.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 23 April 1917, 4.

⁶¹ *Newcastle Sun*, 11 April 1918, 4.

⁶² *Narrandera Argus and Riverina Advertiser*, 20 April 1917, 2.

Unlike the returned men in Newcastle, these two failed to impose their will on the local Win-the-War Committee and they were forced to abandon their plans.⁶³

While some soldiers desired more of a celebratory approach to the event and sought acknowledgement of their efforts and their 'day in the sun', others insisted on the solemnity of the event even more assiduously than the most pious of clergymen. In the east Gippsland area of Victoria, for example, controversy broke out in April 1918 when, at a welcome home event for troops in Sale on the night of 24 April, a recruiting officer, Lieutenant Smith, a Gallipoli veteran, complained about a local dance that had been planned on the night of 25 April in nearby Longford: "He did not think there could be people so callous as to go merry-making on the night of a day that should always be revered with hallowed feelings by Australians for the consecrated dead that lay on Gallipoli. (Applause)"⁶⁴ Smith took it upon himself to go to the dance and berate those who were there. The following Saturday, he commented that he had been publicly criticised for doing so, but he continued to voice his disapprobation at the event: "There was only one Anzac Day and for people to indulge in dancing at a time when their comrades' blood was being spilt in the defence of Australia was base callousness."⁶⁵

Others, including the Anglican priest at Longford, the Reverend Godfrey Smith, also voiced their disapproval: "Longford had held itself up to obloquy in the eyes of the whole of Gippsland by virtually dancing on the graves of our heroes who had fallen on Gallipoli, in France, Egypt and Palestine".⁶⁶ These comments drew a barbed response from an organiser of the dance, Mr W. Brewer, who attacked the high-handed puritanism which in his view underwrote the priest's and the recruiter's invective, explaining that it had been a community event held to raise funds for a sick man in hospital who had six children who needed financial support:

During the war there has been altogether too much of the pharisaical self-advertising and self-exultation at the expense of other's feelings ... The proper form of celebration for Anzac Day

⁶³ *Narrandera Argus and Riverina Advertiser*, 24 April 1917, 2.

⁶⁴ *Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle*, 27 April 1918, 2.

⁶⁵ *Gippsland Times*, 29 April 1918, 3.

⁶⁶ *Gippsland Mercury*, 7 May 1918, 3.

is not fixed. In most places flags were flying at half mast and trade was going on as usual.⁶⁷

Brewer was correct. While the significance of Anzac Day may have been fixed in the minds of Lieutenant Smith and the Anglican churchmen concerned in the imbroglio, the fact was that in 1918, the “proper form of celebration” was *not* fixed. Had Brewer been able to read reports of Anzac Day commemorations from accounts in digitised newspapers, as the modern historian can, he would have been able to prove that point to his detractors with a number of key strokes. Despite the efforts of politicians, preachers, newspaper editors, recruiters and returned soldiers to assert their will and forge a commemoration that marched their own imperatives, by 1918 they had not yet achieved that aim.

The Longford controversy spilled over into the pages of many of the nearby regional newspapers and helped feed another controversy about another ‘Anzac Night’ dance – this time across the Victorian Alps in Benalla. Once again revellers were publicly castigated for their indulgence on the hallowed day. In this case, the revellers were returned soldiers and the dance was a fund-raiser to benefit the wounded. Their chief accuser signed herself, “A Soldier’s Mother”. She averred that it “was an insult to the mothers and relatives of those brave boys who fell on that never to be forgotten day.”⁶⁸ A returned Anzac replied:

I think if the people were a bit more broad-minded at the present crisis, we would not need recruiting staffs touring the country in pursuit of recruits; and if we want a Memorial Day for the fallen Anzacs, have it on the Sunday following the 25th April, but let us have *our day* [emphasis added] without any further comments.⁶⁹

This spokesman was thus making it very clear that, in his opinion, the day belonged to the Anzacs themselves. The letters continued to fill the correspondence columns of the *Benalla Standard* until they finally petered out or the editor declined to continue publishing them.

⁶⁷ *Gippsland Times*, 16 May 1918, 3.

⁶⁸ *Benalla Standard*, 30 April 1918, 3.

⁶⁹ *Benalla Standard*, 3 May 1918, 3.

These regional debates in Victoria and New South Wales did not concern politicians, generals, trade union leaders, archbishops or influential thinkers and writers. They did not speak of earth-shattering events. They were, at their core, small-town concerns. Yet each voice in these debates, the RSA representative in Newcastle, Mr Dark, Lieutenant Campbell and Mr Culley in Narrandera, Lieutenant Smith, the Reverend Godfrey Smith, the "Soldier's Mother" and the returned Anzac who responded to her, spoke with heartfelt conviction and authority. These debates yield insights into an issue that is central to the making of this chapter. To whom did Anzac commemoration belong? Was it the returned soldier who had sacrificed so much? Was it the grieving mother who had also sacrificed? Was it the recruiter or the clergyman or the fund-raising local government official keen to raise community support for the wounded and their kin? Each brought to the commemoration their own imperatives. Through that push and pull, there developed in 1917 and 1918, a commemoration that, in trying to meet everyone's needs, was doomed to fall short of expectations.

Anzac politicised

Doubtless the tensions played out in the debates discussed above were exacerbated by the fact that, during 1917 and 1918, the nation was in crisis. There is some consensus among historians that those tensions in Australian society already evident by April 1916 had, two years later, created a home front social fabric rent by divisions and hostilities. By April 1918, Australia was a society riven by ideological, industrial, social and sectarian conflict.⁷⁰ Martin Crotty argues that "individual trauma fed into social trauma ... as people sought scapegoats for their misery and outlets for their frustration."⁷¹ That contestation we have seen played out in the pages of the *Gippsland Times*, the *Gippsland Mercury* and the *Benalla Standard* in April and May 1918 is testament to the accuracy of that assessment.

⁷⁰ Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18*.; Marilyn Lake, *A Divided Society: Tasmania During World War I* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1975).; Joan Beaumont, "The Politics of a Divided Society," in *Australia's War, 1914-18*, ed. Joan Beaumont (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1995).

⁷¹ Martin Crotty, "25 April 1915 Australian Troops Land at Gallipoli: Trial, Trauma and the 'Birth of the Nation'," in *Turning Points in Australian History*, ed. Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 105.

The war proved a grave economic strain, especially on the working classes. Inflation was rampant and wage increases did not keep pace. Many businesses made significant profits from the war and the war profiteer was consistently reviled in the labour press. Negative sentiments – a growing war-weariness and worker dissatisfaction with falling living standards, soaring prices and rents – found expression not just in a rhetoric of discontent but in the reality of industrial militancy. The great strike of August 1917, originating in the New South Wales railways, took in 173,000 workers nationally and resulted in the loss of five million days of work in key industries.⁷² While the strike collapsed after three months, with the unions involved being deregistered and their leaders charged with conspiracy, the long-term effect was to further polarise the labour movement and to increasingly radicalise its industrial wing, especially in New South Wales.⁷³

Such militancy was doubtless further inspired by the ‘success’ of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in late 1917 and the belief that it heralded an end to the fighting.⁷⁴ Pacifist appeals to the “broad highway of international brotherhood” were now more plausible and had significantly more appeal than they had in 1914, 1915 or 1916.⁷⁵ As E.J. Kavanagh, the secretary of the New South Wales Labor Council put it, “the war we are waging is the great class war”.⁷⁶ Such declarations collided head on with the cult of Anzac and were perceived to be inflammatory at best, and certainly transgressive for the day’s advocates. Meanwhile, significant factions in the labour movement were morphing from an anti-conscription position to anti-war one.⁷⁷

The issues were so divisive that Tasmania’s labour newspaper, the *Daily Post* noted in October 1917, that “today Australia is like an armed camp of two opposing factions”.⁷⁸ Anzac Day rhetoric in 1917 and 1918 acknowledged these divisions and was often strident in its calls for national unity in the face of such discord. “The

⁷² Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, 12.

⁷³ Dan Coward, "Crime and Punishment," in *Strikes: Studies in Twentieth Century Australian Social History*, ed. John Iremonger, John Merritt, and Graeme Osborne (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1973), 61, 68, 77.

⁷⁴ Frank Farrell, *International Socialism & Australian Labour: The Left in Australia 1919-1939* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1981), 22.

⁷⁵ *Australian Worker*, 31 May 1917, 7; 28 February 1918, 1.

⁷⁶ Cited in Coward, "Crime and Punishment," 77.

⁷⁷ D. J. Murphy, "Queensland," in *Labor in Politics: The State Labor Parties in Australia 1880-1920*, ed. D. J. Murphy (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975), 201; Murray Perks, "Labour and the Governor-General's Recruiting Conference," *Labour History* 34, no. May (1978): 44.

⁷⁸ Cited in Lake, *A Divided Society: Tasmania During World War I*, 115.

second anniversary of Anzac Day finds Australia in the throes of political turmoil,” reported the *Queenslander* in April 1917.⁷⁹ At St Paul’s Cathedral in Melbourne, Anglican Archbishop Lowther Clarke told his Anzac Day congregation: “In Australia there is strife everywhere. The conditions of social organisation had long been simply a state of organised warfare, class against class, party against party.”⁸⁰ Society magazine *Queensland Figaro* acknowledged the need for reunification of the nation. Its editorial on the 1917 Anzac Day emphasised the recuperative capacity of that commemoration in these terms:

The celebration will be one that should appeal to the national instinct of a brave race, and let us hope that many of the misunderstandings generated by the Conscription Referendum will be forgotten for all time, and that the memories of the mighty deeds of the men of Anzac will overcome everything and reunite all classes of the people of Australia ... Surely Anzac Day should provide an opportunity for all sections to forget the past and resolve collectively to help to the utmost of Australia’s power in the gigantic task of bringing the great war to a conclusion favourable to the allies.⁸¹

This was an appeal to a shared national pride in the Gallipoli experience to mobilise, to overcome and to heal the social trauma of the recent past associated with the conscription referenda, industrial turmoil and sectarian tensions. Yet it demanded ongoing commitment to the war effort. Some claimed that Anzac had already achieved this outcome. “The immortal memory of Anzac Day unites the Australian people in a common sentiment without the aid of negotiation or argument” insisted the *Age* in 1918.⁸² Anzac as a balm to national wounds, a commemoration which united Australians in their grief, was thus a powerful trope in the discourse.

Despite the rhetoric, the fault lines created by ideological, class and sectarian tensions were not repaired, but rather reinforced by Anzac commemoration. The galvanising of the nation in the struggle to win the war remained a primary message

⁷⁹ *Queenslander*, 21 April 1917, 20.

⁸⁰ *Age*, 26 April 1917, 7.

⁸¹ *Queensland Figaro*, 21 April 1917, 10.

⁸² *Age*, 26 April 1918, 6.

of the commemoration. As in 1916, Anzac Day rhetoric came as a package. It allowed no space for those who needed to grieve for and honour lost loved ones and yet were exhausted by, sceptical of, or disillusioned about “the gigantic task of bringing the Great War to a conclusion favourable to the allies”. Despite the *Barrier Miner*’s claims that “there is nothing political about the Anzac service”, this was hollow rhetoric, as the day became an occasion to reinforce an ideological position around recruitment and conscription, to affirm the politics of the Nationalist Party and to drive a deeper wedge into sectarian divisions.⁸³

Despite the inordinate degree of social pressure placed upon “eligibles” to rally to the flag and replace the casualties, voluntary enlistment maintained a consistent downward trajectory throughout 1916, 1917 and 1918. As they had done in 1916, recruiters used Anzac Day as a tool. Though the Hughes government made no clear stipulations as to the format of Anzac Day commemorations in its correspondence, other than writing to mayors of the capital cities requesting military parades, the dominant imperatives of the 1917 and 1918 commemorations were nonetheless made quite clear.⁸⁴ In April 1917, the prime minister delivered his message:

Let us, my fellow-citizens, resolve that we for whom these gallant soldiers fought, endured and died shall do nothing unworthy of them and the great cause for which they fought. Let us send to them across the leagues of ocean the message that Australia, united by the cement of their blood and sacrifice, stands united behind them, wishing them God-speed and a speedy and safe return to their beloved country.⁸⁵

There was the familiar eulogising of the achievements of the AIF and ongoing mobilisation around the war effort. A significant addition, however, was the chimera of unity behind the cause and an entreaty to the populace to do “nothing unworthy” of the Anzacs. The rhetorical edifice was beginning to show cracks along fault-lines of contestation, in this instance with the implication that voting against conscription had, in fact, been an act “unworthy” of the diggers. Speaking at the Brisbane Anzac Day meeting in Exhibition Hall, Governor-General Ronald Munro-Ferguson told his

⁸³ *Barrier Miner*, 28 April 1917, 4.

⁸⁴ *Argus*, 17 April 1917, 10.

⁸⁵ *Argus*, 25 April 1917, 9.

audience: “A nation will go up higher or go down lower by the simple test of the response made by her sons to the tap of drum and by her daughters to the call for national service.”⁸⁶ In neither Hughes’s nor Munro-Ferguson’s words was there recognition of loss and trauma, though in 1918 Hughes did request that churches conduct services on the day.

After another electoral defeat for conscription in 1917, the calls for more recruits became increasingly urgent in the wake of the success of the German Spring Offensive in March 1918. The timing, for Anzac Day, was propitious. Both Defence Minister, George Pearce, and Recruiting Minister, Richard Orchard, released Anzac Day statements in 1918, stressing the need for more men and eschewing any reference to remembrance of lives lost in the cause.⁸⁷ Once again Munro-Ferguson, in his message, made a call to arms, devoid of any expression of lament for lives lost and bodies irreparably damaged, or of any acknowledgement of the pain of loved ones. The bereaved were merely enjoined into ongoing mobilisation on the home front. The governor-general stated outright that Anzac Day would be an “empty celebration, unworthy of the day we commemorate if unattended by a great improvement in recruiting”.⁸⁸

In their urgency to deploy Anzac Day in the work of enlistment, it was as if the nation’s political leaders had forgotten one of the commemoration’s fundamental imperatives. Unsurprisingly, local Anzac Day speakers echoed the same sentiments at their events. In 1917 prominent Cairns lawyer, A.J.P. MacDonnell, told his audience: “We should not lament for the dead. We should lament for those people who are fit to go and who are lagging behind their mother’s apron strings”.⁸⁹ New South Wales’ champion recruiter, Captain Ambrose Carmichael, spoke at the Tamworth Anzac Day event in 1918, telling his audience that: “His sympathies did not go out so much to the men and women who had sent their boys and had lost them. His sympathies were with those who had sons who could but did not go. He congratulated the parents of those boys who had fallen at the front.”⁹⁰ Clearly the day’s imperatives had shifted from where they were in 1916. The needs of the

⁸⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1917, 9.

⁸⁷ *Age*, 26 April 1918, 7.

⁸⁸ *Age*, 25 April 1918, 6.

⁸⁹ *Northern Herald*, 27 April 1917, 54.

⁹⁰ *Daily Observer*, 26 April 1918, 5.

bereaved were largely ignored here. This was almost exclusively about mobilisation of the home front and a far cry from Garland's grand vision of an Australian "All Souls Day" that John Moses alludes to in his work.⁹¹

Gallipoli remained an instrument of political rhetoric invoked as the *cause célèbre* at recruiting rallies during 1917 and 1918, with the call to arms continuing to be the primary message of most wartime Anzac Day events. National recruiting conferences were held in Melbourne in April 1917 and again in April 1918. Each produced declarations of the importance of Anzac Day in the national recruiting endeavours.⁹² Commemorations in 1917 and 1918 were an occasion for the familiar parade of recruiting appeals witnessed in earlier times. In Brisbane, a "recruiting tramcar" followed the march in 1917 bearing the messages "100 Passengers Wanted" and "Coo-ee – All Men This Way".⁹³ At other events, horses were led with empty saddles, sometimes by women, while men were invited to fill them.⁹⁴ Newspaper editorials expressed concerns that the qualities of "patriotism" and "military ardour" had "degenerated and died a natural death".⁹⁵

Some Anzac Day rallies had all the hallmarks of revivalist evangelical gatherings. An account of the event in Maitland in 1918 is particularly instructive on this count. The *Maitland Weekly Mercury* reported that, after an introduction by the mayor and the singing of patriotic songs, Miss Evans was given the platform. "Do you know that we have the enemy in our midst to-day", she trumpeted. "Let us wake up and face these people. We cannot prevent the war but we can prevent defeat." The next speaker was Private McFarland, who noted that he had been a union organiser before the war but now, as a 'repentant sinner', had shifted his loyalties:

'Is there an eligible in the crowd', he appealed, 'who will come along and help my mates on the other side.' Immediately there was a response, amidst a scene of great cheering. Mr. Bradshaw, who was seated at the piano, struck up a patriotic tune, and

⁹¹ John A. Moses, "Anzac Day as Australia's All Souls' Day: Canon David John Garland's Vision for Commemoration of the Fallen," in *Christian Mission in the Public Square* (Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture Canberra 2008), 5-6.

⁹² *Register*, 5 April 1917, 8.

⁹³ *Daily Mail*, 26 April 1917, 7.

⁹⁴ *Argus*, 28 April 1917, 18; *Geelong Advertiser*, 13 April 1917, 2; *Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer*, 18 May 1917, 2.

⁹⁵ *Examiner* (Launceston), 24 April 1918, 4.

during the excitement, another young man stepped forward towards the platform.⁹⁶

The inclusion of a female speaker at this event is telling. Typically, women were conspicuous by their absence from the speakers' platform at Anzac Day commemorations, yet the influence of attractive young females in getting young men to don the uniform was well-appreciated by recruiters. It was an indication that recruiters were prepared to pull out all stops to boost their figures. It was a sign also, that the distinctions between Anzac Day and any other recruiting rally were becoming increasingly blurred.

Elsewhere, rejected volunteers were asking to be allowed to march with the soldiers. One correspondent wrote to the *Brisbane Courier* in April 1917: "If the authorities will grant us this small favour, the general public will be able to see who are the real 'shirkers,' as no doubt, on such an occasion, even men who have volunteered are looked on with much scorn."⁹⁷ Implicit in this request is an appreciation that the "eligibles" were likely to be "looked on with scorn" at an Anzac Day commemoration. As a loyal supporter of the war, this correspondent needed to identify himself clearly at an Anzac Day parade as one who was a 'supporter' of the event and not an 'opponent'. The Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Alderman Oates, while recruiting at an Anzac commemoration in Sydney in 1917, vigorously confronted, berated and harangued "eligibles" in the crowd because they declined to enlist immediately. The situation almost descended into violence and recruiters had to be restrained.⁹⁸ Anzac Day was clearly no place for the faint-hearted who might feel ambivalent about rallying to the flag. That said, the question of who or what Australians should 'recognise' as an enemy was a vexed and divisive one. The notion of the 'enemy in our midst', as espoused by the speaker in Maitland, shatters any illusion of national unity around Anzac commemoration. Speakers at these events acknowledged division. Participants recognised it and indeed, it seems, enforced it with moral coercion. Anzac Day in 1917 and 1918 was no place for a fit-looking, healthy male out of uniform or who did not wear some form of badge of allegiance.

⁹⁶ *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 4 May 1918, 9.

⁹⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, 13 April 1917, 7.

⁹⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1917, 8.

Politicians and preachers metaphorically linked arms in their determination to occupy the moral high ground of righteous indignation about the nation's seeming lack of ardour for the struggle. Australians were 'shamed' by the message, delivered by Hughes in 1917, that British troops had to replace Australians in the front line for three months because the AIF casualties could not be replaced by new recruits. "Australia was in default", fumed the *Brisbane Courier*.⁹⁹ Anglican Bishop Radford in Goulburn insisted that: "This deplorable fact ... should have some more tangible effect than to make those who remained in Australia proud of themselves".¹⁰⁰ Yet the question of who might take responsibility for the defence of the empire had still more threatening implications for some. Speaking at an Adelaide commemoration in 1917, Colonel Stanley Weir noted that:

If they allowed the coloured races to fight their battles for them, could they, with any sense of British fairplay, close the door against them when the war was over? (Cries of 'No.')

No, they could not. They could combat that by sending white men from Australia.¹⁰¹

This was an appeal to unity of a very different kind.

Gallipoli continued to be mobilised in a political struggle against those who had opposed conscription. The debates around two failed conscription plebiscites in 1916 and 1917 polarised the nation and descended into rancour, hysteria and public violence. Evans concludes that the apparent consensus of late 1914 "now hung in tatters, torn roughly apart by the ethnic, class and sectarian hatreds which the referendum had unleashed and strengthened".¹⁰² The legacy of this polarity was such that the cause of voluntary enlistment could no longer be espoused in anything approaching a milieu of respect and acknowledgement of political difference. Rather, it turned into a witch hunt, with Anzac Day becoming a strategic weapon in that rhetorical assault. The day was now an occasion for public recriminations and the passing of moral judgments about the nation's choices on that issue in 1916 and in 1917.

⁹⁹ *Brisbane Courier*, 25 April 1917, 6.

¹⁰⁰ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 26 April 1917, 2.

¹⁰¹ *Register*, 26 April 1917, 9.

¹⁰² Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18*, 104.

Most Anzac Day spokespersons adopted an unequivocal position on conscription. From the editorial column, the platform and the pulpit, conscription's advocates hurled invective at those who had chosen to actively oppose it and, by implication, all of those who had voted against it. In 1917, Fred R. Brown, a spokesman for the Returned Soldiers and Patriot's National Political League, insisted that:

The view that Anzac Day should be a day for humiliation and prayer only, does not, in our opinion, cover the whole ground. On that day Australia received her first real baptism of blood and became a nation, and on that account Anzac Day should be a day of rejoicing as well as prayer. The day that should be set apart as a day of prayer and humiliation is Conscription Day, October 28, when a few misguided politicians so worked on the credulity of the masses that Australia's name was dishonored and her flag trailed in the mud of shame.¹⁰³

For loyalists, the memory of conscription's defeat was etched indelibly in their political consciousness. On 25 April 1918 a Melbourne newspaper, in its Anzac Day editorial, analysed the causes of the defeat of the conscription plebiscite in these terms: "We know that the cause was due to political prejudices, to selfish unconcern, to covert and active disloyalty, and to the craven fear of those who dreaded the personal risks of war. These are not motives of which we can be proud."¹⁰⁴ Those who had trailed the Australian flag in the "mud of shame" or who felt "craven fear" of the risks that fighting involved, would likely be absent from any event in which they were so castigated. Such invective, of course, made no allowance for the fact that a significant proportion of serving men in the AIF voted against conscription. Indeed, Keith Murdoch reported to Hughes that voting on the front of Europe was three to one against conscription and that the army's majority had been carried by troops in the Middle East, further behind the lines in Europe and in training in England.¹⁰⁵ Such high-handed moral judgements around conscription passed down by Anzac Day speakers made no allowance for the complexities of the issues which informed

¹⁰³ *National Leader* (Brisbane), 20 April 1917, 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Leader* (Melbourne), 4 May 1918, 31.

¹⁰⁵ L.L. Robson, *The First A.I.F.: A Study of Its Recruitment, 1914-1918* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970), 119.

the votes in 1916 and in 1917. Nor did they allow for expressions of compassion or support for those who grieved for loved ones killed and maimed in battle.

Anzac Day attacks on anti-conscriptionists were more than matched by censorious moral judgements about those who chose not to volunteer. In Young (New South Wales) the Reverend J.H. Somerville told his Methodist congregation:

The Government could find more cold-footed slackers at the stadiums and racecourses to the square yard than anywhere else on earth. This should not be tolerated. They are selfish, soulless degenerates, who were not fit to blacken the boots of the brave men in the trenches.¹⁰⁶

At an Anzac Day event in Kalgoorlie Town Hall, Anglican Archbishop Cyril Golding-Bird told his audience of a female parishioner who had fainted when he had come to visit her, expecting that he brought dire news about her son at the battle front. "Recovering, she said that she thought he had come to tell her of the death of her son, but that she would rather hear, that her boy had been killed than lived to think he had not gone to the war."¹⁰⁷ This was a moral tale. A decision not to partake fully in the prosecution of the war was deemed to be a moral failing and an abrogation of all that Anzac had come to represent.

The decision to vote against conscription and/or not to enlist was held to be a disavowal of all that was righteous and decent about the Anzacs' achievements. Such pronouncements continued to be delivered at Anzac Day events in 1918. In Adelaide, Senior Chaplain Ashley Teece told the audience at the commemoration that: "He did not mourn with those whose relatives were dead; he rather mourned with those who, having sons with no legitimate hindrance, refused the challenge of their country and declined to serve her."¹⁰⁸ The editor of the *Zeehan and Dundas Herald* expressed the same sentiment with less vitriol and rather more condescension:

It [the Empire]... can in such a spirit afford to smile in pity upon those of its obviously misguided and clearly disloyal elements

¹⁰⁶ *Young Witness*, 27 April 1917, 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Western Argus*, 1 May 1917, 8.

¹⁰⁸ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1918, 7.

whose objects and efforts are not devoted to the common cause, and who, blind to the proximity and relationship of great causes, acknowledge no debt to any people or any nation contending for the freedom of the world.

Thus dismissed, those less than fully committed to the nation's war aims could be ignored when "looking back with pride" at the martial and moral achievements of the Anzacs.¹⁰⁹ Indeed the moral crusaders of Anzac Day were given ample opportunity to deride more than just the shirkers for their impious ways. The Reverend Henry Howard proclaimed from the pulpit of the Pirie Street Methodist Church in Adelaide:

Until they put themselves right with God by bending their necks to the yoke of His will, their prayers for victory or peace were an impertinence. If, however, they humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God, he would heal their backsliding and firmly set their feet upon the upward way.¹¹⁰

Such was the rhetoric of Anzac that, despite the manifestly horrific consequences of the conflict, some voices were still emphasising the war's redemptive qualities. In 1917 the Reverend J. Tarn told his Penrith audience: "War is not all loss. To some extent it seemed necessary to rouse the very youth of our Empire from weakness, softness, and too much love of ease, pleasure and sport."¹¹¹ Likewise, New South Wales' erstwhile recruiter, Captain Carmichael, could still insist that he "did not think war was an unmitigated evil for it was the fiery furnace which purged the nations".¹¹² In 1918, a newspaper editorial put it this way: "This burning, raging, crucible of war does serve as a purifier; it does enable the weaker and meaner and baser products of civilisation to be differentiated clearly and unmistakably from the rest."¹¹³

Such declarations might possibly be excusable in the lead up to war, but this revivalist "purifying" and "purging of nations" had been enacted at an appalling human cost. The bereaved had every right to feel aggrieved and offended by such rhetoric. The prospect of national or moral redemption was likely cold comfort to the

¹⁰⁹ *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 25 April 1918, 2.

¹¹⁰ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1918, 9.

¹¹¹ *Nepean Times*, 28 April 1917, 5.

¹¹² *Daily Observer*, 26 April 1918, 5.

¹¹³ *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 23 April 1918, 2.

grieving widow, mother, father, sibling or loved one. Moreover, at Anzac Day the 'differentiation' being made between those who had charged up the cliffs at Gallipoli or were fighting in Palestine and the Western Front, and those who were absenting themselves from the struggle, was palpable. The Anzacs epitomised all that was morally worthy. The shirker represented all that was morally reprehensible. Anzac Day in 1917 and 1918 was as much about berating the "shirker" as it was about venerating the digger.

These events were occasions to deliver and reaffirm moral lessons about appropriate forms of patriotic behaviour. Had they attended Anzac Day commemorations – either civil or in church services – the sixty percent of eligible Australian men who chose not to volunteer could expect to be subject to censure and derision.¹¹⁴ There was nothing inviting or inclusive about this discourse. Anzac Day was an occasion for the articulation of an unmitigated and definitive political and moral binary. Fighting for the nation and the empire was virtuous and noble. Not doing so was cowardly, selfish, indulgent and immoral. There were no grey areas and little space discursively for consoling the bereaved or managing the grief of any whose ideological position was not firmly aligned with the pressmen, preachers, teachers and politicians delivering the judgements. Anzac Day in 1917 and 1918 was thoroughly appropriated by the forces of pro-war loyalists to pursue their own ends.

As a recruiting exercise, however, Anzac Day was markedly less than satisfactory. Despite the energy poured into the promotion of enlistment on Anzac Day and the moral pressure brought to bear, the results remained disappointing for the nation's recruiters. In Martin Place, in Sydney, it was reported that, despite addresses from returned men "in rugged soldierly style", their exhortations had little effect. Nonetheless, in the quest for a positive spin on events, the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that "there is no doubt that their appeals found a mark in some of the young men who walked away after the meeting to think it over."¹¹⁵ The *Age* reported the failure of the 1917 Melbourne event to garner adequate recruits, despite the efforts of "stalwart Light Horsemen" and other recruiters calling for men.¹¹⁶ The *Argus*

¹¹⁴ John McQuilton, "Enlistment for the First World War in rural Australia: the case of north-eastern Victoria, 1914-1918," *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no.33 (2000).

¹¹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1917, 3.

¹¹⁶ *Age*, 28 April 1917, 13.

pointed out that, state-wide, only 301 recruits had joined during “Anzac Week.”¹¹⁷ While empty saddles had been filled by riders on the march, very few of these men actually passed subsequent medical tests.

Many of those who “volunteered” on Anzac Day were men who had been previously rejected or were already discharged. In fact, Anzac Day gatherings were often conspicuous for the absence of young eligible men. Women and children dominated the crowds.¹¹⁸ Captain Baird, the Secretary of Victoria’s Recruiting Committee, openly acknowledged the failure of Anzac Day as a recruiting tool. “The best methods of obtaining recruits were by means of personal approach by returned soldiers and the bringing to bear of the influence of women,” he announced.¹¹⁹ In Renmark, South Australia, in May 1917, the local press analysed the figures and concluded that: “The demonstrations on Gallipoli Day, Anzac Day, and the Win-the-War day seem to have been useless for the purpose of securing recruits,” also concluding that personal canvassing from recruiting officers was more likely to garner more positive results.¹²⁰

Party politics

Despite acting as a rallying point for these renewed enlistment initiatives, Anzac Day in 1917 lacked a convincing, affirming rhetoric of national cohesion. It was much more a “Nationalist” event than it was a national one. In 1917, the event preceded the federal election by less than two weeks. As the self-proclaimed “Win-the-War Party” this was an opportunity for political campaigning for the Nationalists. In Fremantle on 25 April 1917 Defence Minister George Pearce made Anzac Day the centrepiece of a campaign speech. Now, like other conservatives, he insisted that Labor was responsible for the “party politics” which impeded the nation’s full commitment to the war. He told his audience: “If Germany won this war, there would be no parties in Australia – Liberal or Labor. Therefore, it behoved them to drop all their party differences.”¹²¹ Manifestly, neither Pearce nor his Nationalist colleagues

¹¹⁷ *Argus*, 1 May 1917, 8.

¹¹⁸ *Border Watch*, 28 April 1917, 6.

¹¹⁹ *Argus*, 1 May 1917, 8.

¹²⁰ *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, 25 May 1917, 5.

¹²¹ *Daily News* (Perth), 26 April 1917, 6.

had sought an end to party differences. Rather, they sought the defeat of Labor at the polls and invoked and appropriated the Anzac story to achieve that end.

Critiques of Labor were not limited to Nationalist candidates. The conservative press also used Anzac Day to point accusing fingers at the labour movement, with many Anzac Day editorials in 1917 featuring stinging attacks.¹²² Clergymen speaking at Anzac Day events also joined in the campaign to impugn Labor's role during the conscription campaigns. In Brisbane, Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel A.C. Plane (who also ran as Nationalist candidate for the electorate of Brisbane) attacked the credibility of Labor parliamentarians, John Fihelly and William Finlayson, at an Anzac Day gathering in Brisbane, telling his audience that "the sooner the disloyal element was purged from Australia the better it would be for Australia. If he got in on May 5 — and he believed he was going in — the men who were loyal to the Empire and to the Union Jack would get his wholehearted support."¹²³ Tensions were evident at the most mundane local level also. In Muswellbrook (NSW) Anzac Day organisers chastised the local branch of the Parliamentary Labor League for not giving over their booking of the local hall for the Anzac Day commemoration.¹²⁴

Clearly the day's promoters viewed anything that looked like less than total commitment to the Anzac ideal as suspicious, tarred with the brush of disloyalty. Gerhard Fischer argues that the stigmatisation of anti-conscriptionists, radical socialists, unionists and pacifists as "enemies of the state" was designed to strengthen the internal cohesion of Australian society.¹²⁵ It was this ideology that was buttressed by the Anzac legend and peddled vociferously at Anzac Day events. No discursive space was allowed for an alternative rendering of a Gallipoli narrative as Hughes's Nationalists appropriated the legend for their own purposes.

Such was the success of the newly-formed Nationalist Party's ideological appropriation of the commemoration that in a speech delivered in Sydney on the Thursday prior to the election, Navy Minister Joseph Cook petitioned electors to

¹²² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1917, 10; *Cairns Post*, 25 April 1917, 4; *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga Wagga), 26 April 1917, 2.

¹²³ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1916, 6; *National Leader* (Brisbane), 27 April 1917, 5.

¹²⁴ *Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 28 April 1917, 2.

¹²⁵ Gerhard Fischer, "'Negative Integration' and an Australian Road to Modernity: Interpreting the Australian Homefront Experience in World War I," *Australian Historical Studies* 26, no. 104 (1995): 467.

“Make Saturday Another Anzac Day”. While the newspaper reporting of that speech gives no indication of precisely what Cook meant by this, it nonetheless functioned as a battle cry for the pro-war conservative forces to take to the polls. There is no indication that a Labor opponent dared make the obvious riposte that the Dardanelles campaign had been a failure. To remind electors of that would not have been a vote-winner. Cook’s was “a call to every patriot” to emulate the Anzacs and storm the heights of Labor disloyalty and white-anting of the war effort. Winning the election, like Gallipoli, was a further demonstration of doing one’s duty for the Empire.¹²⁶

While its opponents sought to position the labour movement in opposition to Anzac, labour and the working class had to deal with the difficult matter of how they positioned themselves. The labour movement, along with Australian society in general, polarised during the 1916 conscription referendum, and the gap widened further throughout 1917. The Labor Party formally split in January 1917 with Hughes and a significant number of followers joining with the conservatives to form a Nationalist coalition which went to the polls in May 1917 seeking re-election. Mounting working-class radicalisation and militancy brought even greater division between the parliamentary and industrial wings of the labour movement.¹²⁷ While some Labor politicians continued to speak on Anzac Day platforms and endorse the day’s values, most did not. Trade union representatives also absented themselves.

While rarely taking part in Anzac Day events in 1917 and 1918, Labor politicians declined to critique the event.¹²⁸ Yet no incompatible and fundamental ideological breach between Anzac and labour occurred, nor did a radical transformation of labour discourse take place. Rather, Anzac produced a shift in the labour movement’s rhetoric around war and nationalism. Whereas one might expect contestation of the inherent militarism of the digger mythology, the labour movement frequently constituted itself in such a way as to seek inclusion in it. Labour was determined to resist any monopoly of Anzac by the conservatives. Rather, it insisted that the “worker/warrior” was the hero in the mythological nation-building narrative,

¹²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 May 1917, 6.

¹²⁷ Robert Bollard, “The “Active Chorus”: The Great Strike of 1917 in Victoria,” *Labour History* 90, no. May (2006): 77.

¹²⁸ An exception here is in Brisbane where the Premier and some state ministers typically appeared on the platform.

emphasising the voluntarist and democratic elements of the burgeoning legend. Thus many labour newspapers reported positively on Anzac Day commemorations.¹²⁹

Radical publications for the period give ample justification for expecting that the Anzac commemoration, a centrepiece event for the affirmation of Australian nationalist and pro-war aspiration, would be very much in the critical cross-hairs of any erstwhile card-carrying socialist editor.¹³⁰ While the claims of a number of historians may be justified that Anzac Day was subject to critique by militant socialists and pacifists (they were sometimes, though not always, one and the same), this seems to apply to a later period.¹³¹ Closer scrutiny of the radical press during the war years provides little or no evidence for such a claim.¹³² Throughout the period, the radical socialist press sustained a vigorous critique of Australia's involvement in the conflict around such issues as economic hardship, war-profiteering, militarism, government authoritarianism and the need for class solidarity. By mid-1916 these journals found common cause, in labour publications, around conscription. In a society torn by political and social division, industrial turmoil and sectarian difference, and strained by war-weariness, it was a critique which gained momentum the longer the war continued. Radical socialist ideology became increasingly influential as the industrial wing of the labour movement voiced its discontent with the parliamentary wing. Yet, despite the labour movement's increased adoption of a trenchant anti-war position in the wake of the conscription campaigns, there is little or no evidence on offer of a sustained critique of the Anzac ideal or engagement with the issue in any way.

¹²⁹ Mark Cryle, "'Natural Enemies'?: Anzac and the Left to 1919," *Labour History*, no. 106 (2014).

¹³⁰ Left-wing political ideas of a more radical ilk were also promoted by a range of publications emanating from avowedly socialist and syndicalist organisations and individuals active in Australia at the time. *Direct Action* (Industrial Workers of the World, Sydney), *The Socialist* (Socialist Party of Victoria), *Ross's Magazine* (Melbourne), *People* (Australian Socialist League, Sydney), the *Woman Voter* (Women's Political Association, Melbourne) and the *International Socialist* (Australasian Socialist Party, Sydney) too have been considered in this analysis.

¹³¹ Carl Bridge, "Anzac Day," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed. Peter Dennis, *Oxford Reference Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), [no pagination].; Marilyn Lake, "Pax International, Women and Australian Peace Movements," *Guardian (Sydney)* 1513, no. 10 August (2011): 6.

¹³² For example, in 1929 *Direct Action* printed a piece entitled "May Day versus Anzac Day" which promoted the former and critiqued the latter as "an expression of oppression". 20 April 1929, 2

Unlike much of the labour press, radical publications did not actively endorse the Anzac commemoration. Rather they remained mute on the topic. The columns of *Direct Action*, the *Socialist*, *Ross's Magazine*, *People* and the *International Socialist* yield no insights into what radical scribes thought of the Anzac commemoration or were prepared to commit to print. Was this lacuna in itself a form of protest? Were they limited by censorship? All of these publications attempted to flaunt the censor's restrictions on a regular basis and none of them used silence as a rhetorical weapon in other debates. Rather, it might be suggested, they were constrained by that inherent paradox in the Anzac commemoration. Anzac was, on the one hand a celebration of militarism – a recruiting exercise and a commemoration of the nation's "baptism of fire" in an imperial war. Yet it was also a day of national mourning and public grieving. As such, a public critique would be insensitive and unconscionable on moral grounds, alienating the scribe rather than endearing them to the reader.

The language of reconciliation was not merely the preserve of right-wing scribes and spokespersons. A few days after the 1917 *Queensland Figaro* article noted above was published, Queensland Labor Premier, T.J. Ryan, champion of the anti-conscription campaign and Hughes's nemesis, noted that the Anzac commemoration "meant for at least one day of the year we could suspend local differences and all feel that we were an integral part of a mighty empire".¹³³ A year later Ryan expressed a desire to work towards shared goals, emphasising the need for Australian citizens to "make an effort to settle their differences and work unitedly so far as the great war-issue was concerned and in this they had no greater example set them than the brave Anzacs on Gallipoli who fought and died together."¹³⁴ It was an ideal to aspire to, but the reality of Australian society had a rather different complexion. Thus, while the conservatives evoked the "Anzac Spirit" in their imaginings of a society purified and regenerated by war, the labour movement too had its own take on such a mythology. The notion that the war was a catalyst for change was common to both political affiliations, even if they disagreed on the nature of the society they aspired to.

By 1917, elements of the industrial labour movement were less than convinced about the day's efficacy. Despite the fact that, in regional centres, a variety of

¹³³ Cited in the *Daily Standard*, 26 April 1917, 8.

¹³⁴ The *Daily Standard*, 26 April 1918, 4.

community organisations frequently marched in Anzac Day parades, it was rare for unions to march. At a Queensland Branch conference of the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union in Brisbane in 1917 the issue of Anzac Day arose in a discussion about public holidays. One delegate argued that the celebration of Anzac Day would be perpetuating the present war. He proposed, in its place, the commemoration of 28 October – “Anti-Conscription Day”. “That”, he said, “was worthy of record”.¹³⁵ Unlike the conservatives, who sought to consign 28 October ignominiously to the dustbin of Australian history, these unionists wished to promote the date into the national commemorative pantheon. The success of the anti-conscription movement was, for many on the side of Labor, an achievement worthy of remembrance.

In some working-class areas, the turnout at commemorations was minimal. In Port Adelaide in 1917 the Mayor complained about the poor attendance at the Town Hall for the civic commemoration. He then went on to heavily endorse the “Win-the-War” Party for the forthcoming election, stating that “if the opposition had nothing better to advance than their anti-conscription ideals, they should be anti-conscripted out of the state”.¹³⁶ Labor was well-supported in the Adelaide electorate which contained this district in the 1917 federal election, despite losses at the polls elsewhere. In a working-class area with such political leanings, many chose to ‘vote with their feet’ when their local conservative mayor was known to be running the ceremony. Port Pirie was an Australian Workers Union-dominated, industrial town with a population of over nine thousand in 1917 and an ‘honour’ list which included eighty ‘fallen’ men.¹³⁷ Yet, there was little effort to enact a commemoration there in 1917, apart from a small memorial service held in the Town Hall.¹³⁸ The *Kalgoorlie Miner*, which served a town with a similar demographic, noted that several hundred gathered for their 1918 commemoration, from a total population of close to eight thousand.¹³⁹ In Broken Hill the conservative daily, the *Barrier Miner*, passed ironic comment on the

¹³⁵ *Worker* (Brisbane), 25 January 1917, 15.

¹³⁶ *Advertiser*, 26 April 1917, 9.

¹³⁷ Erik Carl Eklund, *Mining Towns: Making a Living, Making a Life* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2012), 143-44.

¹³⁸ *Port Pirie Recorder and Northwestern Mail*, 26 April 1917, 1.

¹³⁹ Western Australia Statistician's Office, *Statistical Register of Western Australia for 1913* (Perth: Government Printer, 1915), Part XI, 5.

lack of numbers at the 1917 commemoration.¹⁴⁰ Five hundred were in attendance, including school children who had little choice in the matter, from a town with a population of over 27,000.¹⁴¹ Anzac Day commemorations, when they took place in mining towns and port areas, often lacked community and trade union support and appear to have been the preserve of a minority of loyalist pro-war conservatives who chose to defiantly fly their flag of allegiance in the face of local apathy or even hostility.

In other spheres too, the conservative proponents of Anzac Day did not have it all their own way. The education sector was one of the few areas in which the official Anzac morality tale was challenged. In both Victoria and Queensland, deputations of teachers and anti-war activists approached the respective state ministers for education, requesting a down-scaling of the militarisation of school curricula. In Brisbane, on 3 February 1917, prominent Quaker and peace-activist Margaret Thorp joined with other like-minded citizens to meet with the Queensland Minister for Public Instruction, Herbert Hardacre. The deputation asked the Minister to “eliminate the inculcation of jingoism in the schools, and to prepare definitely for permanent peace and a real spirit of patriotism.” Particular attention was drawn to the Anzac Day issue of the *School Paper*.¹⁴² The *Brisbane Courier* reported the episode under the headline, “Attack on the Empire”.¹⁴³ Hardacre refuted most of the claims and refused to undertake any action on them. Likewise, the Victorian Minister for Public Instruction, Sir Harry Lawson, had little sympathy for a deputation from the Sisterhood of International Peace which approached him with similar demands in Melbourne in mid-April 1917.¹⁴⁴

Despite the intransigence of the state powers on the issue, some members of the schooling sector questioned the particular hegemonic reading of wartime events encapsulated in the official Anzac narrative. While the state minister rejected her ideas, Margaret Thorp, as a representative of the Women’s Peace Army, spoke in six different schools in Rockhampton and Mount Morgan on and around Anzac Day

¹⁴⁰ *Barrier Miner*, 29 April 1917, 3.

¹⁴¹ H.A. Smith, *Official Year Book of New South Wales 1918* (Sydney: New South Wales Government Printer, 1920), 110.

¹⁴² Evans, *Loyalty and Disloyalty: Social Conflict on the Queensland Homefront, 1914-18*, 140.

¹⁴³ *Brisbane Courier*, 5 February 1917, 6.

¹⁴⁴ *Age*, 12 April 1917, 6.

1917.¹⁴⁵ Head teachers in those schools either had some sympathy with her position or, at least, an appreciation that an alternative perspective was valid. While the influence of such initiatives as Thorp's was extremely limited by 1917, hers was not a lone voice. The existence of such deputations prepared to tackle the authorities on the militarisation of the school curriculum, and Anzac Day's part in that process, indicates that there were Australians in some quarters who were dubious about the mainstream political messages imparted by the commemoration.

Teachers also showed their disaffection when in 1918, the Minister for Recruiting, Richard Orchard, sent telegrams to state ministers of education requesting that Anzac Day bonfires be lit in state schools on the night of 25 April in a bid to "assist in arousing fresh war spirit throughout Australia."¹⁴⁶ The recommendation was widely condemned by teachers and others. Spokespersons for the teachers' unions in various states objected on what might be referred to in contemporary parlance as, 'workplace health and safety' grounds.¹⁴⁷ The prospect of children being encouraged to gather combustible material and to light fires in school grounds was not, for most teachers, an inviting one. Others condemned the idea on the grounds of its extravagance and futility – that its festive connotations were entirely inappropriate.¹⁴⁸ Others tendered objections on ideological grounds. Helen Coleman, a South Australian member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, an organisation not typically associated with a radical outlook, also expressed her opposition to the Minister's request, further noting that:

What is required in the future generation is not the war spirit, which develops into militarism, for the suppression of which the Allies are ostensibly fighting, but the very reverse, training for which must begin now. The present generation demand of us the highest in ideals and the best that progressive education can give.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Hilary N. Summy, *Peace Angel of World War 1: Dissent of Margaret Thorp* (St Lucia, Qld: Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, 2006), 87.

¹⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 April 1918, 14.

¹⁴⁷ *Worker*, 18 April 1918, 15; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 April 1918, 13.

¹⁴⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 2 May 1918, 20.

¹⁴⁹ *Register*, 20 April 1918, 10.

In Perth, the Australian Labour Federation condemned the plan.¹⁵⁰ Clearly then, some organisational bodies representing mainstream Australians, such as teachers, as well as others more marginal in their ideological location, made their voices heard against the clamour of pro-loyalist demands for more and better demonstrations of loyal service to empire. This marks a significant departure from the discursive organisation of commemoration in the early war years.

Like the mourners discussed above, others were half in the embrace of Anzac Day without committing to all that it encompassed. Some smaller labour groups organised their own commemorations on Anzac Day in 1917 and 1918. While they certainly marked the occasion, their commemorations reflected more specific needs. Unionists had lost friends and loved ones on the killing fields and they shared that grief communally. Doubtless, these occasions were devoid of the loyalist hoopla which accompanied the 'official' events. Adelaide's labour newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, recorded a small Anzac Day gathering of clerical and labouring staff in the Government Stores in 1917.¹⁵¹ Likewise, railwaymen in Petersburg, South Australia, took part in a small commemoration in the locomotive sheds on the same day.¹⁵² In 1918, South Australian railway workers held a similar event at Wallaroo.¹⁵³ The *Townsville Daily Bulletin* complained that the Clerk's Union in that town had also organised their own event on Anzac Day.¹⁵⁴ They had their heroes to honour and their dead to mourn. By virtue of its overt politicisation, however, official Anzac Day ceremonies held no appeal, so these citizens sought a community of the like-minded with whom to share their grief and to honour and to pay their respects to the dead, a community not to be found within the increasingly shrill pro-loyalist camp.

As recriminations about the nation's choices around conscription were carried into Anzac Day commemorations in 1917 and 1918, so too were sectarian tensions and paranoia about the 'disloyalty' of Australian Catholics. The war exacerbated pre-existing racial and sectarian tensions in Australia. The savage British reprisals in the wake of the failed Easter Uprising in Ireland in 1916 alienated many Australians of Irish Catholic background. When Protestant and Orange lodges applauded the

¹⁵⁰ *West Australian*, 22 April 1918, 8.

¹⁵¹ *Daily Herald*, 26 April 1917, 7.

¹⁵² *Petersburg Times*, 4 May 1917, 2.

¹⁵³ *Register*, 27 April 1918, 9.

¹⁵⁴ *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 19 April 1918, 3.

British actions, the rift widened.¹⁵⁵ Some Catholic prelates pledged their support for conscription and sustained their commitment to Anzac Day in the churches at least, if not at civic events, but others demurred. A notable example of the latter was Melbourne's Archbishop Daniel Mannix, an outspoken but eloquent critic of the government's position and a resolute supporter of Irish national self-determination. His appeal to disaffected and increasingly impoverished working-class Catholics was undeniable.¹⁵⁶ He was openly castigated and impugned from the Anzac Day speaker's platform and pulpit, with many such speakers distrusting Catholic allegiances to nation and empire.

Speakers and journalists often expressed anti-Catholic sentiments on Anzac Day. Mannix in particular was often singled out for censure by Protestants, because of his prominence in the debates over conscription in 1916 and 1917. In their Anzac Day speeches, politicians and preachers denounced his putative claim that the nation was involved in a "sordid trade war".¹⁵⁷ As Denis Murphy points out, the construction of Mannix as leader of the "No" campaigns was more a factor of the pro-conscriptionists aligning against him, than it was a factor of the machinery of the anti-conscription movement itself.¹⁵⁸ For many Protestants, the figure of Mannix as the intemperate, Irish nationalist, tribal chieftain, represented all that was reprehensible and disloyal about Australian Catholics. At Anzac Day events, most Protestant clergymen and politicians focussed on Mannix and did not need to broaden their range of fire to include all of those who practised the Catholic faith. Those who listened to their speeches and sermons would draw their own conclusions.

On occasions, sectarian tensions flared up at regional level. In Wodonga (Victoria) an Anglican clergyman, the Reverend J. Cookson-Compton, wrote a provocative, condemnatory letter to the local paper, accusing his Catholic counterpart, Father Francis Flynn, of disloyalty for not flying the Union Jack at the public library flag pole on Anzac Day 1917. Flynn responded in kind and a rather tawdry exercise in sectarian point-scoring played out in the correspondence column of the local

¹⁵⁵ D. J. Murphy, "Religion, Race and Conscription in World War I," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 20, no. 2 (1974): 156.

¹⁵⁶ Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, 233-34.

¹⁵⁷ *Argus*, 25 April 1917, 9.

¹⁵⁸ Murphy, "Religion, Race and Conscription in World War I," 156.

paper.¹⁵⁹ It was a minor *contretemps*, but it indicated that public commemorations like Anzac Day could act as flashpoints for inflaming the sectarian animosity which had burnt so fiercely during the conscription debates.

While Catholic clergymen rarely joined their Protestant counterparts on the speaker's platform at civil Anzac Day events, many Catholic churches conducted masses on Anzac Day and Catholic schools also commemorated the day. Rather like the small 'breakaway' union Anzac Day gatherings noted above, Catholics commemorated the day in their own way. Moreover, Catholic churchmen emphasised the key part played by Australian Catholics in the AIF and, much like the Labor Party, sought inclusion in the burgeoning legend on their own terms. At Saint Stephen's in Brisbane on Anzac Day 1917, Archbishop James Duhig reminded the congregation that twenty-two percent of the AIF were Catholics, fighting and dying beside their Protestant comrades. He nonetheless eschewed the pro-empire loyalist rhetoric which permeated so many Protestant sermons on the same day, emphasising Gallipoli as a distinctly 'national' Australian event.¹⁶⁰

Other Catholics too, protested their loyalty publicly. While speaking at the annual conference of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society in Sydney on 25 April 1917, the District President, Brother Devlin, made reference to Anzac Day and to scurrilous anti-Catholic pamphlets that were circulating concurrently. As was reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

He availed himself of the opportunity to nail to the counter a deliberate lie and a gross calumny. It was something more than a misrepresentation to say, as had been publicly said, that the Hibernians were wanting in loyalty and patriotism, while other sections of the community were responding to the wartime call of duty.¹⁶¹

Conservative Protestants pilloried Catholics publicly on Anzac Day. Yet, much like the labour movement, Catholic spokesmen did not critique the day. Rather, for them

¹⁵⁹ *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, 15 June 1917, 2; 29 June 1917, 2; 6 July 1917, 2; 27 July 1917, 2.

¹⁶⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1917, 9.

¹⁶¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 April 1917, 8.

it became nuanced in such a way as to align with Catholic ideology and to accord with the political sentiments of many practitioners of that religion.

Conclusion

Anzac Day, by 1918, was still a work in progress. While 25 April's status as an iconic date in Australia was well-established, the form that the commemoration should take to support it was still in flux and, in some areas, the cause of significant social tensions. The push and pull between the day's respective imperatives were played out in microcosm in regional centres across Australia – not always harmoniously. The occasion was no closer to being a cohesive national observance than it had been in 1916. Indeed, in the years since the commemoration's inception, it had shifted further from that point and not closer to it. By 1918, most Australians acknowledged Anzac Day. It was not peripheral. It was, however, multi-faceted and increasingly divisive. In combining solemn acknowledgement of the war dead with recruiting and unapologetic militarism, and frequently leavening the mix with carnivalesque fund-raising, Anzac Day failed to bind the nation's wounds. Many circled the day on their calendars and acknowledged its significance, commemorating it in their own way. Others were alienated from the patriotic clamour and obsequious deference to empire which surrounded the occasion. They were alienated too by the recrimination and bickerings around conscription and enlistment that were pervasive at the time. By 1918, 25 April had shifted from an occasion that embraced a range of constituencies to one effectively only for those committed to a particular ideology around the war. Anzac Day as national unifier was still awaiting its day of arrival.

Conclusion

During the period 1915 to 1918, Anzac Day took shape as a national commemoration. It had no high moment of heroic invention, nor was it a singular concept which emerged from the thinking of one man, or one committee, or one government. Rather, its shape emerged in piecemeal fashion through the agency of various conservative elites who sought to galvanise and mobilise the home front around the war effort. As an observance in the war years, therefore, Anzac assembled a set of cultural practices and martially-inflected discourses that satisfied conservative expectations of a national commemoration. In some cases, these discourses predated the landing itself. Thus Anzac Day was a conflation of practices with a traceable genealogy. Yet, with its singular reliance on what Stephen Alomes has called a “rhetorical sensitivity about human suffering”, as distinct from authentic engagement with the personal toll taken by war, it increasingly failed to meet the needs of a traumatised and grieving populace.¹ As Joan Beaumont points out, Australians experienced grief on a scale which placed profound strains on consensus about the reasons for which the war was being fought.² By 1918 Anzac Day’s appeal to war-weary and traumatised Australians was on the wane. Moreover, the stridency which accompanied the day’s commemorations reflected, as Beaumont has noted, growing loyalist anxiety about the government’s power to mobilise the populace for sustained and even increased sacrifices.³

This thesis has provided a more nuanced understanding than we have to date had of the forces which shaped Anzac Day in its earliest years by examining the commemorative context in which it emerged. In a nation riven by political, social and religious rancour, Anzac Day became a symptom of that division rather than a balm to it. The day was prefigured in nationalist discourse in the decades prior to the landing itself. It filled a space in the commemorative calendar which, despite the existence of Anniversary Day (26 January), Empire Day and Wattle Day, was articulated publicly since Federation. Australia’s ‘arrival’ in the war had been

¹ Stephen Alomes, "Our National Folly: War Romance and the Australian National Imaginary," in *Reflections on Anzac Day: From One Millenium to the Next*, ed. Anne-Marie Hede and Ruth Rentschler (Heidelberg, Vic: Heidelberg Press, 2010), 92.

² Joan Beaumont, "'Unitedly We Have Fought': Imperial Loyalty and the Australian War Effort " *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 398.

³ *Ibid.*, 405.

anticipated as a moment of national self-realisation. A particular authorised version of the Gallipoli landing and its significance was rapidly propagated by politicians, journalists, teachers and clergymen. This rendition of events and their significance inflected public patriotic displays during 1915 such as Empire Day, Australia Day and Violet Day. By April 1916, Anzac's rhetorical and performative modes were already well established. The work of Canon David Garland, while influential, did not define Anzac Day's form. Garland and the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee did, however, promote a particular version of the commemoration which distilled the cultural elements traceable through this genealogy of Anzac's emergence. Garland's committee clearly encapsulated the imperatives of the pro-war elites who sought to promote the observance nationally and insisted that Anzac Day be deployed to galvanise lagging home front support for the war. Despite their endeavours, no one vision for Anzac Day prevailed nationally, as planners and organisers sought to shape commemorative occasions according to pre-established practices and local needs.

In response to defeat at Gallipoli, falling enlistment and mounting casualties, the day's organisers aimed to re-energise the Australian populace for the war effort. The memorialisation of 'the fallen' was only one part of the story. Packaged with a belligerent patriotic pageantry, the commemoration made little provision for the mourning of the bereaved who nonetheless inflected it with their very presence, such that Anzac Day events in Australia during the war were not characterised by a singular focus. Rather, they often constituted somewhat messy and cluttered performative occasions which struggled to accommodate a multiplicity of imperatives – recruiting, fund-raising, memorialisation and public acknowledgement of returned soldiers.

During a period of major social division in Australia, claims by the day's promoters that its effect was cohesive were illusory. The vitriolic conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917 demonstrate the degree of social tension around the issue of the war. Moreover, rising rents and prices increasingly marginalised a disaffected working class from the war goals of the nation's leaders. Their alienation from these imperatives resulted in heightened industrial militancy which, in turn, attracted more accusations of disloyalty. For pro-war loyalists, Anzac Day was an occasion to reinforce and reassert their own values in the company of the like-minded, while

castigating 'outsiders' as disloyal. Rather than unify Australians, the commemoration further entrenched the position of those who sought to pursue victory at all costs while alienating and marginalising those who were exhausted by, ambivalent about, or hostile to the nation's war effort. Yet the significance of the date itself was widely acknowledged as a time for memorialisation, with many Australians pursuing their own commemorative activities away from the unapologetic militarism and patriotic cant which accompanied official civic events.

The consequence was an 'un-fixing' of the event throughout 1917 and 1918, such that commemoration in New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania followed the pattern set by Victoria of staging different elements of the observance on different days. Commemorations splintered along political lines and attendances fell.

The detailed account of Anzac's emergence given in the preceding chapters is significant in countering two contemporary historical narratives about Anzac Day: first, its development as relentless upward trajectory; and second, the idea that contemporary political 'recasting' of the Day was a revolution – "a complete transformation of the traditional language and patterns of commemoration associated with the day", as Mark McKenna has argued.⁴ At the end of the war Anzac Day had no guaranteed future as the pre-eminent national commemoration. Yet Martin Crotty's and Craig Melrose's research suggests that, by the mid 1920s, the observance had developed into a thriving and meaningful commemoration whose "central message had a broad appeal and trumped competing interpretations".⁵ At the 1926 commemoration in Melbourne, General John Monash told his audience that the observance had "grown year by year from small beginnings to a mighty solemnisation in which the entire people of the State participate".⁶ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to call into question the assertions of these historians or to challenge Monash's claim about the event's ubiquity. Yet the first part of Monash's statement can be challenged. Anzac Day has not been characterised by a relentless upward trajectory or a growth from "small beginnings".

⁴ Mark McKenna, "Anzac Day: How Did It Become Australia's National Day?," in *What's Wrong with Anzac: The Militarisation of Australian History*, ed. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: New South, 2010), 127.

⁵ Martin Crotty and Craig Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 96, no. 393 (2007): 690.

⁶ *Argus*, 26 April 1926, 12.

The decline in popularity of the day in the 1960s associated with protest over the Vietnam War was not the first time enthusiasm for the day shifted, nor did the rituals and rhetoric of Anzac see growing numbers of Australians throughout its formative years.

In the early 1920s Anzac Day's status in the pantheon of national commemoration in Australia was still to be consolidated. In his analysis of memorial unveilings and dedications, Ken Inglis notes that, during this time, the events were as likely to be staged on Empire Day or Armistice Day, as they were on Anzac Day.⁷ Anzac Day in 1916, 1917 and 1918 was an event driven by the imperatives of winning the war. Once won, many of those imperatives no longer existed. Moreover, commemorations in 1919 were further hampered by the influenza epidemic which ravaged Australia, so Anzac before the 1920s is better characterised as stuttering rather than strengthening. In order to survive and flourish, the event needed to find a new focus. Crotty and Melrose argue that Anzac Day in the inter-war period was characterised by "public triumphalism" and "private lamentation".⁸ The mobilising rhetoric of the war years morphed into a triumphalist one while the lamentation, which had always been an element of the commemoration, albeit muted, was now increasingly validated publicly.

In pursuing Anzac as a "mythic tale" which has resisted historical analysis and explanation, this inquiry has drawn on Foucauldian genealogical theorising to disrupt Anzac as "regime of truth." According to Foucault each society has its "general politics of truth ... a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements".⁹ In Anzac's case – that the day has been an idealised march of progress – an exponential and inevitable growth from humble origins to the 1960s, that it has always been commemorated with a kind of reverence, that is highly "Australian", that it was only contested from the 1960s and that its function has been largely memorial – an acknowledgement of national debt to those who died in the nation's wars. This thesis shows that all of these assumptions can be challenged. The day began with a commemorative flurry in 1916

⁷ K. S. Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 1998), 199.

⁸ Crotty and Melrose, "Anzac Day, Brisbane, Australia: Triumphalism, Mourning and Politics in Interwar Commemoration," 681.

⁹ Foucault, "Truth and Power," 131,33.

but lost impetus over the next two years in a nation riven by social and political tensions. By 1918 Anzac Day's future was far from secured. It may well have gone the way of Wattle Day and Empire Day – consigned to footnotes in the nation's history. There was no consensus about its reverence and indeed some returned soldiers sought to wrestle it from the hands of pious churchmen. From the outset the day celebrated Empire and was used to rally men to the cause of fighting the Empire's wars. Such is the new truth about Anzac which has evolved from this research. Historical data has been collected to destabilise the conceptual bedrock of present popular understandings of Anzac.

One hundred years on, Anzac has seen a major revival in what Carolyn Holbrook has called the "Anzac ascendancy" – a remarkable currency in Australian society.¹⁰ It has also witnessed a number of performative iterations. Thus it would be folly to claim that Anzac Day 2015 is essentially a beast of the same stripe that it was in 1916. This thesis is evidence for the fact that, in some respects, the commemoration now is barely recognisable from some of the Anzac Days of the war years. In other respects, however, there are marked continuities with the past. Thus McKenna's claim that, under the influence of John Howard's prime ministership, it "became a completely new type of national day", warrants a riposte.¹¹

In terms of the day's rhetoric, there are many consistencies between then and now. Birth metaphors still prevail, as does the idea that the day is the most important on the commemorative calendar, transcending all rivals. Some of the newspaper quotes from 1916 could easily be from 2015. When then Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, spoke at the Lone Pine memorial on a visit to Gallipoli in April 2012, the *Australian* reported the event with the headline: "It was birth of our nation, PM says".¹² A recording of her speech makes it clear that Gillard did not, in fact, say that it was the birth of our nation. She did however describe the landing as "our first act of nationhood", and she quoted C.E.W. Bean's famous declaration from the second volume of his *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918* that it was at this site that the "consciousness of Australian nationhood was born".¹³ Few would quibble with the

¹⁰ Carolyn Holbrook, *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney: New South, 2014), 2.

¹¹ McKenna, "Anzac Day: How Did It Become Australia's National Day?," 126.

¹² *Australian*, 25 April 2012, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/anzac-day/it-was-birth-of-our-nation-pm-says/story-e6frgdaf-1226337483693>.

¹³ Julia Gillard, "Lone Pine Speech," AustralianPolitics.com, <http://australianpolitics.com/tag/lone-pine>.

headline however, probably not even Gillard, such is the ubiquity and pervasiveness of the rhetorical figure that the nation was 'born' at Anzac Cove.

The veneration of the achievements of the AIF remains a consistent element too. In 2013, the Returned and Services League's Western Australian President, Graham Edwards, told a Perth Anzac Day gathering: "Perhaps we ought better honour our Anzacs in our daily lives with those same qualities of humour, honour, sacrifice, mateship and a fair go for all."¹⁴ A year later, in his address at the Anzac Day ceremony at the War Memorial in Canberra, Prime Minister Tony Abbott spoke of their actions and invited his audience to "ponder anew the example of our mighty forbears". These "foundation stories", he claimed, "should be as important to us as the ride of Paul Revere, or the last stand of King Harold at Hastings, or the incarceration of Nelson Mandela might be to others."¹⁵ It was a rendition of events on Gallipoli which stressed heroism, sacrifice and honour, and so did not differ radically from those produced in 1915 and 1916. Moreover it was, and remains, the moral high ground of national allegiance, a location which silences opposing voices and renders alternative narratives suspect. While Anzac continues to be invoked in public discourse as an exemplar of effective moral training, national realisation remains firmly linked to military endeavour.

Anzac commemoration has served to revere a quite specific military identity – the Australian soldier at Gallipoli. McKenna's point that "writers, filmmakers and journalists [have] performed narrative surgery on the Imperial history of 25 April 1915" in order to recast it as uniquely 'Australian' story, is a valid one.¹⁶ While the references to empire have long been discarded, and the event now constitutes an unambiguous celebration of Australian nationhood, the discursive artefacts of its imperial origins remain. Kipling's "Lest We Forget" was a phrase minted as a warning against imperial hubris at the height of Britain's political dominance. It was always sufficiently capacious an expression to be put to work in other contexts. The fourth stanza of Binyon's "For the Fallen", a poem written in September 1915 while

¹⁴ *AAP Australian National News Wire*, 25 April 2013, 1.

¹⁵ Tony Abbott, "Address to the Anzac Day National Ceremony, Canberra," Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/2014-04-25/address-anzac-day-national-ceremony-canberra>.

¹⁶ McKenna, "Anzac Day: How Did It Become Australia's National Day?," 116.

Australian troops were still being processed through recruiting offices, is now the Anzac Ode. These literary figures have proved to be both stable and persistent in the iconic rhetoric of Anzac Day.

Anzac Day was a commemoration launched to support and promote the war effort at home. It follows that any observance geared to mobilise the nation around that endeavour is, by its nature, limited in the lessons it can deliver about war. Talk of peace on Anzac Day is still transgressive, though its contemporary iterations downplay the politics of warfare by focussing on narratives of service, honour and sacrifice. Yet the evidence for Fussell's "high diction" remains. In the public domain, there is little exploration of the whys of Gallipoli and the machinations of geopolitics which brought on the tragedy. Instead, soldiers are redrawn as products of their time or victims of circumstance – brave men who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. The rhetoric of Anzac also remains obscurantist – "a wonderful Australian saga" John Howard called it in 2004, echoing the language of the war years.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the survivors of World War I are gone, along with most of those loved ones who personally mourned their loss. Gone too is the author of the most controversial critiques of Anzac observance, Alan Seymour, who was inspired to write *The One Day of the Year* after witnessing the undignified public behaviour of veterans on Anzac Day in Sydney in the 1950s. His play, according to one obituarist, "capture[d]...the tensions between Australia's links to the past and aspirations to new horizons" at a time when the Vietnam War was casting a long shadow, with television bringing decidedly unromantic images of the carnage of war directly into Australian lounge-rooms.¹⁸

The passing of these cohorts from the social landscape has allowed subsequent generations to shape Anzac in ways that meet their changing performative preferences. Yet as a contemporary critic points out, today's ceremonies are no more accidental than those organised in the formative years of Anzac. They continue to involve "significant government funding, publicity and official rhetoric", as well as

¹⁷ Cited in Joy Damousi, "Why Do We Get So Emotional About Anzac? ," in *What's Wrong with Anzac?: The Militarisation of Australian History*, ed. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (Sydney: New South, 2010), 96.

¹⁸ Murray Bramwell, "Author Alan Seymour Captured Poignancy of 1960s Generation Gap," *Australian*, 26 March 2015. <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/stage/author-alan-seymour-captured-poignancy-of-1960s-generation-gap/story-fn9d344c-1227278568160>.

focusing attention on “the inclusion of children and grandchildren of veterans.”¹⁹ Moreover, as Seymour found with the banning of his play, the day’s commemoration continues to marginalise open discussion of war’s futility or tragedy, just as it did in 1915. Anzac Day continues to masquerade as a fully inclusive and national event, as it did during the war years. Contestation at that time, however, was rarely overt. Rather, its spectre emerges from the silences, ambivalences and absences which lurk on the margins of wartime commemoration.

One hundred years on, critical analysis remains muted in the context of what Don Watson has called “a new opium” – the resurgence of Anzac Day as “a new organic national day to the inexhaustible advantage of politics, commerce and persuaders of all kinds”.²⁰ As a twenty-first century ritualistic combination of festivity and gravitas, the day’s observance has been re-cast, according to one blogger, from archaic to attractive – “a stable source of controllable news and a rare chance to get away with clichés about pride, mateship and honour”.²¹ In its revitalised form, it has expanded to incorporate the new tradition – battleground tourism – that invites Australians to combine overseas holidays with war remembrance rituals. In its newly robust iteration, however, it is no more welcoming of critique of the real costs of war than any other romantic mythologising of the past.

While today’s more prosperous generations are spared by historical distance the deep trauma of Gallipoli, wartime Anzac Day events were characterised by a somewhat paradoxical binary that encompassed both pride and sorrow. War’s trauma has been replaced by sentimentality and nostalgia. Through the growth of family history and the need to contextualise it, Anzac Day and memorialisation generally, as Bruce Scates demonstrates, remain capable of generating powerful emotional responses from Australians today.²² New generations have learnt about Anzac Day through pre-school and primary school, through pilgrimage and performance. The media has also been increasingly active in publicising the efforts of those who drilled down into the narrative to uncover individual stories and

¹⁹ 'Paidiske', "Anzac as Civil Religion," <https://paidiske.wordpress.com/2015/02/>.

²⁰ Don Watson, "A New Opium: The Anzac Cult" *Monthly* (2012).
<http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2012/june/1338434839/don-watson/new-opium>.

²¹ Derek Barry, "The Metamorphosis of Anzac Day"
<https://woollydays.wordpress.com/2009/04/30/the-metamorphosis-of-anzac-day/>.

²² Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xix.

artefacts as they are donated to museums and libraries or as diaries and letters are published. Although they may know little about the events which spawned it, they have nonetheless learned particular cultural behaviours, old and new, which accompany its commemoration. With the passing of time, however, the connection with a generation of Australians who had the lived experience of the life-changing effects of war continues to diminish. It is for this reason that the account provided here of Anzac commemoration in the formative years of World War I probes the silences in the rhetoric of that time, the sins of omission as well as commission that de-legitimated the expression of personal loss and grief experienced by so many. In doing so, Anzac spawned a rhetorical tradition that has left little room for hard questions about the meaning, causes and outcomes of war, not only at Gallipoli, but in all places and times.

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