

ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC  
**GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**REDEDICATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CORPS MEMORIAL PARK**  
LE HAMEL, FRANCE  
8 NOVEMBER 2008

Welcome, and thank you for joining me in this quiet gathering, an observance of life and sacrifice.

I feel deep affection for your country - Australia's ally and friend - and receive here an ebullient generosity reminiscent of the camaraderie first enjoyed by French and Australian soldiers 92 years ago.

Yet today, rich in remembrance, fresh in promise, I tread lightly upon your land and speak gently of that which it has heavily borne and cradled.

I am privileged, as a symbol and voice for my countrymen and women, to come to this place, this sacred shrine, to thank and to honour, to rejoice and to dream - with, for, and in their stead - those fine Australian men who fought the Battle of Le Hamel.

This place  
where conflict raged,  
tears and blood were shed;  
lives, lost and saved;  
courage reigned, no matter triumph or defeat;  
nationhood, affirmed;  
brothers and sisters, sure and proud.

This place  
where history is recorded;  
stories, told;  
lessons, written;  
precious memories, preserved and fading;  
the past observed, in present wisdom and future light.

This place  
a place of healing:  
grief and loss repaired with  
joy, for love remembered;  
thankfulness, for life given up;  
forgiveness and letting go;  
celebration of the freedoms we cherish.

This place  
where we seek to imagine a body's pain,  
a mind's toil, and a heart's anguish;  
where we can hold onto each of these eternal gifts.

This place  
in our private souls and our shared humanity;  
here, now, in the silence of our solitude, and the warmth of the space we occupy as one.

My friends, in recalling the accounts of the extraordinary wartime advancements of the Diggers in Le Hamel - indeed their direct contribution to achieving the Armistice - we must also summon the stories and images of unprecedented bloodshed and loss of life experienced by Australians elsewhere on the killing fields of the Western Front.

Today, nigh on the eve of the 90th anniversary of the Armistice, I most gravely and sincerely rededicate this Australian Corps Memorial Park to their enduring memory and spirit.

*They shall grow not old,  
as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun,  
and in the morning  
We will remember them.*