ADDRESS AT A SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION
FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY 2026
BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOBART CENOTAPH, WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2026

Good morning, everyone. It is a privilege to be with you all as we gather for the annual commemoration of Remembrance Day.

May I begin by acknowledging the many veterans of conflicts to which Australia has committed forces and those who have served in our Australian Defence Force through the years.

This importantly includes the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have worn the uniform of our nation.

Each year, on the 11th of November, people all around the world pause at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month to remember the moment when, in 1918, the guns fell silent on the Western Front.[1]

For more than a century we have honoured that silence as an act of gratitude and of conscience. Remembrance is more than a commemoration of a past peace.

It is an act of conscience and citizenship. We remember sacrifice and are moved to uphold the duty of service and to renew our commitment to the ideals that those sacrifices defended. Remembrance is not just an exercise in nostalgia. It is a moment to face the world's brokenness and to recommit to our duty in the present.

[1] Australian War Memorial, "Remembrance Day" accessed 10 Sept 26

It is a sobering fact that Australia lost more than 60,000 dead in the First World War. We should also be conscious of the fact that there are many hundreds of thousands more who have served, and continue to serve, in wars, peacekeeping missions, and humanitarian operations since.[2]

Remembrance Day is a reminder that the freedom we enjoy in this country has been paid for with blood; that peace has been purchased with sacrifice; and that the duty to protect both rests now with us.

From the trenches of Gallipoli and the Western Front to the skies over Europe, the jungles of the Pacific, the deserts of North Africa, and the battlefields of Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, Australians have served with courage and compassion.

But service is not only what happens in battle; it is the willingness to place others before self, to answer a call greater than comfort or convenience. And sacrifice is not only the loss of life, but also the unseen burdens, physical, mental, and emotional, that are carried by those who return, and by the families who wait and grieve.

While we acknowledge that there have been some significant attacks on our Jewish community that were an attack on all we hold dear, we live in relative safety in Australia.

That is in stark contrast to the conflicts that continue to affect many areas and people around the world.

[2] Over 103,000 Australians have died in wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations since 1885. https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration accessed 10 Sep 26

In Ukraine, fighting continues into its fourth year, with thousands of civilians killed and nearly 4 million internally displaces and 6 million seeking refuge abroad.[3] In Sudan, civil war has created one of the largest humanitarian crises of our time, with more than 21 million people in need.[4] Closer to us, in Myanmar, widespread violence and persecution have destroyed communities and forced hundreds of thousands to flee.[5] And in the Middle East, the conflict has taken a devastating human toll.[6]

Each of these crises reminds us that the lessons of Remembrance Day, that the pursuit of peace, justice, and human dignity, are not confined to history. They are living challenges for our time.

Our remembrance demands **more** than silent contemplation.

It calls upon us to live in ways worthy of the sacrifices made on our behalf.

That means caring for our veterans and their families, ensuring they have the support, recognition, and dignity they deserve.

It means educating new generations by teaching them not only about battles and bravery, but about the human cost of war, and the preciousness of peace.

And it means engaging with the world, standing for justice, compassion, and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

In a moment, we will observe a minute of silence.

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[3] UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, July 2025 Report accessed 30 Sep 26
[4] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Sudan Crisis Update, 2025" accessed 30 Sep 26
[5] https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/myanmar accessed 30 Sep 26
[6] https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/03/1167138 accessed 30 Sep 26

In that silence, may we hold in our hearts all who have served, those who did not return, and those who returned forever changed.

May we also hold the hope that one day remembrance will no longer be shadowed by war but will stand as a testament to humanity's better self.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning — we will remember them.

Lest we forget.