



## ROSEBANK COLLEGE

**College Assembly - Friday 24 April 2026**

**ANZAC address: Maya Temelkov**

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As a young Australian and a proud Army Cadet, Standing here today carries weight - the weight of honour, and of responsibility. ANZAC Day is not simply a date on the calendar. It is a powerful reminder of where we've come from, what we stand for, and what we are capable of becoming. And that message matters to every single one of us.

Cadets in Australia have a long and meaningful history. Our story began in 1866, when cadet training first started in schools. By 1886, cadets were already marching in public parades in Victoria. Then, in 1906, King Edward the Seventh established the Commonwealth Cadet Corps, uniting cadets from across the colonies under one structure. Even before Australia was fully a nation, young people were stepping up - learning discipline, leadership, and service. That tradition is not only history, but a path laid out for us to follow.

One of those young people was James Charles Martin - the youngest known ANZAC. He was only 14 when he enlisted, and he died at Gallipoli. Born in Tocumwal, New South Wales, in 1901, James loved everything military and joined the cadets at school. After leaving school, he worked as a farm hand, but his heart was set on serving. His father had been rejected from service, and James, the only son wanted to take his place.

Even though he looked older and his voice had already broken, he still needed parental permission because he wasn't yet 21. He got that permission, enlisted, and landed at Gallipoli on the 8th of September 1915. His story should make us stop and think. Not because he was young, but because he understood something vital: that service isn't about age. It's about character. And character is something every one of us can choose to build.

The story of ANZAC began on the 25th of April 1915, when 16,000 soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed under fire on the shores of Gallipoli in what is now Türkiye. They were part of a British Empire force of 75,000 troops from Britain, Ireland, India, France, and her dominions. Australia as a nation was only 14 years old. We were still finding our identity, still deciding who we were going to be.

Back then, our population was under 5 million. Yet by the end of World War I, 416,809 Australians had enlisted. 330,000. More than 60,000 were killed. 156,000 were wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.

These are not simply numbers we recite once a year. They represent real people. People who stood where we stand, walked the same streets, and sat in classrooms just like ours. People with dreams, families, and futures they were willing to risk for something greater than themselves.

Today, we honour them. We honour the men and women who offered and gave their lives in war. We honour the veterans among us. And as Dr Charles Bean, the founder of the Australian War Memorial, said, "their story rises, as it will always rise, above the mists of ages, a monument to great-hearted men and for their nation, a possession forever." History handed us that 'possession.' Now it falls on us to protect it and live it out.

But ANZAC Day isn't only about looking back. If it were, its power would fade. ANZAC Day is also about looking forward, and that is where we come in.

The ANZAC spirit - courage, mateship, resilience, initiative was never meant to stay trapped in the past. It is meant to live in us. In how we treat each other. In how we face challenges. In how we respond when things are hard, unfair, or uncertain. In how we choose to build our future, starting now.

As young Australians, we have a responsibility to carry that spirit into the world we're shaping. To build a society where rights are respected, but responsibilities are also recognised. To create communities where no one feels alone or forgotten. To take opportunities with both hands, not because they're easy, but because they matter.

ANZAC Day proves that our nation is capable of extraordinary achievements when we dare to reach for them. That legacy is not only for past generations. It includes us - the next generation. And whether we realise it or not, we are already part of that story.

So today, on my birthday and as an officially 16-year-old student and cadet, my message to all young people is this: Don't let the ANZAC spirit be something you only hear about once a year. Let it challenge you. Let it inspire you. Let it push you to be brave when it's easier to stay silent, to be kind when it costs you something, to be determined when giving up seems simpler, and to be someone others can rely on.

Because the future of this country will one day be in our hands and the ANZACs have already shown us what we're capable of when we choose courage, sacrifice, and service over comfort and indifference.

The question is not whether their legacy is powerful. It is whether we are willing to live up to it.

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\*If you're interested in what we do in the unit and want to get involved, you can find all the details and the sign-up link here: <https://armycadets.sydney/>