



**Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP**

**St James Church Spring Flower Festival**

**'A Floral Spectacular'**

**Theme – Spirit of Remembrance – 100 Years since Armistice 1914 to 1918**

**Friday, 7 September 2018**

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Red poppies have long been a symbol of remembrance with particular relevance to the Western Front and of course Remembrance Day itself.

From the fields of Belgium and France and elsewhere across Europe where the poppies have swayed with the soft breezes for time immemorial we know of their fragility, their burst of red when in full bloom, albeit for a short time, their colour dominating the landscape.

As their petals begin to separate and drift on the wind, their stems dry and as time passes their seeds burst forth signalling the opportunity for a new start – it is a cycle that ensures life forever more for those blood red poppies.

Our Aussie and New Zealand boys were also in full bloom as they arrived at those battlefields over 100 years ago. Like the poppies, their blooms lasted all but a short time before they fell to the hail of bullets and bombs and their bodies were as one with the soil where they fell.

For them there would never be a new start - the opportunity had been taken forever.

Perhaps that's why the red poppies have captured our hearts and minds, why wherever they grow we stop and admire them – just long enough before their petals start to drift on the wind.



For little did those young fresh faced young Australian and New Zealanders know that those blood red poppies would one day be worn with such pride and reverence by millions of people throughout the world.

Little did they know that a century later that thousands of women, in the main, would be sitting down in their homes, workplaces and at social events knitting and crocheting red poppies with that distinctive black button to be worn on lapels or to adorn places of remembrance?

Little did they know that 'Motherly' love is passed down through the generations and that is why Mothers keep the home fires burning while their fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, and increasingly their daughters, journey off to war.

Little did they know that service men and women would gather together at newly formed RSL Clubs where they could share their experiences, to receive support from Welfare Officers and from their mates; and importantly to be amongst those who knew what they had endured while away from home.

The red poppy will forever remain a symbol of the Great War and wars and conflicts that have occurred since; just as the home fires will always burn, in the hope that our young men and women will return safely to their families and friends.

Those blood red poppies will in their own special way always be in full bloom just as our Aussie and Kiwi veterans and our serving men and women will always be in our hearts and minds as we join together to commemorate the

### **Spirit of Remembrance – 100 Years since Armistice 1914 to 1918**

May God's blessing be reflected on the Anglican Parish of Lakelands and the Reverend Robert Graue and the St James Spring Flower Festival Committee for the work that you have all done to bring the community together to share in 'A Floral Spectacular' to commemorate the ultimate sacrifice made by so many of our boys and girls and to acknowledge those who returned home to their loved ones.



It is a fitting tribute to those who fell on the battlefields, in the air and on the sea; and to those who endured the prison camps, to those who returned from the wars and conflicts, and to those who have only recently been identified after having laid silently at rest in far- away lands, in many cases for over a century.

I know our boys and girls and their families would be so proud to know that they have not been forgotten through the passage of time – that the Aussie Flag flies throughout this great country as a symbol of strength and unity; and the fact that because of their efforts we live in a relatively safe environment. An environment that we can raise our families, progress our futures and grow our communities respectful of all who choose to make Australia their home.

While the inevitable task of achieving world peace remains a distant challenge our thoughts and prayers go out to the refugees, many of whom are in ‘no-man’s land’ and exposed to years of uncertainty, violence and deprivation of basic human rights.

As parishioners and other members of the wider community attend this Floral Spectacular let it be known that their support can and will make a positive difference.

We know that there are growing attendances at all commemorative services which augurs well for the future – we also know those blood red poppies will in their own special way always be in full bloom just as our Aussie and Kiwi veterans and our serving men and women will always be in our hearts and minds

Lest we forget!