



91ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

ADVERTISING FEATURE

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Turkish Ambassador to Australia: Reha Keskintepe.

Celebrating a nation

By Reha Keskintepe
Turkish Ambassador to Australia

ON October 29, 1923, the Turkish Grand National Assembly declared the Turkish state a republic and elected Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as its first president. This date has been celebrated as the national day of Turkey ever since.

With Atatürk's farsightedness and the Turkish nation's resoluteness to protect its sovereignty and independence, a new country based on universal values and ideals such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law was born.

Turkey has been very successful in the path towards greater quality of life for its people. In line with the aims and projections of our forefathers, we are proud to see Turkey as a well-respected and active member of the international community.

As we celebrate the 91st anniversary of the proclamation of the republic with great joy and happiness, I am honoured to reflect on the achievements and sacrifices of Atatürk and our forefathers with tribute and gratitude.

On this occasion, I congratulate my fellow countrymen in Australia and express my appreciation for their devotion to and love for Turkey, as well as for their generous sponsorship in making this supplement possible.

Atatürk's message to Anzac mothers

MUSTAFA Kemal Atatürk, the first president of the Turkish Republic, delivered the following message to Australian and New Zealander mothers in 1934 as an expression of friendship:

"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side in this country of ours.

"You, the mothers, who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears.

"Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well."

The poignant and magnanimous words of Atatürk were delivered on his behalf by Şükrü Kaya, the Minister of the Interior, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Çanakkale Victory and the Martyrs' Day, on March 18, 1934.

By describing opposing forces as "Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives", Atatürk, as a soldier and a commander, expressed his sentiments of appreciation for the Anzacs with sincerity and maturity.

Atatürk paid tribute to the bravery of Anzac soldiers, who fought in a battle against people whom they never met, in a land which was unfamiliar and far away from their homelands. Thus, he commemorated them by assuring their families that they were now resting in peace in a friendly country.

At the conclusion of the 10-month battle, not only were there thousands of martyrs left behind, but also thousands of bereaved mothers. Therefore, Atatürk addressed Anzac mothers personally, to give the message that his nation regarded their sons as its own people, and as such would protect their graves with love and respect.

There is another message from Atatürk to the Australian people which was published at the request of *The Star* newspaper in Melbourne:

"The landing at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915, and the fighting which took place on the Peninsula will never be forgotten. It showed to the world the heroism of all those who shed their blood there. How heart rendering for their nations were the losses that this struggle caused!"

Atatürk once again emphasised the deep sentiments he expressed on March 18. This succinct and

meaningful message was conveyed to *The Star* through a telegram signed by deputy secretary general Hasan Rıza Bey (Soyak). The message was translated into French, which was the language used for international correspondence at the time, and was published under the headline Turkey, Old Foe, Remembers on April 25, 1934.

These inspirational words reflect the wisdom and the statesmanship of a victorious commander who had been in the middle of the horrendous battle himself and who witnessed first-hand the sorrow and suffering of thousands of soldiers.

Australians have a special place in the hearts and minds of all Turks, dating back to 1915, when the Mehmets and the diggers developed a sense of deep respect despite the intense fighting they endured. Ever since, Turkey and Australia have fostered a close and friendly relationship.

In 2015, as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, we cherish those eternal words and are confident that the historical bonds of friendship between our two countries and peoples will continue to grow and deepen.



Remembrance: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk with the Turkish flag, the Çanakkale Martyrs Memorial, the Lone Pine in Çanakkale Province, and the Tribute to the Turkish Soldier Memorial.

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MCK Lawyers congratulates the citizens of the Turkish Republic on the 91st Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Turkish Republic. As Turks and friends of Turkey around the world celebrate the 91st Anniversary of the Turkish Republic, the enduring lessons of the struggles that led to the proclamation serve to inspire Turks especially in present times of global unrest to uphold the founding principles of the Republic and the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

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