

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG DAY MESSAGE, 2018

The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP - Minister for Education

National Flag Day is a time for young people across NSW to celebrate the history, heritage, values and spirit that make Australia the great nation it is today.

Through the turmoil of World War I, World War II and the Great Depression, our national flag stood aloft as a symbol of strength and courage in the face of adversity.

It was in this crucible of pain, hardship and sacrifice that the modern nation of Australia was born. From the ancient land our forebears stood upon, we grew and flourished as a people who saw justice, freedom and a fair go for all as the most noble of aims to strive for.

Today, our flag is recognised as a beacon of hope across the world, the national icon of one of the oldest continuous liberal democracies in existence. And it is raised and waved with great vigour to celebrate our many and varied achievements across all fields of human endeavour.

Our flag embodies the values of equality, inclusiveness and compassion that make our nation great. It signifies the ethos that whoever you are, whatever your background or personal circumstance, you can achieve your full potential as a citizen of our nation.

Most fundamentally, we are a nation that values nothing more greatly than its people, and that the only requirement to be an Australian is your service to your fellow citizens. This is at the heart of what our flag symbolises.

I urge all students across NSW to stand proud as they raise the flag, and reflect upon the nation they've inherited from past generations. The greatest way you can honour their legacy is to work on building a future that's even better for generations to come.