Since the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, the acronym ANZAC has become synonymous with Australian identity. The Anzac legend memorialized the ethos of courage and mateship supposedly demonstrated by Australian soldiers in their first battle of the war and codified these qualities as pillars of Australian character. The perpetuation of this memory has come under vigorous criticism by revisionist historians, who criticize the celebration of an identity based on Anglophone, masculine, and militarist traits.

This paper will examine how the meaning of Anzac has changed in response to historical revisionism to become more inclusive of the wider Australian population. This paper will examine essays submitted by Australian students in years 9 and 10 for the Simpson Prize, a contest organized by the History Teachers' Association of Australia (HTAA) and subsidized by the Australian government. These essays show how contemporary Australian youths understand the meaning of Anzac, while the winning essays demonstrate which sentiments are validated, rewarded, and publicized by the HTAA. The Simpson Prize essays suggest that the interpretation of Anzac is demonstrating a post-national transition by incorporating all segments of Australian society. Women, Indigenous Australians and Asian immigrants are being recognized for displaying the qualities of an Anzac. The essays show that these three groups that were once antithetical to the militarist, masculine, Anglo-Saxon definition of Anzac and Australian identity, are now being incorporated into the memory of the First World War.

This paper will argue, however, that this new reinterpretation of Anzac effectively upholds a traditional, nationalist memory by applying masculine, militarist traits onto new demographics. A woman, an Indigenous Australian, or an Asian immigrant can only gain membership in this version of Australian identity by demonstrating the qualities of an Anzac. Thus, while appearing to take the post-national turn through a seemingly more inclusive interpretation, the meaning of Anzac changes very little from its original formula. The commemoration of Gallipoli and the First World War continues to impress its traditional ideals of nationalism onto new generations of Australians.