

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP
Bombing of Darwin Commemorative Service
City of Cockburn RSL – Rose Garden
Wednesday, 19 February 2025

Good morning veterans, serving members of the Australian Defence Force, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen.

Today we gather to remember one of the darkest days in our nation's history – the Bombing of Darwin.

It was a day when our northern shores came under attack, testing Australia's resolve and resilience.

The stories of courage, sacrifice, and survival that emerged from that fateful day remain etched in our collective memory.

While we reflect on the past, we are reminded that the world remains uncertain.

Geopolitical tensions ripple across continents invading our lounge rooms 24/7 with up to the minute reporting of events that can and does shape our thinking and responses.

Whether it be the Indo-Pacific to Eastern Europe or elsewhere, the spectre of conflict lingers.

Nations continue to engage in posturing and competition for power. Peace today seems as far away as ever in my lifetime.

Humanitarian efforts or the need for them continue to multiply and when you hear of not hundreds, not thousands but millions need healthcare, food, water, and the basics of life it paints a disturbing picture.

The lessons of history urge us to remain vigilant, to never take peace for granted, and to always remember the RSL's enduring motto: "The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance."

We've witnessed the strength, adaptability and resilience of Darwin's people following on from the Bombing of Darwin through to Cyclone Tracey in 1974.

What was once a city rebuilding from the ashes Darwin is now a thriving hub for tourism, trade, and defence.

These achievements are a testament to the enduring spirit of Australians – a spirit that refuses to be subdued by adversity.

However, even as we look forward, we cannot forget the sacrifices of those who came before us.

The veterans of the Bombing of Darwin and the conflicts that followed remind us of the heavy price of freedom.

Today, we also recognise the challenges faced by many of our veterans and their families.

Their service does not end when the fighting stops, and neither should our support for them.

Let us recommit ourselves today to ensuring that no veteran feels unheard or unseen.

Whether it is through practical support, community connection, or simply taking the time to listen, we must do more to honour their sacrifices in meaningful ways.

I acknowledge the amazing contribution that the City of Cockburn Sub-Branch is doing in relation to the welfare of veterans and thank them on behalf of our community.

As we conclude this service, let us also pay tribute to the men and women of our current armed forces, many in far off lands, away from family, friends, and their communities.

They continue to serve with courage, professionalism, and distinction, following the proud example set by those before them.

Lest we forget.