



The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson MP
Leader of the Opposition

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG DAY 2008

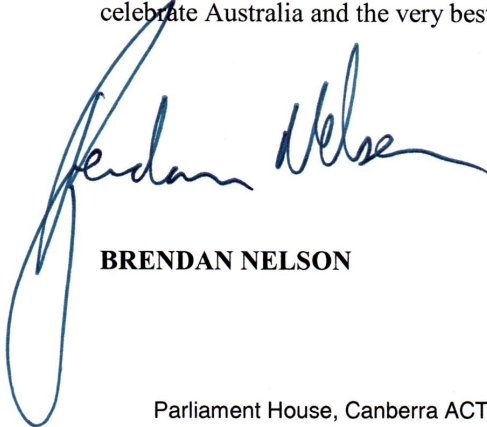
Today we celebrate the 107th anniversary of the Australian National Flag which provides us with a special opportunity to celebrate its significance and recognise the special place it holds in the hearts and minds of our people, and the history of our nation.

Our flag provides a unifying symbol for all Australians and is a poignant reminder of the values and sacrifices made by successive generations of people, born here or afar, that have made our country the envy of the world.

A great many young Australians - in our name, in our uniform, and under our flag - have given their lives in other parts of the world through a series of conflicts in order for our generation to have a future in which we could have confidence. These men and women have fought under our flag so that we might enjoy freedoms that I think, all too often, many of us have taken for granted. These men and women lie as silent witnesses to a future that they have given us and they lie under the long shadow of our flag.

There are certain truths by which we live that are represented by the Australian flag. As Australians, we have a responsibility to stand up for these values in every part of the world, and no part of it is more or less important than any other in this modern, contemporary context.

In the 107 years since it was first unfurled, the Australian National Flag has been embraced as a symbol of pride and identity for all Australians. Today as we stand under this grand flag and pay tribute to its significance for this great land, we celebrate Australia and the very best in ourselves.



BRENDAN NELSON